

# PARISH MAGAZINE - JULY 2020

Free on-line  
Edition



Serving the communities of: Christleton, Cotton Abbots, Cotton Edmunds, Littleton and Rowton.



*It has been said that you can't be cross and say 'bubbles'. The very idea of a bubble is fun. We hope that some of you who are eligible have formed a social bubble to help relieve those who feel lonely and particularly separated from other people, and that it brings new joy into your lives. Also, under very recent relaxation, for those now able to meet up or stay with another household.*

***The other cause of great joy is that St James' Church is open.***

*From Wed 17th June it has been open on Wednesdays 2pm-5pm and Sundays 9am-2pm for private prayer. Also for funerals. Social distancing restrictions and hygiene controls are in place to make it safe. From 4th July the church is permitted to open for services, but detailed guidance for this is awaited from the Church of England and Chester Diocese. Please check the St James' Church website for any updates and information about this.*

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**Deadline for the August - September double issue magazine will be: Friday 24th July 2020.**

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The Magazine subscription is normally £6 per year and running from April to March, but during this Covid-19 crisis magazines will be free via the church website and will not be printed or delivered to homes. Any subscriptions paid will be carried forward until normality is restored.

Please tell others how to find the on-line magazine. Do print it out yourself if that is helpful.

Thank you for reading our magazine. We hope you enjoy it. Feedback is always welcome so please let the editor know what you think about the magazine. Contributions are welcome and more details about this are available from the editor.

The church website not only carries the current issue but also back copies of this magazine and much more information and news about what is happening at St James' Church in these difficult times.

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### ST JAMES' CHURCH WEBSITE:

**<https://www.stjameschristleton.org.uk>**  
Website maintained by Jonathan Gilliatt  
*jonathan.gilliatt@btinternet.com*

### ST JAMES ON TWITTER:

 **@StJChristleton**

### CHRISTLETON VILLAGE WEBSITE:

**[www.christleton.org.uk](http://www.christleton.org.uk)**

## RENEWING OUR RELATIONSHIPS?



I wrote to the parish near the start of the pandemic in March.

Much has happened since this date.

Thankfully, speaking of our parish communities, it appears we have travelled well through the peak of the virus. Instruments of care we put in place, which were wonderfully supported by you (thank you), were largely not needed. Conversations with you tell a wonderful story of how families, friends, and neighbours naturally came together to love one another, for which we are so very thankful.

We have now entered into a new time, as lock down life starts to give way to familiar patterns.

There is a real risk, as we know, of another peak in the virus, which we hope and pray will be avoided through people continuing to love one another through, not least, maintaining social distancing measures and wise decisions being made at the local, national, and international level. Our leaders need our prayers, vocal and practical challenges if we are to, together, navigate safely through the difficult terrain ahead.

We will continue to keep our instruments of care in place, and develop them in the months ahead to be prepared should they be needed in the future.

There is also a great opportunity to create and give space to new patterns of living. To let some of the un/re-discovered blessings of this time inform our futures. To continue to care for our neighbour as we have done. To orientate and shape our lives to give more time to our families, and share responsibility for our households. To give greater space to our created order, ourselves included, to flourish as it so evidently has in this period of lock down. To re-evaluate what is truly important. To as a church carefully discern what we might need to let go off in order for new life to grow.

I was reminded of this today as we prayed and heard about Joshua gathering the tribes of Israel, and renewing their covenant – relationship of mutual obligations – with God (Jos 24.1-28). Joshua recounts their history, including their being brought into the promised land. He invites them to choose who they will love and serve. The God of Israel or other idols – gods.

They choose God (at least until the next chapter/book of the bible!).

It seems like we face a similar decision to these Israelites of old, as we move out of lock down.

Will we choose to love and serve the idols of wealth and self or we will choose to love and serve one another as God requires - regardless of race, status, gender, or whatever other classification we might care to add?

With my love and prayers,  
*Stefan*

## WELCOMING ROB CROFT:

On behalf of the parish it gives me great pleasure to welcome a new colleague Rob Croft. Rob joins the parish on the 5 July to serve as Assistant Curate, and continue his initial ministerial education with us. Normally, we would be welcoming Rob post his ordination as Deacon, but on account of the Coronavirus this has been delayed until October. Instead, Rob and the other deacons of the diocese will be commissioned for service at a special service on the 2 July @ 7pm. You are warmly invited to be part of this service by visiting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86914032114>

Rob has kindly written an article for us by way of introduction to himself, below, and I know he will look forward to getting to know you in the months and years ahead, just as I am sure we will look forward to getting to know him. Rob brings, as you will read and hear, a wealth of experience and gifts, and will undoubtedly bless, challenge, and change us as a community for which we give great thanks.

Please do say hello when you get a chance, and commit to continually holding Rob in your prayers as he continues his formation with us.

With my love and prayers,  
*Stefan*

## REJOICE, ROB HAS ARRIVED!

In normal times, we arrive by being bodily present. But in the past three months, the quality of 'presence' has taken on a richer meaning, in which we can arrive without 'being there'. On 5 July, I begin my time in the benefice of Christleton St James, though I may well be sitting four



miles away, at home in Lache, Chester. I look forward to meeting you, whether on Jitsi Meet or in person!

I grew up in Beverley, East Yorkshire. As a new-born, I came home to a flat a hundred yards from the beautiful medieval parish church. The church and its parish are the simple answer to why I am an Anglican. I went to its junior school. I sang in the church choir as treble and bass. I was a server there. Like so many, I left that home to go to college and never returned.

I came to Chester nearly forty years ago. It was perhaps in 2012 I began my journey to Christleton, going via Helsby where I joined a new group for lay people, called Education for Ministry (EfM). We came together to study scripture and the Christian tradition, over four years. Out of that group of nine, four have since gone on to train for ordination. I only did one year because I then began my training to be a Reader in the diocese. I studied part-time at All Saints Centre for Mission and Ministry and was licensed to St Mary's, Handbridge in 2016.

Last year I was accepted to train for ordination, and studied full-time at Queen's Foundation in Birmingham. Queen's is ecumenical, multi-cultural, and international. It celebrates diversity and has the only centre for black theology in the country. It has been a wonderful place to learn *through* difference.

It seems that the older I get, the more I learn. Perhaps that reflects the time it has taken me to learn to listen. In recent years I have become very involved with intentional conversation – series of conversations that a group commits to have together. I facilitated an EfM group in Chester for five years, and have facilitated conversation series at Retreat House Chester. Throughout my training and through many conversations, I have become convinced that I and the church learn most when we learn together. The Church of England's focus on Setting God's People Free and on intentional discipleship emphasise the wholeness of the people of God, and our learning together.

The root of the word conversation is 'living together with'. Conversation is not just words but a wholeness of living together. It's a safe space where we explore each other's truths and find new truth – a space where we can be vulnerable and honest and open to what a community is saying, to what the Spirit is doing, and to our calling.

I hope to come first as a listener – to Stefan, to the church, and to the community – that I might hear your stories as, together, we adventure with God.

*Rob Croft*

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## **BOX OPENING 2020**



Dear Box Holders,

Unfortunately, because of the coronavirus situation we are unable at this moment in time to set a date for the Box Opening 2020. The guidance from the Children's Society is that Box Holders should hold onto their Boxes until advised otherwise. Of course, please keep topping them up! As soon as I hear any further information, I will let you know.

We are all aware that during these unprecedented times there are many vulnerable children in our country at risk from increased poverty, neglect and worsening mental health issues. Thank you for your continued support. Your kindness has made life so much better for the vulnerable young people that the Children's Society help.

*Lesley Morgan*

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## **TREASURER'S NEW BEGINNINGS:**

This Lockdown is not good for any of us, so I was wondering what to do with myself after coming off the treadmill and (due to a back strain) off the golf course for a bit. I was NOT pleased.

However, I knew there must be something useful I could do and began to wonder if I could be part of the discovery of new beginnings, of perhaps new shoots in our church life, when really I thought I was about to fall off my perch!



The attached pic shows what wonderful new growth occurs when one remembers to water a Christmas tree!!

What AM I on about this time?

On behalf of the church, and even free of charge, I have attended a Church of England Webinar on On-Line Giving. For a start I thought it was pretty clever to manage to access it, and then I even managed to re-access it to check some information (you may realise being highly computerate is not my favourite field).



Were there Key Points?

Well, it is true that we normally have a collection in our services – should this not therefore be part of our on line services we have needed to have while being unable to attend the church?

Might it be that via our own website, Facebook, Twitter, “a church near you” and such things that we might reach more people than we presently do, in fact some different people?

I am informed that “a church near you” has 38 and a half million visitors each year!

I was beginning to see the light!!! Or perhaps a way forward.

All enthusiastic, I offered to set this up for the church, but Stefan, aware it was going to need integration with the website, kindly offered to help and so within a day or two we were the proud owners of an on-line platform for Donations.

## Make an Online Donation

These donations can also be gift aided, but other than that, the system is very similar to the contactless terminal.

As the church is open for private prayer, I would be hopeful that not only our new website facility but also the contactless terminal will come into its own once again. The principle is that, although we can accept cash, contactless is preferable, as it is in shops at present, to reduce infection risk.

I wouldn't want you to feel I am not able to accept cash,

cheques or bank transfers, of course. These are still extremely welcome and I am immensely grateful to those who have increased standing orders, set up bank transfers and one way or another got money to me to keep the church ticking over in this difficult period.

So I nearly rested on my laurels but then now I am in the midst of attending training for an online accounting system (3 separate sessions) which is a mirror of the present accounting system, Finance Co-ordinator. I am about to start using this with our own current data which is being uploaded, as I write, into somewhere that I don't understand so hopefully I shall be able to play with it tomorrow.

The main benefit of this system is that I can set up other people to view the data, even to do some of the book-keeping entries, or perhaps the auditor to audit as I go along. It is automatically backed up in addition. The training and trial for 3 months is free, so after that we shall have to take a view! It would cost a little more than the present system but I did wonder if one day someone might appear to assist me

(best to do so before I actually do fall off my perch). This facility will make training someone else remotely easy instead of impossible!

Do have a play with the online donation if you'd like to, or of course get in touch about any more normal queries.

With any luck I will soon be back on the golf course but I do have a bit of work to do first!

Our embryonic new shoots will soon be transformed into a vision of beauty – or at least that's what I'm hoping, so here's three of those!!

Very many thanks for all your support.

*Liz McClure*



## CYCLING DURING LOCKDOWN:



The official announcement at the end of March was one hour's exercise a day away from the home. How far? I think it was within a two mile radius of your house. So I started to plan my 'local' bike rides. The weather was unbelievable, warm and sunny at the end of March beginning of April. The roads were quiet, which made cycling all the more enjoyable. My first rides took me through Christleton, Littleton, Guilden Sutton, Newton and over to Handbridge then

home, about 8-9 miles which I duly recorded on Strava. Occasionally Tina would join me. It was so great to soak up nature, trees were coming into bud, and bird song was much more noticeable. I enjoyed these early rides mostly on my trusty Dawes Galaxy. But! I was beginning to get restless, I wanted to go further and thus be out for longer. The rules changed. Unlimited amounts of exercise and no restriction on distance! Great stuff! Time to unleash my Trek Madone carbon fibre road bike. I was now able to do tours to Waverton, Hargrave, Huxley, Beeston, Tattenhall, Chowley, Coddington, Churton and Aldford. Some of the rides were between 25 and 30 miles, mostly on quiet country lanes, again in truly magnificent weather. Spring was moving on, trees were now in full leaf, cow parsley decorated the roadside with buttercups and dandelions. The fields of Rapeseed gave me dreadful hay fever!

These journeys also gave me time to think and reflect. I felt I was lucky, lucky to be out and about. If I was having a bad day thinking about lockdown a long ride was therapeutic. I would think about seeing my grandchildren and hugging them, and doing the same with my two sons. Then church, how I was missing the fellowship, Sunday service and daily morning prayer in the lady chapel, working with the payback team and our monthly gardening team, Breakfast at 8 and community lunch. All part of the rhythm of the daily, weekly and monthly cycle that makes up the parish of St James.

The cycling still goes on. Not today though. It is lashing down and is set to continue for the rest of the day and evening, Tomorrow is another day!

*Mike Lightfoot.*

## CARING FOR THE CHURCHYARD:

We saw Eagle (Alastair Holland) and his daughter Isabelle, mowing the churchyard and we thought that it would be good to help tidy some of the graves as they had become overgrown during Lockdown.

The ground was really hard as it has been so sunny, so we had to fill watering cans and wet the soil so that we could dig up the roots of the weeds. We like filling the watering cans, but they get quite heavy when they're full. There are three taps to choose from, so anyone wanting to help doesn't have to walk too far! For our Beavers and Cubs Community Impact badge, we are going to carry on keeping some graves tidy and help Mike and Sue build a bug hotel.

We also found a cat's collar about 5 metres up in a fir tree, it belonged to Alfie who lives in Church Walks, so we took it back to him, and met him and his owners. Their garden backs onto the churchyard and Alfie loves playing in there. His owners have a family of hedgehogs in their garden and they also go into the churchyard.

*Milo & Autumn O'Brien.*



## PRAYER POSTER:



I have attached a photo of my boys and a prayer poster we made for Environment Sunday (7<sup>th</sup> June).

Here is part of the prayer we said:

Creator God,  
We thank you for the beauty of the earth  
that feeds and sustains us.  
We thank you for the insects, birds, flowers,  
and mammals in our gardens.  
We thank you that every living thing is known  
and loved by you.  
Help us to take care of the precious gift of life.  
Amen.

*Sarah Batchelor*

## Churchyard Maintenance

**If you wish to help keep the churchyard  
tidy then please talk to Mike Lightfoot  
who knows how this is being done  
safely at present.**

**Of course, take a walk via the  
churchyard as part of your exercise.  
Be joyous in God's amazing creation.**

**More details from Mike Lightfoot  
Tel: 07787 421357**

## CHRISTLETON PARISH HALL

Currently closed. Enquiries to:  
Maria Norbury: Tel: 01244 335499.  
[maria\\_norbury@btinternet.com](mailto:maria_norbury@btinternet.com)

See also the church website.  
<https://www.stjameschristleton.org.uk>



## Have you ever thought about being a school governor?

Christleton Primary School governors are looking for a new governor to join them. Previous experience in education is not essential, but having a keen interest in the running of the school and the education of our primary age children is.

Our Primary School is a vital part of our village community and governors from the community can help to enhance that relationship.

If you might be interested in helping in this way look at the school website  
<http://www.christletonprimaryschool.co.uk/>  
to get a flavour of the school life and talk to the chair of governors, Emma Binns  
[ebinns@christletonprimary.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:ebinns@christletonprimary.cheshire.sch.uk)

Visiting the school is not possible at the moment as, even as some of the children return to school, visitors are not allowed in the building.

*Elizabeth Inall*

## RUBLEV'S ICON:

In our Sunday morning Worship a couple of weeks ago I spoke about an Icon. The reading we had in the service was about Abraham entertaining three visitors at the Oak of Mamre (Genesis 18) and in preparing for the service I was immediately reminded of this Icon by Andrei Rublev.

Here is a brief reflection on that Icon along with an illustration of it (next page) so you might have a chance of understanding what I am talking about!

We associate icons with the Eastern Orthodox Church and we don't often find them in Anglican churches. One thing to say right at the start is that an icon is not a picture. An Icon is the product of prayer and is itself a prayer. Icons are said to be written and not painted. There are rules for those creating icons to observe.

When I visited a monastery in Russia the monks were insistent on the necessity for confession and prayer as part of the process of creating a new icon. So then they are considered to be a divinely inspired aid to prayer and contemplation for the onlooker. The Orthodox Church asks that we consider Christ not just as the Word made flesh as in John ch1 but also that he is the image of the invisible God. An Icon is the window to the divine, helping us worship. It is not viewed purely as a piece of art.

Rublev's icon of the Trinity was painted around 1410. It is inspired by the story of hospitality of Abraham in Genesis 18.

It depicts the three angels who visited Abraham at the Oak of Mamre. But Rublev interprets that on two levels. When we read the story the text changes from the plural to singular and early Christian thinkers saw that as a reference to the Trinity which Rublev picked up on, so it is often interpreted as an icon of the Trinity.

The image is full of symbolism and is designed to take the viewer into the Mystery of the Trinity. So take a moment to look at the icon. First of all look at faces of the three figures, they are virtually identical. Does this help us to understand the nature of the Trinity?

If you draw a line around the outside of the three figures and around their feet you have a perfect circle. The centre of the circle is the point where the two fingers of the central figure touch the table.



Colours are important in Russian iconography and there are rules about which colour can be used to illustrate what. Blue is the colour of the heavens, of divinity and all three figures are wearing blue. But they are also wearing other colours which identify who they are.

### **The Spirit**

Look at the right hand figure – he is wearing a blue robe which is speaking of divinity but over that he has a green robe. Green speaks of new life and green is the colour used to represent the Holy Spirit in Russian icons.

We have just experienced an amazing spring and surely we've had enough time this year to appreciate the vibrancy of the new growth on trees and plants all around us. Especially the bright greens against the glorious blue skies we've had recently. I wonder, does that say anything to you about life the Spirit comes to bring? Many of prayers in liturgy asking for the Holy Spirit start with 'Come Holy Spirit'. Just as Abraham invited the men to stay, so we can invite the Holy Spirit to come to us.

'Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people and kindle in them the fire of your love'.

Take a moment to think about the green of new life, the figure in the icon and the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives. ....

It's quite hard to make out but behind the figure is a mountain. Mountains are places where people often encountered God - places where heaven and earth seem to touch. Moses met God on mountains. Jesus was transfigured whilst in prayer on a mountain. I wonder have you had any so called "mountain top" experiences - times maybe when you have felt very close to God – times when you have felt transfigured and filled with the Spirit?



The Christ figure rests two fingers on the table - laying onto it His divine and His human nature. To me that is also the gesture of blessing seen in other icons. He points to a cup filled with wine with its obvious symbolism of the Eucharist.

What does this represent to you?.....

Behind the figure is a tree. This could be the oak tree at Mamre under which the three angelic visitors rested.

The tree could also represent the tree of knowledge of good and evil and therefore the fall. The tree may also represent the Cross - the tree on which Christ died.

The tree of death which becomes the tree of eternal life - eternal life which was lost to humanity by the disobedience of Adam and Eve and restored to us by the obedience of Jesus. It may also be the tree of life in Revelation bearing twelve kinds of fruit, one for each month of the year, and the leaves of this tree are for the healing of the nations...

But remember Elijah could not find God in the earthquake -  
 - the wind -  
 - the fire on the mountain -  
 but in the gentle breeze which carried the voice of God deep into his being. Try and recall, if you can, when have you been aware of the presence of the dynamic stillness which is the Spirit within you.

If we move around the circle as the figure of the Spirit inclines - our gaze is drawn to the central figure - representing Christ.

### **Christ**

Again the figure wears the blue of divinity. The brown garment speaks of the earth - of His humanity. The gold stripe on his robe which is reminiscent of a Roman Emperor speaks of kingship.

Think for a moment on the paradox of the Cross -  
 - the place where death and life confront each other -  
 - where death gives way to resurrection - and eternal life. ....

The Christ figure in turn inclines towards the figure on the left - and we are drawn to gaze there too.

### **God the Father**

This figure seems at rest within Itself. The blue garment almost hidden by a shimmering - ethereal robe. The One who is Creator who cannot be seen by His human creatures. Both hands clasp the staff. All authority in heaven and on earth belong to the Father. What kind of authority do you find in the figure in the icon?....

Behind the figure is a house, the dwelling place of God. We are reminded of John 14 "In my Father's House are many mansions - I go to prepare a place for you..." What is the promise for you in these words of Jesus?

Now although, as we have seen, the three figures can be enclosed in a circle they are not closed in upon themselves. There is an open-ness. They are turned towards the one looking at the icon - drawing them into their relationship.

Imagine a new circle but this time a 3-dimensional one. A circle on the horizontal plain. It travels around the back of the Spirit - behind the Christ behind the Father and comes forward and extends beyond the image to go round behind you too...

What does this tell you of the love that God as Trinity has for you? What does it tell you of their hospitality inviting you in?

I've not seen the original Rublev icon which is in Moscow but I have stood in front of a copy in a church in the Russian city of Pskov. It is very large (142 cm x 114 cm (56 in x 45 in)) and you do feel as if you are making up a foursome looking at and being looked at by the three figures around the table.

I am reminded of a poem by George Herbert:

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,  
    Guilty of dust and sin,  
But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack  
    From my first entrance in,  
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,  
    If I lack'd any thing.

A guest, I answer'd, worthy to be here:  
    Love said, You shall be he.  
I the unkind, ungratefull? Ah my dear,  
    I cannot look on thee.  
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,  
    Who made the eyes but I?

Truth Lord, but I have marr'd them: let my shame  
    Go where it doth deserve.  
And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?  
    My dear, then I will serve.  
You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:  
    So I did sit and eat.

*Elizabeth Inall*

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## MEMORIES:

When we went into 'lockdown' back in March & John and I had our letters from the NHS telling us we had to stay at home until 30 June as we had to shield because we were in the vulnerable age group, but we could go out for exercise, we wondered what we were going to do for 3 months! But here we are almost at the end of that 3 months and we've just been given the news that we can go out a little bit sooner than anticipated. Yipeeeeeeeee!

As we have Daisy our 5 year old miniature dachshund I was able to take her out for walks each day & we were blessed with wonderful weather almost from the beginning of lockdown so I very quickly got into the habit of walking Daisy for between 1 – 2 hours every morning which is great exercise for me as well as Daisy. I really think she would walk for England & sometimes wonder how she manages on her little legs.

As I'm walking along the Caldys Valley Road I'll often hear someone passing in a car & they'll tap their horn but I haven't a clue who it is because they've gone past me so quickly so I just wave anyway. I very quickly noticed the number of people walking increasing almost daily along with the dog walkers, joggers and cyclists and I recognised the regular dog walkers & so did Daisy! She would either ignore them or bark at them whereas the dog walker & myself struck up a conversation with 2 metre social distancing of course, and now we've almost become 'best friends'. I also realised that people were so friendly & smiley & would respond to my 'Good Morning' whereas I suspect some would not have done so before lockdown.

Sometimes I would walk down to the river at Sandy Lane where I would have a rest on one of the seats overlooking the river & remember how I used to bring my Heinz 57 terrier Bimbo many years ago to the same place & we would take the ferry over to the Meadows – I think at a cost of sixpence in old money – and spend a few hours walking to Eccleston & back. The landing stage is still there but don't know if the ferry is still available. I'd meet Alix sometimes while I was in the Dee Banks area & we'd stop for a chat.

When walking in Boughton I got into the habit of calling on people I know who were living alone just to see if they were managing OK and I'm glad to say that all was well. I would regularly call on Jean & we'd sit in the sun in her garden, she'd give Daisy a treat and we would drink coffee & chat. I'd see Adrienne en route plus Sally

and Marion plus one or two ladies who I hadn't seen for many years who were walking their dogs & all of a sudden get the feeling ..... I think I know that face, stop and look again & they're doing the same thing to me, & yes we do know one another which was really lovely. We've now exchanged telephone numbers and will be in regular contact again.

Sometimes I have the feeling that I want to visit St James church, even though it's closed\*, so I visit the churchyard & say 'Hello' to my parents and my nephew & then it's decision time as to which way I go home! Sometimes I'll take the footpath at the side of the churchyard & go over the fields to Pearl Lane then home along the by-pass or I'll go past the pond & walk on to Littleton remembering how I used to walk the same pathway about 53 yrs ago when Simon was born, with my friend Sally & her baby Jonathon & we would push the prams from where we lived in Fir Tree Lane to the Institute where a weekly baby clinic was held and the weight and progress of each baby was recorded each visit. I've still got the record cards to this day. I also remember walking down Pearl Lane to my mother's house in Belgrave Road once or twice a week when we'd have some precious Grandma time.

I've got into the habit on a Sunday after we've participated in the Jitsee Morning Service of walking to Vicars Cross to visit Rebecca & family. I go past our house in Norley Drive which we lived in for 9 years after leaving Fir Tree Lane and remember not being very happy in Vicars Cross partly due to a neighbour who was not at all neighbourly and when, 6 months after moving in I told John I wanted to move he told me in no uncertain terms that it was not possible & we'd just have to grin & bear it. We finally moved again 9 years later to Toll Bar.

One thing that really annoyed me was the way cars would speed up & down the Caldry Valley Road which has been much quieter than usual during lockdown so these 'idiots' have taken advantage and constantly broken the speed limit & acted recklessly. The police have been out frequently with their speed gun & while passing a policewoman on duty I did mutter something about how I hope she catches the lot of them, & she smiled assuring me that she has already done so.

It's been quite noticeable since lockdown restrictions started to ease a short time ago that lots of 'For Sale' signs have gone up on properties and already 'Sold' or 'Under Offer' signs have appeared which reminds me of when we put No 2 Toll Bar Road up for sale 7 years ago.

The board went up in the front garden on the Friday & it was sold within 2 hours much to ours & everyone's amazement. Can't quite believe that was 7 years ago this month. We had 30 very happy years at No 2 and as I walk past now think of the many family events over the years and walk on to spend a pleasant hour in Christine's garden or a bit further on with June in her garden.

Today 18 June is our 54<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary & my plan had been to walk up to St James church where we were married & as it's now open, go inside & spend a short time reflecting on times gone by & thanking God for 54 very happy years despite some bumps along the way. But, I can't do that because it's bucketing down & has been all morning and shows no sign of going away so I doubt very much that I'll be taking Daisy out for a walk today.

But there's always tomorrow ..... now which way shall we go today Daisy?

*Janet Milton*

*\* church now increasingly open.*

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## **ELLESMERE PORT & WHITBY**

If after passing Backford on what is now the A41 towards Birkenhead in the mid 1800's you turned right into the road to what is now Ellesmere Port and now called Whitby road you would pass through the Hamlet of Whitby. The road continued through open country until it arrived at a lighthouse and lock on the Mersey estuary leading to Whitby docks. A canal was built from Nantwich to Chester and eventually the dock was linked to Chester. More docks and warehouses were built, some designed by Thomas Telford. It was renamed Ellesmere Port after the market town in Shropshire, presumably because it was an outlet for the towns produce. It also served the pottery trade in Stoke-on-Trent

By 1900 it was a thriving community with shops, Churches, Church Halls and a small park with a bandstand. The Port also had two Brass Bands. Day trips from Chester to Liverpool were run. A flyboat [A narrow boat pulled by a team of trotting and galloping horses] left Chester in the morning picked up a paddle steamer at the port and the passengers taken to Liverpool. A return journey was made in the evening.

The Manchester Ship Canal was opened in 1894 cutting off access to the river but allowing entry to the Canal. Then in 1905 The Wolverhampton Corrugated Iron Works bought land on the bank of the canal and built a factory. A canal basin was made and the company bought 21 barges [called Mersey Flats] and a steam tug. Most of their output was exported and it was taken to the docks in Liverpool. The company built rows of terraced houses for the workers they brought from Wolverhampton and so the town of Ellesmere Port began to form. Then the Shell Oil Company built a refinery on the banks of the canal and more houses were built. The crude oil was brought up the canal in tankers and when they became too big to travel up the canal a new dock [called The Queen Elizabeth Dock] was built at Eastham. The spoil was piled at the side of the canal creating a small field level with the road, now a Mayfield Memorial Park.

The town had its own football field with a semi-professional team playing in a lower league - its star player in the 60's was Pongo Wearing an ex division one player. Also in the 60's the land between E-Port and Whitby, on which the annual fairs were held was taken to build a market, a shopping arcade, a Civic Hall, an excellent Library, Council offices and a Police Station. The boundary was lost.

Whitby never had a definite centre it was more of an area. In 1914 Heathfeild House in Whitby was bought by the Red Cross and staffing it they turned it into a convalescent Hospital for wounded soldiers. In 1918 with a large grant from the owners of The Corrugated Iron Co it was purchased by The Ellesmere Port & Whitby Urban District Council. It became Whitby Cottage Hospital. [I was born there in 1930.] In the 1959 with a growing population Whitby Grammar School was built [our two daughters went there], it is now Whitby High School and has just celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

By 1940 the trade at the docks had more or less stopped and by 1960 they were derelict; sadly one of the unique Telford Warehouses had burnt down. By 1975 the M56 had opened. To build it the Port's shops, Churches, Church Halls and small park were demolished, only the Anglican Church [Christ Church] survived and is now a listed building. The Churchyard contains war graves from WW1, it was made redundant in 1994. Jean was confirmed there.

In 1909 St Thomas's and All Saints was built in Whitby. It was made of corrugated iron and painted white

when I knew it. It was probably made by the Corrugated Iron Co as many so called "Tin Chapels" were exported to the Empire. A new Church was built alongside it in 1957. Behind the alter two local art teachers created a mural. The Iron Church was demolished later. More recently the Church has been lengthened and the interior reversed; a modern dais with a table as an altar is now in place - the mural is no longer in view, pity!

The Iron works closed in 1948. The Shell Refinery was sold in 2011 and the research establishment was given to Chester University. Much more has come and gone as lifestyle has changed, two cinemas, a dance hall, a big Co-op, small department stores all lost as the town expanded and moved towards Whitby. The final blow came when Cheshire Oaks was built.

*Ben Williams*

*(Editor's note: In Ben's 'Fate' article in the May 2020 magazine edition I inadvertently attributed Whitby to Yorkshire. There is a Whitby there, but of course Ben is referring to Whitby in Ellesmere Port which is quite clear from his article above. Sorry Ben!)*

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### **A HIT IN PEPPER STREET:**

On the 16th June one of several thunderstorms came over, and as usual rumbled around with a torrential downpour. Nothing special until **BANG!** With no delay between the flash and the bang it was overhead and very loud. I looked out of our windows but the church tower was still there. No trees had been struck. No apparent damage - but there was. A house in Pepper Street had been hit and its chimney was damaged causing masonry to fall into the street.

The Fire Brigade attended to check everything was safe leaving the owners with the task of getting the chimney fixed. (Ed.)



## A DAMP WOODSIDE TALE:

Is this The Pit? No.

Is it the Gowy? No.

Is it the River Dee? No.

The Mersey? No.



It's the Plough Lane / Quarry Lane junction which is one of the lowest points in Christleton. It was following another thunderous downpour also on 16th June.

Drains and sewers in Christleton are old (Victorian?) and despite underground storage tanks to catch heavy rainfall like this the system couldn't cope. Development in Christleton over the years and the increased use of concrete driveways throws more water down to this point and to make it worse it's thought to be contaminated with sewage. Horrid, and it is bound to get worse. Richard Keech who lives there knows all about it, and has several measures installed in his house to keep flood water out.

Interestingly the old photo below shows the junction with the 'Woodside Pond'. When the road was improved the pond was filled in but re-appears from time to time.



(Ed.) (Photos Richard Keech)

## LANDING:

*We've just had a decorator in to do some work.*

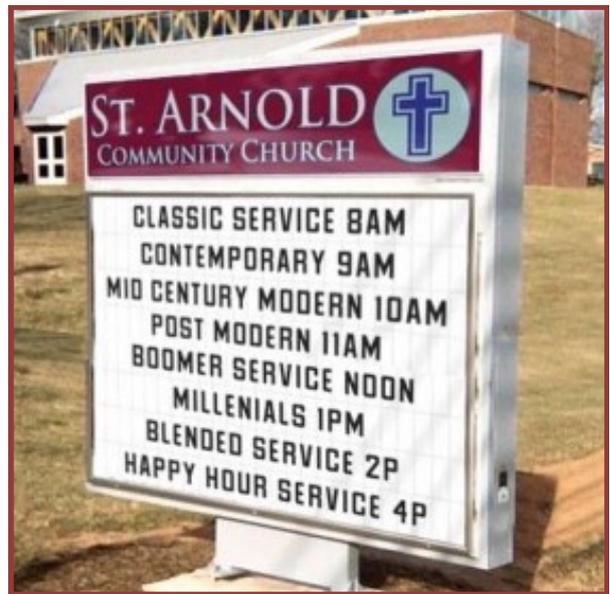
*I got chatting to him and it turns out he is a British Airways pilot who's been furloughed and so he's doing this to earn a bit of extra cash and to stave off boredom.*

*He made a lovely job of the landing.*

(Richard Keech)

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## TOO MUCH CHOICE?



(Martin Thompson)

## A PUZZLE FROM MARTIN THOMPSON:

If you've already come across this on Facebook, then apologies. There's one 'correct' solution, but so many areas for argument (that's the best bit!)

The battle of Mathematics and English.  
Let's see who can get it right.



Question:

**1 rabbit saw 9 elephants while going to the river.  
Every elephant saw 3 monkeys going to the river.  
Each monkey had 1 tortoise on each hand.  
How many animals are going to the river?**

# St James' Church Calendar

## JULY - AUGUST 2020:

Already we are past the Summer Solstice and the days are getting shorter. Doesn't seem fair!

There is no calendar at present. At the time of writing this the Parish Hall is closed and the church is only open for private prayer at the following times.

**Private Prayer: Wednesdays: 2pm - 5pm and Sundays: 9am - 2pm.**

.. and also for funerals.

You will be asked to sanitise your hands and maintain social distancing and you will not be able to use any church books or orders of service. Prayer stations with text from Psalm 23 are there to aid your prayers and meditation.

***From Sat 4th July (effectively Sun 5th) the government permits the church to open for services if it wishes and can do so safely, but detailed guidance for this is awaited from the Church of England and Chester Diocese. Therefore, please check the St James' Church website for any updates, information, newsletters about this.***

**MORNING PRAYER:** This takes place on-line using the 'Jitsi Meet' video conferencing application at 9am each weekday (Mon - Fri). You are all welcome to join in this short act of worship to start the day. For joining instructions please see the church website, or contact Stefan or Tina.

**SUNDAY WORSHIP:** This is also on-line using Jitsi Meet at 10am. Ask Stefan or the Churchwardens for details and about this, and also about how and when services will resume in church..

### **CHURCHYARD WORKING GROUP:**

Maintenance work is now taking place again, and if you wish to join other volunteers then please speak to Mike Lightfoot who can explain how it can be done safely. See ad on page 7.

**WEDDINGS & FUNERALS:** Funerals may now take place in church, but social distancing and hygiene rules apply. Weddings in church with up to 30 people may be possible soon. We await more official guidance.

**PCC MEETINGS (on-line at present):** 'Dreaming the Future' meetings: 25/6 and 22/7.  
Regular PCC meetings: 15/7; 16/9; 18/11; 20/1/2021; 17/3/2021.



***Prayer stations in church***



## NATURE NOTES:

Friends, this has been yet another extraordinary month for wildlife watchers in the Parish. The star bird of the month is a yellow wagtail, spotted on power lines in Plough Lane by Hems de Winter. I confirmed the sighting, seeing perhaps the same bird near Hollows Farm. This very bright **yellow wagtail** was once common



in the Parish, but like another once common bird the Golden Plover, now very rare indeed. Cettis warblers continue to promote themselves at Hockenhull, together with blackcaps, chiff chaff and more recently reed buntings. Song thrushes too are more numerous than usual, and their song can be heard louder than ever with the lack of overhead sounds from aircraft.

The blackcaps are still singing all around the parish and frustratingly can be "heard but not seen" Kestrels can be seen most days hovering in the skies hunting for prey, and peregrine falcons and sparrow hawks have been spotted regularly in the area. Tawny and barn owls can be heard and seen, the latter often seen hunting in the early morning dawn light. Water birds such as coots on the Pit and moorhens on the Pit & canal have had good numbers of young, and it's very noticeable that coot chicks are much more demanding than other small birds, still calling for food from parents despite being big enough to fend for themselves. Mallards have had broods of as many as thirteen ducklings, and I think that some are already on their second brood. House martins, swallows and swifts can be seen, but nothing like the usual numbers. It is possible that our groups of these long distance migrants were caught out by dreadful unseasonal weather of high winds and low freezing temperatures on 9<sup>th</sup> April in Greece, when tens of thousands of these three species were found dead in the streets of Athens and other areas of that country.

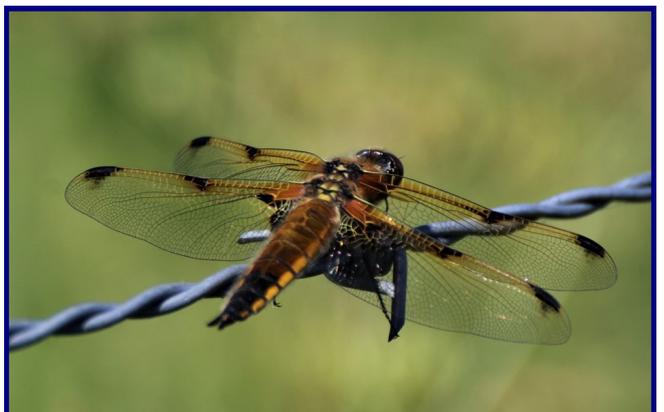
A number of villagers have been very excited to see two mute swans on the canal for almost all of May. They

appear to be a non breeding pair that have just flown in, but are obviously used to being around people. The pen has a BTO leg ring which is not from our region, so I am trying to find out where she was ringed, to give us some more details. I hope they might stay around as they are very friendly, and I know that people are looking forward to seeing a pair of swans in the village again.

May is one of the most exciting times for me as a photographer when I begin to see newly emerged damsel and dragonflies along the canal or on the wet meadows at Hockenhull. This year has been no exception, and my first major sighting was a female **broad bodied chaser** dragonfly, looking rather like a



large hornet sitting on reeds near the main gate. This is a relatively new species to the area, and was followed by the sighting of a rare "**beautiful damselfly**" which was seen twice on the same day along the canal. This species is distinct from the very common "**banded damselfly**" which appears in profusion along the Gowy, with upwards of 500 specimens counted on some warm still sunny days. A newly emerged male dragonfly a "**four spotted chaser**" appeared on the 30<sup>th</sup> May along the banks of the Gowy, and hunted along the big meadow and river bank for food. Tens of common blue and blue



tailed damselflies are now flying around together with several large red damselflies, no doubt feeding on the huge numbers of small insects and midges, that have appeared during this spell of amazing sunny weather. All over our garden mini spiders webs are covered by thousands of these entrapped insects. I'm also sure that we have more bumble bees than usual, and they are foraging all day long for nectar in the wonderful display of flowers we have. It's noticeable that they, like many species of butterflies, always feed on any blue flowers or flowering bushes.

*David Cummings*

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## **WILLIAM HUGGINS FRs** **ARTIST & RESIDENT OF ROCK HOUSE**



**Self Portrait**



**The Artist's wife.**

The famous animal and landscape artist **William Huggins**, was born in Liverpool on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1820. After studying at the Mechanics Institute, where he won a prize at the age of 15 for paintings of historical subjects, he turned to the drawing of animals for which today he is best remembered. His knowledge of these was gained from the large number of pets he kept at home, from visits to zoological gardens and on more than one occasion he followed Wombwells Menagerie, a travelling animal circus, around England.

In 1847 he became an Associate of the Liverpool Academy, and a member in 1850. He also exhibited at the Royal Academy between 1842 and 1875. Apart from his pictures of lions, horses, donkeys and poultry, Huggins also continued to paint historical and religious subjects which contained animals. These included "Daniel in the Lion's Den", "Una and the Lion", "Disobedient Prophet" and other portraits and landscapes. Many of his landscapes were painted

around Chester or on Wirral. He developed a very individual technique, painting with pale transparent colours on a white background.

In 1861 he moved to Chester, and in 1876 he took a house over a stream in Betws y Coed which possibly caused him health problems in later life, as he developed rheumatism and arthritis. It was in 1880 after the death of his wife that he moved back to Chester, to Rock House an elegant Georgian Town House in Christleton where he lived with his brother Samuel an Architect, and sister Hannah.

By this time he was suffering so much that he only painted and drew when he felt well enough. He never ventured far from the village, but lived quietly and modestly as he had always done. It's said in some reports that he was an eccentric individual, and that he preferred the company of animals to people. It's also recorded that he hated travelling in tunnels, and would get off the train before Liverpool and walk the rest of his way home! I like to think of him as a very compassionate man, who recorded meticulously the subjects he was drawing or painting, and there are some wonderful sensitive drawings and paintings in the collection of his work kept in the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, the Grosvenor Museum in Chester or in local collections in Christleton. Some of his drawings of lions for example have a definite feline quality, where he appears to capture their cat like movements seen in their natural wild state.

In 1883 his condition worsened and his doctor diagnosed consumption. During the early part of the winter he grew steadily weaker and died on 25th February 1884 at the age of sixty three at Rock House in Christleton.

All his life he had hankered after recognition as a history painter in the grand style, following on as he was from another famous Liverpool artist George Stubbs, but he never attained this. His brother once remarked "that the chief characteristic throughout his career was his looking at nature alone". The entry in the Dictionary of National Biography stresses the worth of his animal painting and his talents as a draughtsman and colourist. For many years after his death, however, even the popularity of his animal pictures seemed to decline. It was only through the reawakening of interest in Victorian paintings in the 1960's that he became well known nationally and given him the recognition he deserved. His work then became very collectable in 1968 when Jackie Kennedy, wife of the late American President John Kennedy, purchased one of his paintings.

Until then his paintings sold for between £115 and £630, but then took off dramatically, and it's said that there were many attics and landings in Liverpool being searched in case they had a "Huggins".



When Samuel died in January 1885, Rock House was sold to the Mosford Family, who set up a Butchers Shop adjacent to the house, built of shiny red Ruabon brick, a fashionable brick developed by the Grosvenor Estate and manufactured at Ruabon. His sister Hannah lived for a further nine years in a small terraced house 82 Tarvin Road, Vicars Cross. All three are buried in the churchyard at St James, in a grave to the right of the sun dial walking towards the church from the Lych Gate.

School closed under Government direction on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March and reopened as Emergency School Provision the following Monday. We had begun planning for such an event and staff were uploading home learning provision via Google Classroom.

The weeks immediately before lockdown were incredibly difficult; with increasing student and staff absences, the difficulties in arranging supply staff and the general atmosphere of concern.



We held final assemblies for Year 11 and Year 13 students that were very emotional. Due to staff shortages, Year 13 were sadly dismissed at the end of their assembly. I delivered assemblies with Heads of Year to every other Year group, to try to reassure students and send them off in a positive frame of mind. A final staff meeting took place and the prospect that this might be the last time we met for quite some time, provided an emotional backdrop. I closed the school a day early, to give staff time to complete home schooling preparations.

On Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March we welcomed our first EP students – the children of key workers and those students who were identified as being vulnerable.

The epitaph on William's tombstone, said to have been composed himself reads 'A just and compassionate man who would neither tread on a worm nor cringe to an emperor'. He seems to have been a man of great socialist principles, and we were fortunate to have him living in our village.

EP provision has a settled pattern:

- Welcome, registration and fitness session in the Hall
- AM - Google Classroom for home learning in ICT2 and ICT3
- PM - Creative activity with a set theme for the week

*David Cummings*

**Ref.**

Christleton History of a Cheshire Village 1979  
 Christleton 2000yrs of History  
 Mr D Jones of Liverpool.  
 "The Observer" Supplement 1964  
 Merseyside Painters People & Places.  
 Walker Art Gallery Liverpool 1978

Staff rota for teams of five has been in place with a dedicated Senior Leader and teaching assistant support.

In line with government guidance, we have, from the 15<sup>th</sup> June, started to widen our provision to include Year 10 and Year 12 students. We are limited to no more than 25% of each Year group on any one day. Students in Year 10 will be receiving catch up lessons in English, Maths and Science and some will have additional support for their optional GCSE subjects.

Year 12 are receiving three, two-hour sessions with each of their A-level subjects.

Throughout this period, we will continue to receive children of key workers and those identified as vulnerable and staff will continue to set work for all other Year groups who are studying at home.

We have also begun two sets of plans for the Autumn term – one assuming a full return to school and a new timetable has been written for this and another timetable that assumes a more limited opening. We await further guidance from the Department for Education on this matter – but bearing in mind they have released over 40 guidance documents so far, we may still have to make our own arrangements.

In the Autumn term, we also plan to move to a new structure and timings for the school day, which are shown in the table below.

Wednesdays will continue to see formal lessons end earlier, at 14:00, to allow time for staff development, extra-curricular sport and music, support lessons and extension work. With growing numbers attending school, we are also in the midst of refurbishing our accommodation to provide an additional four full sized classrooms – when I joined CHS in 1989, the roll was just 1200 – in September we will welcome 1445 students to school!

I'm massively indebted to a number of people for their support in helping me navigate the school through some very choppy waters. My senior leadership team and staff team have quite simply been magnificent in the way they have dealt with the situation and with all I have asked them to do, often at short notice – they have been the embodiment of our values.

We have also received lots of support from our local community, with many warm words and offers of help – thank you, they have been a great morale boost.

For our students, I want them to know that they have been missed. I'm heartbroken that their education has been interrupted and that their wellbeing has been undermined. When they are back at school, we will do all we can to fix that and to help them move forward so that they can fulfil your potential. It's been a tough path for them to navigate – it's a privilege for us to walk alongside such amazing young people.

*DP Jones - Headteacher  
June 2020*

<b>Time</b>		<b>Duration (mins)</b>
<i>By 08:35</i>	<i>Students should be on site</i>	
<i>08:40 – 09:00</i>	<i>Form Tutor/Assembly time</i>	<i>20</i>
<b>09:00 – 10:00</b>	<b>Lesson 1</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>10:00 – 11:00</b>	<b>Lesson 2</b>	<b>60</b>
<i>11:00 – 11:20</i>	<i>Break</i>	<i>20</i>
<b>11:20 – 12:20</b>	<b>Lesson 3</b>	<b>60</b>
<i>12:20 – 13.00</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>40</i>
<b>13.00 – 14:00</b>	<b>Lesson 4</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>14:00 – 15:00</b>	<b>Lesson 5</b>	<b>60</b>

## FROM THE REGISTERS:

No Baptisms or Weddings at the current time.

### Funerals:

**Mrs Evelyn Mary Roberts** (aged 96)

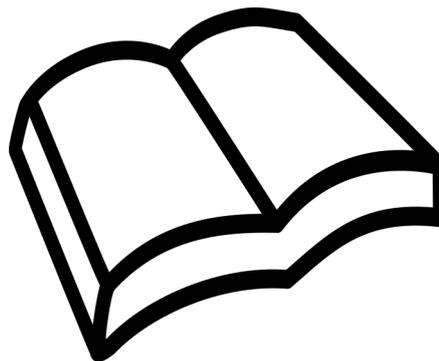
Died: 21/4/2020

Burial of ashes at St James: 22/6/2020

**Mrs Iris Grimes** (aged 95)

Died: 7/6/2020

Funeral in church and burial: 26/6/2020



Note: The current rules specify a limit to the number attending funerals, and all social distancing and hygiene requirements will apply. As rules are slowly being relaxed this may change.

## CONGRATULATIONS:

To all those who have birthdays and anniversaries at this time we send you congratulations and hope that you have been / will be able to celebrate despite the restrictions!

Please send details to the editor if you wish them to appear here.

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**Saturday Breakfast Club** Every Saturday from 9am serving our Breakfast/Brunch menu alongside tea, coffee & cakes.

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Address: Village Rd, Christleton, CH3 7AS

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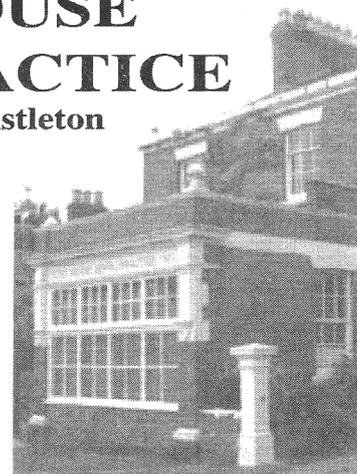
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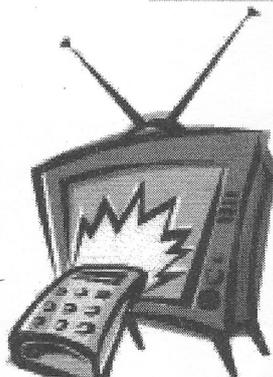
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## **Jennie's Catering OF CHRISTLETON**

*Every Occasion Catered For:*

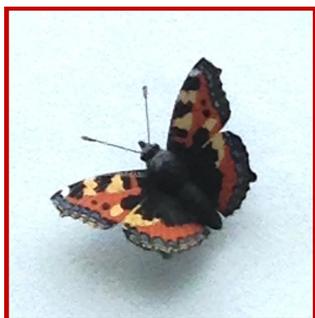
*Canapes  
Buffets  
Finger Buffets  
Afternoon Teas  
Dinner Menus  
Freezer Orders*

*Waiter Service as Required*

**For Help and Friendly Advice  
Contact**

*Jenny Adam 01244 330090*

## THE PICTURE QUIZ—answers to the three pictures in the June edition:



### 1: WHITE WALLS:

The larger than life butterfly is at 'White Walls' fixed on the wall facing Village Road. This house is roughly opposite the Christleton Institute.



### 2: PEPPER STREET CANAL BRIDGE:

Looking down to the tow path beneath. It is advisable to walk across the bridge using the roadway. Those tempted to get across on the black service pipe will encounter some difficulty, pain and risk!



### 3: COTTON CROSS:

In last month's picture you were looking sideways at Cotton Cross on Plough Lane. This picture shows the base and an inscription that says: "This Cross marks the junction of Christleton, Cotton Abbots, Cotton Edmunds".

Continue down Plough Lane from Christleton past the Plough pub and you'll eventually find it on the left.

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The Foodbank is still operating and needs your contributions now more than ever, but even though the church is now open for part of the time we prefer it if you didn't leave items in church unless you have no other option.

So please try to use the collection points available in all these big supermarkets:

**Sainsbury's, Waitrose, Asda, Morrisons, Tesco**

Also the **Royal Mail Sorting Office** on Station Road has a box. Or people can take items directly to the Foodbank ...the address and directions are on their website:

**<https://westcheshire.foodbank.org.uk>** . And finally

people can make a money donation to the foodbank - regular or one-off - and again details are on their website. They will be happy with anything non-perishable but UHT juice is always most welcome and preferably not dried pasta. Thank you for your help.

*Chris Alderton*

