



PARISH MAGAZINE - OCTOBER 2019

GOD AND GOVERNMENT

This month we may, albeit unlikely, have left the European Union without a deal.

It begs the question - what has God got to do with politics? For some, I'm sure, the answer is absolutely nothing. We are to obey the government in all things government – secular if you like, and obey God in all things God - spiritual if you like. This dualism easy to provoke from when Jesus was asked whether it was right to pay taxes to Caesar or not (Mat 22.15-22).

But is this view sustainable? An article by Julian Rivers, a former Professor of Jurisprudence (I had to Google it...), in the book *God and Government* suggests not. He writes "...the Bible shows itself to be deeply political. It tells the story of a global kingdom, ruled over by one who is King of kings and Lord of lords [a church way of saying Jesus Christ], one before whom every knee will ultimately bow and every tongue worship (Phil 2.10-11)...Christ places a permanent question mark after every other exercise of authority. This cannot avoid having political significance".

Rivers notes how one direction of Christian teaching in, e.g., 1 Peter 2.13-17, speaks of the clear legitimacy of government. It is established or ordained by God to restrain evil and promote good, and therefore we should submit to its rule for in doing so we are obeying God. It's quite a sobering and contentious thought in of itself before one even begins to reflect on how a government's right to govern is forfeit at some point. A point that arguably the Bible is not clear about.

Another direction of Christian teaching suggests that while government is legitimate it is also limited. First, by the existence of other human authorities, like, for example, the church, family, and individual. Second, by the means at its disposal, which Rivers argues is



symbolically the sword which radically limits its use to the King, Christ, who has foregone the sword as a means of rule.

Of course there is much more which could be said, and is by Rivers in his aforesaid article. But simply taking together these two directions, one is left with the idea that government exists in relationship and partnership with other human authorities not just other governments.

I can't help ponder whether the struggles of government are, in part, therefore a result of the accompanying struggles our churches, families, and individuals face in the modern era. We need all these human authorities to flourish for the common good if our governments are to function well. Surely then, this presents an important mandate and focus for us all, regardless of whether we remain in Europe or not at the end of October.

With my love and prayers, *Stefan, Rector*

MUSIC TO OUR EARS:

Hi Everyone,

As the new Director of Music at St James' Church, I'm really excited to be a part of the wonderful community here and I can't wait to start contributing my part towards the musical life of the church.



I bring with me three years of experience as an organist from my involvement with various parishes in the Lichfield Diocese.

I hope to get to know you all as I settle in so please do catch me for a chat after a service; especially if you are at all interested in joining our choir or church band.

(Continued on page 3)

CLEANER REQUIRED: See ad on page 20

PARISH CONTACTS:

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(Day off is normally Thursday)

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PCC SECRETARY:

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janetmilton70@btinternet.com

PARISH ADMINISTRATION:

Janet has stepped down as Parish Administrator.

Marj Keech will begin taking on this role during

October. Thank you Marj. In the meantime:

For Parish Hall bookings, please still contact:

Janet Milton Tel: 01244 325529

christletonhall@gmail.com

and for enquiries about weddings, funerals and baptisms, please contact the Rector.

For Weekly Notices please contact

Brian Inall Tel: 01244 336500

brian@inall.co.uk

CHURCHWARDENS:

Bettie Gilliatt Tel: 01244 335645

Tina Lightfoot Tel: 07557 352592

for either warden: *thechurchwardens@gmail.com*

VERGER:

John Milton Tel: 01244 325529

MAGAZINE:

EDITOR:

The editor is: **Brian Inall**

Tel: 01244 336500 *brian@inall.co.uk*

*Deadline for submissions for the November magazine will be: **Monday 14th October.***

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The Magazine subscription is currently £6 per year and runs from April to March. Subscribers have a copy delivered, or they may collect from church, and electronic delivery is also an option. If you don't subscribe then you are invited to buy individual copies each month from the back of St James' Church. If all the spare copies have gone then please ask - we will be pleased to help.

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.

Do also look at our church website for back copies of this magazine and more information including a 'live' calendar.

ST JAMES' CHURCH WEBSITE:

<https://www.stjameschristleton.org.uk>

ST JAMES ON TWITTER:

 **@StJChristleton**

CHRISTLETON VILLAGE WEBSITE:

www.christleton.org.uk

(continued from front page)

There will be rehearsals for both of these on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month (band 4-5pm, choir 5-6pm) and they should be lots of fun!

When I'm not in church, you'll find me tootling away on my Irish flute or dancing away at the nearest ceilidh. I am also a keen hill walker and nature-lover.

Thanks to everyone for being so welcoming. I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Best wishes,
Hannah Williams

PRAYER VIGIL FOR HEALING AND RECONCILIATION IN THE LEAD UP TO BREXIT:

We are currently experiencing a time of great uncertainty for our nation, where opinions are polarised and there is distrust and dis-ease amongst communities.

There will be a series of four prayer vigils at St James where we can bring our concerns and fears to God in a spirit of healing and reconciliation and all are warmly invited.

The vigils will take place on Sunday afternoons on 8th Sept and 22nd Sept (which will have passed by the time you read this) but also coming up for 13th Oct and 27th Oct commencing at 4.45pm immediately following the 4pm service.



Tina Lightfoot, Churchwarden

WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE SAID ?

One day during a long spell in hospital last summer, after the chaplain had brought me communion, a man across the ward asked me if I really believed that "all that" would make me better.

I hastily mumbled that through prayer I received hope and that made me feel better.

I recently came across a quote attributed to Napoleon and half remembering it I paraphrase "courage must have hope for nourishment". He was actually talking about love not war, but the thought relates to many of life's battles. During that time of uncertainty, prayer gave me hope and I was further strengthened by the prayers of friends from St James.

Perhaps I now might have answered my fellow sufferer – prayer brings me hope and through hope I receive the courage to fight this illness that afflicts us both. Try it!

David Bowden

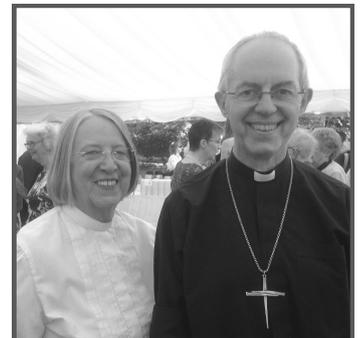
Editor's note: --- have you been challenged to express an aspect of your faith? - what did you say?

GARDEN PARTY AT THE PALACE (LAMBETH):

As I have mentioned before, this year is the 25th anniversary of the ordination of women as priests.

To mark the occasion the Archbishop of Canterbury hosted a couple of garden parties in the gardens of Lambeth Palace for women who were ordained priest in 1994 to which, of course, I was invited. So it was a day trip to London in July on what turned out to be one of the hottest days of the year. Thankfully there was a large marquee providing shade, the refreshments were lovely and plentiful and it was a delightful occasion.

The Archbishop spoke briefly and circulated amongst us (see photo) and it was great fun chatting to women who had travelled from all parts of the country and to share stories. A truly memorable occasion.



Elizabeth Inall

GETTING CLOSER TO GOD:

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

As many of you are probably aware, Marj and I are regular flyers in our little old vintage light aircraft, a machine that we've owned for 21 years now. She's a two seat Piper Colt, made in 1961 from steel tube and aluminium, covered in fabric and we call her "Winnie May," after my elderly relative who's will made purchase possible. She cruises at just over 100 MPH, we sit side by side on seats very reminiscent of those in my first car...

an Austin A35 and, much to Marj's relief, she does have a good heater! So, we have "Win" as we usually call her – a little old aeroplane - what's that got to do with church and God you may ask? Well, that's a difficult one for a mere pilot to explain so why not come with me for a little day trip to one of our regular destinations – Shobdon aerodrome in Herefordshire? It's not too far so you won't be home late.....



The autumn is now here and the shadows noticeably longer, the mornings tending to be a little misty, but the lumpy summer thermals have now calmed and the air is smooth. We're flying from our base of Sleep in northern Shropshire and it doesn't take long to open the hangar doors and complete the pre-flight checks since Win is already fuelled up and ready to go. Thanks to the internet and the little lap-top computer I've already checked the weather and the notices to airmen (NOTAMS) before leaving home so let's now climb aboard and strap in. That's it, pull that strap to tighten your harness and lift that buckle to loosen it.

Right, I'll just give the engine a few shots of the primer, pull the prop through by hand to "suck-in" and now I'm with you. A few cockpit checks, a shout of "Clear Prop" and I can start her up. She rumbles into life, hiccups a little and then settles down into a smooth burble. The oil pressure is good and both ignitions are working OK so let's taxi out and let her oil warm a little. A few more pre-flight checks and, before we know it, here we are on the runway and the power is coming up to full, the noise level increasing and the air speed indicator coming off the stop. We're soon at 55mph and I have the nose wheel clear and then, before we know it, the runway is starting to recede beneath our heels and we're away.

After about 6 or 7 minutes we've reached 3000 feet and I'm able to reduce to cruise power as our airspeed increases and we're soon settled in the cruise with a quieter engine, the landscape below seemingly slowly passing by and we're able to take stock.....and wow... what a view! We're already over the western outskirts of Shewsbury and to our right there is Breidden Hill standing guard by the entrance to the Welshpool Valley with the mountains of Wales beyond.

As we progress further south the ground rises, wooded

hills abound and then there is the unmistakable wooded ridge of the Wenlock Edge stretching away to the east. Many of the valleys below contain a thin white mist, but the hills are standing proud into the smooth clear air through which we now fly. Up here it seems that our view is limited only by the curvature of the Earth. The word "ethereal" doesn't really do it justice. Church Stretton, The Long Mynd and Craven Arms soon pass beneath and then we're descending over wooded hills to our destination, the old WWII RAF aerodrome of Shobdon. A curving final descent soon sees us down low again and established on the final approach then we touch the grass runway, nose-high on the main wheels, the nosewheel soon follows and we rumble to slow speed when we can taxi to the parking area. Un-strap, allow the cylinders to cool a little and then shut-down and silence. It's taken us 30 minutes.

RAF Shobdon was once used to train the glider pilots in preparation for the Normandy and Arnhem landings, but now it is the home of the Herefordshire Aero Club and many associated businesses. We're soon at the large WWII-vintage Nissen hut that houses the aero club and, after a very warm welcome there from the lady who runs the operations-desk (she always gives me a kiss!), we can enjoy a coffee and some cake in "Meg's Diner" before setting off up the hill towards the village. On the way we walk through acres of orchard, past the Bateman Arms (don't worry – we'll call In later) and then on to the former private drive leading through the country estate of the Batemans. It's very pretty here, many trees abound, we pass lakes and then we're close to the walled garden and the buildings that once housed the support functions of this former large country estate. The mansion itself is long gone, but just up here on the right is a little old very picturesque church. Nothing too remarkable about that because we're getting quite used to picturesque by now, but still, let's stop awhile especially since the old muscles are aching a little.

This place of worship isn't actually that ordinary since it's thought to be the finest Gothic Rococo church in Great Britain. There was a timber church here in Anglo Saxon times and this was followed by a stone-built example in the 12th century, the present tower being added in the 13th. Finally, the nave was re-built in 1756 by the Batemans and portions of the original Norman church, "The Shobdon Arches" are preserved on top of the hill that overlooks. Remarkable that such history is around us in this very quiet and pretty spot. Let's now walk up the tree-lined grassy avenue to see the Arches and sit a little. From here we can see over the Herefordshire plain and look up into that clear sky and think a little.

Being here by these Norman arches, looking down upon the spot where worship has been carried out since Anglo Saxon times and thinking about the beauty of the skies through which we've just flown it's natural to feel that God isn't too far away right now.or am I being a bit daft? Well, on that question I'll let you decide, but before that, do read the poem that is printed below. It's "High Flight" by John Gillespie Magee, Jr. It may well help you to answer my question.



Richard Keech

HIGH FLIGHT

*Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds, — and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of — wheeled and soared and
swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air . . .
Up, up the long, delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or ever eagle flew —
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.*

DREAMING:

How many concert halls does an area need? Or perhaps more pertinently, how many concert halls can a particular area support? In the case of Cheshire, the answer is zero and hence we are fortunate to be able to enjoy the excellent facilities offered in nearby Liverpool and Manchester - and perhaps Birmingham. The music scene in London, however, has decided that it needs a new one. Now even if you don't visit London often or have little interest in concert going, you will be aware that there are already many auditoriums for concert performances in that place. So the need for more appears extraordinary and extravagant - not to mention whether another town in the country might be more deserving.



The surprise is that London has only two venues that can properly be described as concert halls: the Barbican

and the Festival Hall. (Note that the Albert Hall does not qualify, despite the famous Promenade Concert Season). Perhaps less surprising is that these two qualifying venues are not considered to have the best acoustical behaviour, lagging behind several on the continent - a "serious" problem for professional music luvvies!

Leaving aside the questionable wisdom of the whole venture, I find the prospect exciting and I can't wait to attend. The architect's impression shows a £288 million wooden structure that reminds me of an assembly of Chinese paper lanterns that children used to make as Christmas decorations, while the inside will feature a 2,000 seat auditorium together with the most recent innovations in audience facilities. It is expected to raise the profile of music to that achieved by The Tate Modern for the visual arts.

I know that the design and planning have to be agreed and the finance from public subscription found, meaning that the Hall may never be built. But it is good to dream and in doing so I am in the company of some illustrious dreamers chief of whom must be John in his Revelation (I am suggesting that revelation is an intense form of dreaming) of the new Jerusalem at the end of time. He writes: "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them....and they will be his people".

The life of Martin Luther King is celebrated for many reasons but for most folk he is remembered for his dream about a time when people of all colours would be equal. With his great gift for oratory, he referred to this state as "the promised land". Preaching on 3 April 1968, he acknowledged that he would like a long life but although he had seen "the promised land", he might not get there with his listeners. He realised that the achievement of equality among people was likely to take longer than his expected lifespan. The following evening, he was murdered. While he had always known that his life was under threat, he could not have known that it would end so quickly.

These dreamers encourage me to go on dreaming but the Martin Luther King story reminds me that dreams may never be fulfilled in a lifetime. I am old and my wonderful concert hall will not be finished until 2027 at the earliest - if at all. The completion is not only dependent on the resolution of the issues described earlier but on the extraordinary: the site for the building is currently occupied by the popular Museum of London! I learn from this that the certainties of life are not only "death and taxes" but also the totally unpredictable. So I am content to leave the completion of the Hall to those responsible and my future to God

Jim Hawkes

2019 REAL ADVENT CALENDAR:

The Real Advent Calendar is the UK's only Fairtrade calendar which comes with a free 24 page Christmas story-activity book and which supports charitable causes.

The 2019 calendar has a new design. Fairtrade chocolate and a line of the Christmas story behind each of the 25 windows. The free book enables parents and children to experience the Christmas story for 24 days and be challenged to do some good in the season of Advent.

Why we need a Real Advent Calendar

The Real Advent Calendar was created in 2013 following surveys which showed that 36% of 5-7 year olds did not know whose birthday is celebrated at Christmas, and 51% of adults said that the birth of Jesus was irrelevant to their Christmas. The calendar is a great way to reverse this tipping point and share the Christmas story.

Tastes good and does good

Money raised from the sale of this year's calendar will help Fairtrade farmers receive a fair price for their goods.

The Real Advent Calendar costs £3.99. There will be a sign-up form at the back of church if you wish to order through St James. The closing date for these orders will be Sunday 27th October.



Tina Lightfoot

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE VERGER:

You will appreciate that this piece will outline some events that happen over a few days but they are all relevant to a 'day's work'.

The phone rings at 10 minutes to midnight & Maria Norbury is saying that the alarm is ringing in the church – would John please come & turn it off. So, yes I get to St James, establish which zone the alarm is ringing in, deal with it & come home & go back to sleep. The next morning I phone the alarm people to report the fault & arrange for them to visit. I try to arrange such visits to take place on a Thursday morning along with the visit for the maintenance of the



clock in the tower, the annual visit to tune the organ, the annual visit of the fire prevention people to check the fire extinguishers, reading the electricity meter, plus several visits by the alarm company depending on how many times I'm called out!

Thursday is cleaning day in St James & I used to be on my own doing this which was quite difficult. Then Valmai formed the Christleton Belles who were a group of volunteers who came in each Thursday morning to clean the church & thanks to them my life became so much easier. Unfortunately they disbanded for various reasons all except Marie who carried on coming on her own & we managed between us. Some time ago Bettie started a cleaning rota and now she produces a monthly rota of volunteer's names who do a wonderful job each Thursday morning and I thank them all. Bettie often calls in on a Thursday morning to meet up with Paul & her coffee/tea and chocolate brownies are most welcome! I usually change the altar cloth, order candles, communion wine or any other supplies during the morning.

Janet usually calls in on a Thursday morning also to copy the weekly notice sheets & I'm then able to put them up in the 3 notices boards in the churchyard and porch, along with any other notices that I'm given maybe from the fundraising group/cathedral notices etc etc.

Friday is bins day and having put the bins out on Thursday for collection on Friday I go & make sure that they're put away. I usually try to do this on a Friday afternoon to coincide with locking the church up for the night. There is a rota of key holders who open & close St James each day of the week.

I open and close church on a Saturday morning which invariably turns out to be a busy morning because there always seem to be people around asking questions about – "where is the grave of", "can you put this notice up please" and before I know it, the morning has gone & I'm on my way home for lunch. The payback team are in the churchyard on a Saturday & it's nice to chat to them & Val their supervisor as well as our own churchyard working team who do a wonderful job in keeping the churchyard so tidy.

Part of the Vergers duties are to assist and help the incumbent in his various duties within the church and I've endeavoured to do this to the best of my ability for both Malcolm for several years, and now of course for Stefan for the last 12 months and these are particularly noticeable on a Sunday which is probably the busiest day of the week for the Verger & on the Saturday evening when I lock church up I prepare things as much as I can

for the 9 o'clock Communion service the next day. On Sunday I set my alarm clock for 6.30 am to give myself time to get to church by 7.45 am. I complete getting things ready for the communion service, put the hymn numbers up, put candles out & check there's enough oil in them all, a copy of the weekly notices on the Rector's stall, and when everything is done await the arrival of the sidespeople on duty for the 9 o'clock service who get the hymn books & service sheets ready. I enjoy greeting the congregation as they arrive & often help people to their seat. When it's time for the service to start I lead the procession down the aisle carrying the cross & take a place in the choir stalls. If it's a Holy Communion service, at the relevant point I will join Stefan at the altar to assist while he prepares the bread and the wine. Sometimes I'm on chalice duty. At the end of the service I lead the procession out down the aisle again carrying the cross. As the congregation leave I then start to prepare for the next service at 10.45 am, check if anyone has left belongings in the pews, collect any stray service booklets & once the collection money has been counted, make sure it goes in the safe. Sometimes the carpets have to be hoovered in between services. The same procedure takes place at 11.45 as at the 9 o'clock and at the end when everyone is leaving, again I check the pews for anything that shouldn't be there. If there's a Baptism taking place at 12.30 I prepare the font with Holy water, check that the families are OK, hand out Baptism service sheets & again, tidy up when they leave having emptied the font.

Twice a month I go to the 4pm service following the new service pattern and generally make myself useful helping the members of the congregation who need assistance. When everything is tidied up and cleared away I lock up & get home usually shattered!

Wednesday is the mid-week Holy Communion service held in the Lady Chapel at 10.45 am. I arrive about 9.30 to set things out & probably vacuum the carpets before anyone arrives. Olive and Janet give me a cup of tea while they are preparing refreshments before the service commences, and after the service they always save me a cup of tea which is most welcome (they know what a 'tea pot' I am!) I clear the Lady Chapel & make sure it's left clean and tidy.

Funerals & burial of ashes can crop up at any time. The day before a funeral I go to church the previous evening about 10.30 pm & put the bollards out in the front of church to prevent anyone parking there the next morning as this space is required for the hearse & family funeral cars. I get to the church approx 1½ hours before the start which gives me time to make sure everything is ready, ie candles out on altar, vacuumed carpets, St James

collection plate available, candles in front of altar for coffin and usually people start arriving approx 45 minutes before the funeral starts. The undertaker's staff should arrive in good time to hand out service booklets but often they don't, and it falls to me to do this. I have to collect the cheque and required paper work from the undertakers. I usually toll the bell 6 times as the coffin is being brought from the Lichgate. I've liaised in advance with the organist if any CD's are to be played during the service & put these on at the appropriate time. At the end of the service I enter details in the register, count any money left on the plate & put it in the safe/check for lost property etc etc & lock up if the service is late in the afternoon.

Burial of ashes are easier in that they don't take so long, but I have to prepare the cremation area before the day of the burial whether it's to be in an existing grave or a new cremation plot. Sometimes they can be really difficult especially if I come across a tree root which has to be dug out to make space for an ashes casket. The service is usually quite short, about 15 minutes, & I wait until all the family attending have departed before I close the grave & put the stone back in place.

Weddings, although a joyous occasion usually can also be difficult. I get out the kneelers, candles etc for the ceremony and await the arrival of the wedding party. The ushers usually arrive early, but not always, & when they do they don't always know what to do, so I have to guide them in their duties! The bride can very often be late arriving which is a bit worrying for everyone but I haven't had the situation of the bride not turning up at all, thank goodness. The confetti is always a problem & although they are told they should not throw it until they get to the Lichgate, it always blows everywhere but thank goodness it's usually biodegradable.

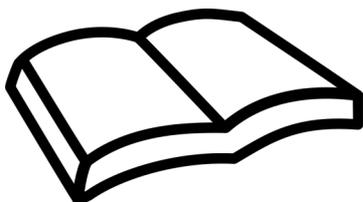
Christmas time is extremely busy for everyone connected with St James & my preparations for the festive season usually start in September when we decide on the height & position of the tree that we'll need to order. Nearer the time I'll check that all the bulbs on the tree lights are working & the lanterns used outside are dusted off from their annual storage & ready for use and then arrange a suitable date for delivery of the tree and decoration along with the church decorations. I'll also arrange for the star to be erected on the Tower in the run up to Christmas.

I've been Verger at St James for 8 years and thoroughly enjoy all aspects of my duties – and do my very best to serve the church and the community to the best of my ability.

John Milton - Verger

FROM THE REGISTERS:

With thanks to
Ann White who is
gathering this
information:



Weddings:

7 September 2019: Thomas George Maskrey
& Katherine Bartlett Pitt

Baptisms:

15 September 2019: Isabelle MacLeod

Funerals:

27 August 2019: Angela Whittaker

29 August 2019: Joyce Hughes

4 September 2019: Lillie Churchill

19 September 2019: Robert Willetts

Note: All these were at St James' Church unless
otherwise indicated.

Christleton Methodist Church

You are warmly welcome
to join us for:

Tea, Coffee and Cake

On the first Sunday each month
October to May
2.30pm—4.30pm

There is no charge but donations to
Christian Aid would be most
welcome.



Luncheon Club

The next lunch is at
12noon (for 12.30) in the Parish Hall on
Monday 21st October 2019

No charge but donations welcome.

A tasty hot 2 course meal plus tea/coffee. All are
welcome. It is helpful for catering if you book a
place, if you haven't already, by calling:
Liz: 409414; Janet: 325529; or Christine: 335562

Future dates: 18th Nov; 16th Dec.

CHRISTLETON METHODISTS

INVITE YOU FOR

**COFFEE &
HOME-MADE BISCUITS
ON**

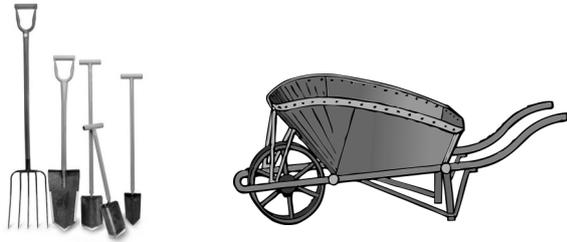
SATURDAY 2ND NOV., 10 AM – 12 NOON

**CHARITY CHRISTMAS CARDS,
CAKE STALL, WHITE ELEPHANT,**

RAFFLE

PROCEEDS TO WORLD MISSION FUND

ALL WELCOME



Churchyard Maintenance

Next:

Saturday 12th October
also: 9th Nov; 7th Dec

Once a month at 10.30am we hold a working party to help maintain our church yard. 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



CHRISTLETON PARISH HALL

Available for :

Meetings, Parties, Functions, etc.
The Hall has wheelchair access and specially adapted facilities.

Although Janet Milton has ceased being the Parish Administrator, enquiries about the hall and bookings should still go to Janet until advised otherwise:

Tel: 01244 325529

Email: christletonhall@gmail.com



Messy Church

Next Messy Church is:
20th October
at 4pm in the Parish Hall.

HARVEST SUPPER ???

Q: What's happening?

A: Nothing! Let's explain.....



When the August/Sept magazine was prepared back in July we believed we might run a Harvest Supper on 12th October with food and entertainment. It was therefore provisionally advertised, but regrettably the resources were not there to do it. Therefore it won't happen this year. Sorry for dashed expectations! *(Editor)*

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St James' Church Calendar

October and November 2019

Every **Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday** and **Friday**: 9am: Morning Prayer

OCTOBER:

Tuesday 1st: 7.30pm: Pilgrim Study Group in church. (3rd of 6)
 Wednesday 2nd: 10.45am: United Holy Communion (Churches Together). Refreshments.

Sunday 6th: from 8am: Breakfast in the Parish Hall.
(Trinity 16) 9.00am: Holy Communion. Refreshments after in Parish Hall.
 10.45am: Morning Worship. Refreshments.
 4.00pm: Annual Allotment Service on Mike & Tina's allotment.
 All welcome to this short service celebrating harvest. Refreshments.
 Bring a mug for soup, a chair to sit if you wish and please wear suitable shoes.

Monday 7th: 10.30am: Fundraising Bridge Drive at Deva Bridge Club. Ticket only.
 Tuesday 8th: 7.30pm: Pilgrim Study Group in church. (4th of 6)
 Wednesday 9th: 10.45am: Holy Communion (BCP). Refreshments.
 Thursday 10th: 4.00pm: Church Band rehearsal with Hannah
 5.00pm: Church Choir rehearsal with Hannah
 Saturday 12th: 10.30am: Churchyard Working Party.

Sunday 13th: HARVEST FESTIVAL
(Trinity 17) No 9am service today. You are invited to the 10.45 combined Harvest service.
 10.45am: Family Harvest Eucharist (Communion).
 4.00pm: Evening Prayer (BCP).
 4.45pm: Prayer Vigil for Healing & Reconciliation during the lead up to Brexit (3rd of 4)

Tuesday 15th: 7.30pm: Pilgrim Study Group in church. (5th of 6)
 Wednesday 16th: 10.45am: Holy Communion (BCP). Refreshments.

Sunday 20th: 9.00am: Holy Communion. Refreshments and Produce Sale.
(Trinity 18) 10.45am: Morning Worship with Communion. Refreshments.
 4.00pm: Messy Church in the Parish Hall.

Monday 21st: 12.30pm: Luncheon Club in the Parish Hall.
 Tuesday 22nd: 7.30pm: Pilgrim Study Group in church. (last of 6)
 Wednesday 23rd: 10.45am: Holy Communion (BCP). Refreshments.
 Thursday 24th: 4.00pm: Church Band rehearsal with Hannah
 5.00pm: Church Choir rehearsal with Hannah

Sunday 27th: CLOCKS GO BACK 1 HOUR TO GMT
(Trinity 19) 9.00am: Holy Communion. Refreshments after in Parish Hall.
(Bible Sunday) 10.45am: Morning Worship. Refreshments.
 4.00pm: Contemplative Communion Service.
 4.45pm: Prayer Vigil for Healing & Reconciliation during the lead up to Brexit (last of 4)

Tuesday 29th: 7.30pm: Weekly Home Discussion Group. Restarts. Venue to be advised.
 Wednesday 30th: 10.45am: Holy Communion (BCP). Refreshments.
 Thursday 31st: B**X*T Will we, or won't we? A cause for continuing prayer for the common good.

NOVEMBER:

Every **Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday** and **Friday**: 9am: Morning Prayer

Sunday 3rd: from 8am: Breakfast in the Parish Hall.
(*All Saints*) 9.00am: Holy Communion. Refreshments after in Parish Hall.
10.45am: Morning Worship. Refreshments.
4.00pm: Young Person's Service.
6.30pm: All Souls Service.

Tuesday 5th: 7.30pm: Weekly Home Discussion Group. Venue to be advised.
Wednesday 6th: 10.45am: United Holy Communion (Churches Together). Refreshments.
Saturday 9th: 10.30am: Churchyard Working Party.

Sunday 10th: REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY
(*Remembrance*) 9.00am: Holy Communion. Refreshments after in Parish Hall.
10.50am: Remembrance Service. Starts just before 11am at the memorial (weather permitting), and then moves inside the church. Refreshments afterwards.
4.00pm: Evening Prayer (BCP).

Tuesday 12th: 7.30pm: Weekly Home Discussion Group. Venue to be advised.
Wednesday 13th: 10.45am: Holy Communion (BCP). Refreshments.
Thursday 14th: 4.00pm: Church Band rehearsal with Hannah
5.00pm: Church Choir rehearsal with Hannah

Sunday 17th: 9.00am: Holy Communion. Refreshments and Produce Sale.
(*2 before Advent*) 10.45am: Morning Worship with Communion. Refreshments.
4.00pm: Messy Church in the Parish Hall.

Monday 18th: 12.30pm: Luncheon Club in the Parish Hall.
Tuesday 19th: 7.30pm: Weekly Home Discussion Group. Venue to be advised.
Wednesday 20th: 10.45am: Holy Communion (BCP). Refreshments.

Sunday 24th: 9.00am: Holy Communion. Refreshments after in Parish Hall.
(*Christ the King*) 10.45am: Morning Worship. Refreshments.
4.00pm: Contemplative Communion Service.

Tuesday 26th: 7.30pm: Weekly Home Discussion Group. Venue to be advised.
Wednesday 27th: 10.45am: Holy Communion (BCP). Refreshments.
7.30pm: PCC Meeting.
Thursday 28th: 4.00pm: Church Band rehearsal with Hannah
5.00pm: Church Choir rehearsal with Hannah

Bell ringing practice is every Tuesday evening. (Contact: Nikki Dromgoole)
Church cleaning is every Thursday morning. (Contact: John Milton)

BCP means: A service following THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER. (Traditional older style language.)
Other services generally follow COMMON WORSHIP with modern language, except where indicated otherwise.

All Calendar entries subject to correction or change. Check also the "What's On" calendar on the church website as this may show more up-to-date information.

THE REGULAR PATTERN OF SERVICES IS SHOWN BELOW:

Please note that actual services may differ from this pattern because of special events and festivals, so please check calendars and notices, including the on-line calendar on the website.

	1 st Sunday	2 nd Sunday	3 rd Sunday	4 th Sunday	5 th Sunday
9:00am	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Holy Communion
10:45am	Morning Worship	Morning Worship	Morning Worship with Holy Communion	Morning Worship	Morning Worship
4:00pm	Young Person's Service	Evening Prayer (BCP)	Messy Church in Parish Hall. (Term time only)	Contemplative Communion	Taizé Service

SERVICE STYLES: *9am* is in a traditional style with sermon, organ, and often a small robed choir. *10.45am* is in a more contemporary style with a sermon/talk, using a wider range of traditional and modern hymns and songs, with the words on a display screen, and music mostly played on a piano keyboard or by a small music group.

PEOPLE WE REMEMBER.

Nigel Bromage

Nigel was a prominent member of the local community and at St James' Christleton for many years when he moved here in retirement. He had a wonderful sense of fun, a bubbly personality and you were always greeted with a warm smile. Together with Sarah we were members of the Dixon's Alms Houses Committee, and they were very active members of the group, caring for the residents on a sometimes daily basis. When Nigel died on the 1st July it marked the end of a long and well lived life, which was celebrated by Sarah, his four children, their families and friends at St James' in a service led by the Rev'd Elizabeth Inall.

Nigel was born in London in 1932, one of twins, who in 1939 at the outbreak of war were evacuated to a farm in Golden Grove, near Llandeilo in west Wales, a very rural location compared to their home in London. Nigel loved every minute of his life there, volunteering for everything, unlike his brother who was having a very unhappy time. Their experiences are quoted in a book about evacuees, "When the children came home" .

The family later moved to Telford, and it was here that Nigel won a scholarship to Adams Grammar School, and from there won a place at University College London to study French. After some time in learning to teach French, he realised it wasn't a career that suited him, so he left and joined the Bank of England as a clerk in 1958. He was really good at his role, but soon discovered that his "teaching skills" were to prove very

useful, and he was instrumental in setting up the Bank's Training Division. In retirement he was involved with Teacher Training at Liverpool Hope University, a job he relished, and was highly valued and appreciated by staff and students. So in effect he did become a teacher and later contributed to the education of many local High School students, teaching them to read, and grow to love books. This was a skill he had honed with his own children and grandchildren, who adored being read to, and told funny made up stories by him. He also became a guide at Chester Cathedral, specialising in taking parties of French Schoolchildren around. Nigel loved his visits to France using his excellent knowledge of the language, and was very happy sitting enjoying a drink whether in Paris, Normandy or the Dordogne.

Nigel's career at the Bank of England had also been a great success, and by the time he had retired aged 60, he was the Banks Agent for the North West & Northern Ireland. During a long career he had also worked in Basle, The Gambia, Tokyo and Germany. He worked with Business in the Community for 30yrs, and was closely linked with the Prince of Wales Trust. In Chester he was involved with local commerce and industry, as well as the arts and education, and was a highly regarded Treasurer of the Chester RSPB Group. He regularly worshipped at St James', and latterly enjoyed the intimacy and friendship of the Wednesday morning service. His faith was very important to him.

Nigel loved sport, whether playing rugby for Streatham & Croydon, umpiring at cricket, or as Chairman of the Bank of England Sports Club. When I first met him, we

discovered that we both had a passion for cricket, and our conversations were almost always about the state of a test match, or his beloved Surrey. Nigel knew every score, or detail, and just loved talking about it. He also attended matches when he could, usually at the Oval in London, watching Surrey or England play, and was delighted when he could persuade his family and friends to join him. It seemed very appropriate that in his last days, he listened to Test Match Special in his hospital bed, and how he would have revelled when the England team won the World Cup just a few days later.

Nigel was a delightful man, full of wisdom, knowledge and wit, who had lived life to the full. He achieved so much in his career, and was a wonderful companion to his friends. He was a loving husband to Sarah, and a super dad, granddad and great granddad to his family. He was a truly delightful gentleman.

David Cummings

CHRISTMAS IS COMING:

Please note in your diaries:

Sun 1st Dec:	4pm - Christingle Service.
Sun 8th Dec:	10.45am - Toy Service.
Sun 22nd Dec:	6.30pm - Nine Lessons & Carols.
Christmas Eve:	4pm: Crib Service 7pm: Carols Around the Tree 11.30pm: Holy Communion
Christmas Day:	9am: Holy Communion. 10.45: Morning Worship

DISCUSSION / STUDY GROUPS:

Our Mission at St James which is driving some of the current changes includes development of our worship, our buildings and of our people. People development itself takes several forms: developing confidence, skills, knowledge, faith and spirituality to name but a few.

Our various study groups are a way to develop some of these, and to have some fun, fellowship, coffee and maybe chocolate biscuits along the way.

The Weekly Home Discussion Group meets weekly in someone's home on a Tuesday at 7.30pm. It sets its own topics and runs itself in a gentle way where there are often no definitive answers, just various thoughts.

The home group stops during the summer and also for Christmas and Easter. It also stops if another study group runs—as is the case at present.

The CofE Pilgrim course on The Bible is now running until 22nd October, so the Weekly Home Group will restart on 29th Oct. The venue will be advertised.

It is anticipated that there may be a 4 week study series in Advent on prayer, and if that falls on a Tuesday then the Weekly Home Group will give way to that as well.

Please join these groups. You could be 'developed' in the nicest possible way!

Brian Inall



CHRISTLETON WI

Meets on the 2nd Wednesday each month.
7.15pm in the Parish Hall
New members welcome.
Details from Elizabeth Inall (Tel: 336500)

Next meetings:

9th Oct: "Chester: A trading city"
(Ed Abrams)
13th Nov: AGM & "Living in Styal"
(Eddie Tarry)
11th Dec: Christmas Party & Meal (Eaton GC)

HARVEST **FESTIVAL**



**A combined family
Communion service
to celebrate Harvest.
10.45am on Sunday 13th October.**

**Please note that there will be
no service at 9am.**

THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTLETON VILLAGE SHOW. (Part 2)

Agricultural Shows

The 1913 show was a show of Cheese, Brood Mares, Foals, Horse Leaping (Show Jumping) and Turnouts (Horse drawn carriages), and again seems to have been extremely well organised. This show is described as an annual show for the whole district, open to residents of Christleton, Great Barrow, Guilden Sutton, Trafford, Picton, Upton, Wervin, Croughton, Plemstall, Tarvin, Stapleford, Hargrave, Huxley, Handley, Waverton, Saighton, Tattenhall, Huntington, Aldford, Newton and Hoole.

The President was J Wahab Macfie Esq JP. of Rowton Hall. Secretary Mr J H Salmon of Rowton and the vet Mr Jas Storrar MSCVS. The committee included Mr Beech, Sam Earlam (Headteacher), Mr Heywood, Mr Lunt, Col Townsend Logan, Mr Witter and many other well known village personalities. The new Rector, Rev. GMV Hickey gave permission for it to be held on the Rectory Field on Wednesday 20th August 1913.

In the minutes for the 1914 Show which was to be held before the outbreak of WWI, Mr Edward Porritt became President, Mr Charles Cullimore Vice President, Capt. Currie Chairman of the Committee with Mr Salmon as Secretary and Treasurer. Mr Porritt gave four additional prizes for the Best Kept Cottage Gardens and Allotments worth 1st £1, 2nd 15/- 3rd 12/6d and 4th 10/-

This Agricultural Show was clearly the highlight of the village summer, and over the years held on other sites in the village including the fields on Birch Heath Lane, Hunter's field between Littleton Old Hall and Christleton Pit. A glass slide from 1911 shows a huge marquee on the field, and this was used to display flowers, produce and cheese. These activities seem to have ceased between the two world wars and it was 1949 before the Agricultural Shows were revived.

Christleton Show 1949

This was held at Littleton Old Hall on Bank Holiday Monday. Thanks to the very kind donation of a programme for the day, we have details of this superb show. The programme indicates that it must have been a very popular event for people from a wide area, and the day was a very long and enjoyable one. There was also the excitement and opportunity of taking to the skies in an aeroplane with flights being offered through the day by Wright Aviation from Hooton.

I was intrigued to see a class for Cottagers who lived within a five mile radius of the Show Ground, with exhibits to be grown by the exhibitor on the premises. There were cash prizes for every event, and a wide programme of entertainment during the day. In fact it was a combination of the present Village Show and Village Fete.



10.30am	Showground Opens.
Judging of	Horticultural Classes; vegetables/fruit/flowers/preserves/honey. Farmers Classes Vegetables; Cottage Garden only for local cottagers Flowers/wild flowers & grasses for school children Table decoration- Prettiest arrangement of flowers for the dinner table.
11.00am	Juvenile Hack Classes
12.00noon	Open Juvenile Jumping (12.2h)
12.30pm	Parade of Morris Dancing Troupes from Christleton Village to Showground with the Chester Blue Coat Band.
1.45pm	The Billy Macs- "Aristocrats of Balance" Britain's youngest Equilibrists Lezelli- High Staircase Globe act
3.00pm	Open Juvenile Jumping (14.2h)
3.15pm	Parade of Winning Troupes of Morris Dancers
4.15pm	Ventriloquist & Novelty Competitions
4.30pm	Sheepdog Demonstration
4.30pm	Open Musical Chairs (Horse Event)
5.00pm	Lezelli- Ground Act on the globe, and competition open to the public.
5.30pm	All the fun of the Circus. (Ring 2)
6.00pm	Tractor obstacle course
6.00pm	Open Jumping Competition
6.30pm	Grade C Jumping Competition
7.00pm	Pitching the Sheaf
7.30pm	Tug of War between teams entered by Local Licensed Houses.
7.45pm	Committee Bicycle Obstacle Race
8.45pm	

Show Officials.

President P.G.Hunter Chairman GKL Richardson
Vice Chairman D A Dutton. Treasurer R Gregory.
Assistant Treasurer. R A Dandy Auditor J Formstone
Advertising; C J Mills

Veterinary Officer G Beresford Edwards
Medical Officers. Dr. P A Campbell, C Pownall
Commentator. Mr G N Milton

This show programme offered Aeroplane flights during the whole of show day, "an opportunity to view the surrounding countryside and City of Chester from the air". Excitement with safety is the motto of JOYFLIGHTS provided by Wright Aviation Ltd from Hooton. "Comfortable flights at reasonable charges." There were also control line model flying displays and competitions by Chester Model Flying Club.

The Agricultural type shows folded in the 1950's with the demise of the farming industry in the parish, and in the locality generally. However the Village Fete continued and has been held on various sites; The Old Hall whilst the home of Rector, Rev. A.A. Guest Williams; Faulkners Lodge the home of Mr & Mrs Rae Cullimore; Christleton High School; Christleton Hall, and at Christleton Primary School in Quarry Lane.

David Cummings

NATURE NOTES OCTOBER 2019:

Christleton Legion Meadow.

Although the Legion Meadow was created 10 or so years ago, it is only now that we are beginning to see the real development of the flora and fauna. This summer with its extremes of very hot sun and heavy rain has seen a great increase in the flowering plants and the number of insects, bees, butterflies and dragonflies has been dramatic, culminating on one afternoon in mid August when 60+ painted lady butterflies were on the wing together with eight other butterfly species being seen. A week or so later there were at least 20 southern hawker dragonflies flying over the same site, an incredible sight to see. We have also been pleased with the development of the flowering species, the highlight again being the appearance of at least a dozen common spotted orchids. These delightful flowers are the same species that are found on meadows along Plough Lane and at Hockenhull Platts wet meadow, although the height of the grasses and other vegetation growing there is preventing the orchids developing at all.

Back on the Legion meadow the rather tall and sometimes ungainly common knapweed with its purple flowers has been the plant to attract most butterfly species, whilst the blue meadow cranesbill has also been

a popular food source. The red clover is also favoured by insects and this can be found all over the site, together with yellow rattle which is the most recently introduced flower. Yellow rattle is an attractive, semi parasitic, grassland annual which has the ability to suppress or weaken grasses, and by doing so produces a better display of wildflowers. These plants grow best in a managed environment, and are now well established on the Legion Meadow with its new managed regime. Using our new system the meadow is cut and the vegetation is left lying on the ground in August, long enough for the seeds to fall onto the ground. It is then taken away, and a further cut in March allows the flowering plants to emerge before the grasses get too well established. In addition to the plants mentioned above the following have been recorded on the meadow this year; Wild carrot, red dead nettle, tufted vetch, buttercup, sorrel, meadow sweet, scabious, dog rose, ragwort, ox-eye daisy, lady's smock or cuckoo flower and birds foot trefoil.

The butterflies seen in 2019 include; brimstone, orange tip, peacock, small tortoiseshell, large white, small white, meadow brown, comma, speckled wood, red admiral, small copper, ringlet, gatekeeper, holly blue, common blue.

David Cummings

Painted
Lady



Common
Blue

LITTLETON PARISH COUNCIL - A51 Tarvin to Cheshire improvement scheme:

The project seeks to deliver a series of major junction and roundabout improvements that will see:

- Additional lanes at the Stamford Bridge traffic lights, the widening of the existing bridge over the River Gowy and capacity improvements at Tarvin roundabout.
- Changes to the road layout, widening, lane markings, restricting traffic movements at Hare Lane/Littleton Lane and better signage. Traffic travelling north on Littleton Lane will only be able to turn left at the A51 Tarvin Road junction.
- New crossing points and improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users are also planned near Stamford Bridge.

These changes are intended to increase both the amount and the average speed of traffic travelling along the A51, including through Littleton. CW&C, along with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (C&W LEP) have identified the A51 as a key strategic route for freight traffic between the M6 and the A55.

How can Littleton Parish Council (LPC) help the residents? By capturing their concerns and thoughts so that we can build a common view about what's important to the community with respect to traffic. LPC plans to distil those views and concerns into a 'Traffic Plan'. We believe a documented strategy will enable us all to have constructive interactions with CW&C.

The Littleton Parish Council strategy is to create an environment that enhances the well-being of the community where people are the priority and which:

- **reduces both noise and air pollution;**
- **maintains the safety of individuals as they move around the community;**
- **re-builds social cohesion.**

Key Objectives:

- **ensuring that both noise & pollution levels in the village are below the WHO standards;**
- **ensuring that all roads in the village are safe to cross;**
- **providing traffic measures to manage traffic for the benefit of residents, pedestrians and cyclists;**
- **introducing appropriate speed limits;**
- **recognising the need to work in collaboration with all stakeholders and experts to achieve our objectives.**

Dave Taylor, Clerk to Littleton Parish Council

CHRISTLETON PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

TRAFFIC & ROAD SAFETY

The Traffic Working Group (TWG) has made progress with CWAC Highways and are now awaiting costs for a number of proposals being considered.

- Traffic monitoring is ongoing throughout September around the busiest areas of the village.
- CWAC Highways will come to the village to test two different options for displacing vehicles through the S bends to determine the best one to reduce congestion and safety concerns. Once confirmed, these dates will be shared with the village and local businesses.
- The TWG are continuing to look at other ways of improving traffic and road safety issues in other areas around Christleton
- A full report should be available for November when the Parish Council will undertake a 6-month review of the work of the Traffic Working Group.

KING GEORGE'S FIELDS TRUST

The Trustees are looking for the First Field to be put to better use and to possibly generate some additional income for the Trust. A number of organisations have been contacted to try to generate interest in renting the field on a one-off basis.

Another suggestion is to look into turning the field into a wildflower meadow – preliminary enquiries are being made as to the feasibility and cost of such a proposal.

FUTURE PROJECTS

The Parish Council is making enquiries from CWAC to arrange for an Officer to come to talk to the Council and wider community on the possibility of creating a Neighbourhood Plan for Christleton. Further information will be available in due course.

COMMUNITY PRIDE COMPETITION

Sadly 2019 will be the last year that this competition will be held. Their main sponsor ESSAR Oil has pulled of any future sponsorship arrangements, making the running of the competition not financially viable. The Parish Council will be represented at the final awards ceremony in November 2019.

HIGHWAYS FAULT REPORTING

To report any highways faults including potholes, missing signs, broken street lights, then please contact the following:

cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/contact-us/report-it/potholes-and-road-faults.aspx

Sue Thwaite, Clerk to Christleton Parish Council

CHURCHES TOGETHER In CHRISTLETON:

For the second year running, our Away Day at the beautiful setting of Brown Knowl Methodist church in July was a very hot one indeed. Thus almost the whole committee was able once more to sit outside under the trees, initially to chat and plan informally and then to take our delicious team-effort lunch out there too. This is always a much more informal meeting than usual and one which we all enjoy.

Revd. Christine Dutton has now left Churches Together in Christleton (although she is still working in this area so you may well still see her). So, in August, as a very small thank you to her for all she has done, for her enthusiasm, encouragement and support over the last few years, we duly treated her to lunch in the country, and presented her with a gift. A happy occasion despite goodbyes! She will be much missed.

Now we look forward to working with Revd. Jo Brown, the new minister at the Methodist church.

In October Fr. Paul is to give several evening lectures at St Werburgh's on The Bible. If these talks are as interesting and stimulating as his last, two years ago, we are in for a treat! More news in detail later.

The Village Summer Teas were still in full swing until the end of September, and appeared to be as popular and successful as ever. The proceeds this year will go to our local hospice. We do thank everyone involved for all their efforts.



*Jan Bowden
St James' representative on CTC.*

FUNDRAISING EVENTS COMING UP

Mon 7th Oct: Deva Bridge Drive Event.
Sat 7th Dec: Wreath making and Christmas Produce Sale.
2020:
Sat 25th April: Supper/Concert with Philip Chidell (violin).
Sat 20th June: Jig Saw Jazz evening.



EUROPEAN
JAMBOREE 2020
POLSKA



Afternoon Tea and Cake

Sunday 13th October

2.30pm – 4.30pm

The Schoolroom

Christleton Methodist Church

Daniel Brown is selling tea and cake to raise funds for the Chester Scout Contingent going to the European Scout and Guide Jamboree in Poland next summer.

The European Jamboree offers a unique opportunity for young people from across Europe to unite in celebration of the values of Scouting & Guiding. The European Jamboree in 2020 will gather more than 15,000 Scouts and Guides ready to take social action and ACT!

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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@ringobellschester.co.uk
Address: Village Rd, Christleton, CH3 7AS

ROCK HOUSE DENTAL PRACTICE

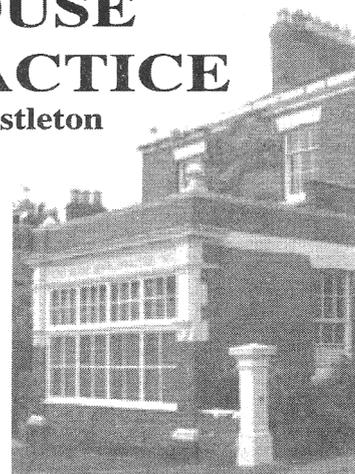
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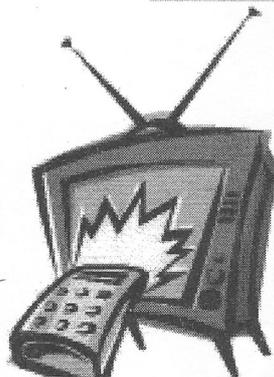
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Jenny Adam 01244 330090

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE PEW!

I suppose it is a piece of church furniture we take for granted. An invitation to sit and hear the word of God at a Sunday service, a marriage, a baptism or a funeral, or just come in and quietly sit.

Let's take St James. Have the pews always been there? I suspect, and David Cummings will probably correct me, that they probably date from the 1870s when the church was remodelled. In his guide to St James' Church, David suggests the Churchwarden's pews date from the 1880s. So, were pews in the church in earlier periods?

So what is the history of the church pew?

Pew is derived from the Middle English word *pewe*, which comes from the Old French *puye* or *puie*, meaning balcony or elevation. This in turn comes from the Latin *podia*, the plural of *podium*.

A pew is a long bench or enclosed box for seating members of a congregation in a church. Apparently there is no evidence of churches having seating of any kind for at least the first 1200 years or so of Christianity!

The first backless stone benches began to appear in English churches in the thirteenth century. These were originally placed against the walls of the nave. Gradually they were brought into the centre of the church, first as moveable furniture and later fixed to the floor. Wooden benches replaced the stone ones from the fourteenth century. Churches were not commonly furnished with permanent pews before the Reformation.

The rise of the sermon, especially in Protestantism, made the pew a standard item of church furniture. Private pews became common place in the fifteenth century, and provided the church with extra income. Parishioners now stated in their wills that they wished to be buried close to where they sat each Sunday. Gradually the open space in the centre of the church began to be filled with the pews and tombs of the wealthy.

When pews were privately owned, their owners sometimes enclosed them in lockable pew boxes, they held deeds to these boxes and passed them onto their children.

Parish harmony and hierarchy was also reflected in church seating. Frequently there were ferocious disputes as to who sat where. Certain areas of the Church were considered to be more desirable than others, they might offer a better view of the service or might make a certain family or person more visible to

their neighbours during services!

The nineteenth century experienced a boom in church building, rebuilding or restoration. Many newly built or restored churches set out to recreate what the Victorians thought the medieval church looked like. Box pews were demolished, and the new pews, usually in serried ranks served to seat the congregation according to the class system, wealthy at the front and the poor toward the back. More people could now be accommodated but this came about just as church attendance was in decline.

There are few churches today whose interior wasn't radically altered during the Victorian period. Pew letting continued in many churches well into the twentieth century, in some instances into the 1950s and 1960s.

And finally! Remember, for the vast majority of the past 20 centuries we didn't have pews.

Mike Lightfoot.

References:

Antique Church Furniture. Pew History.
John Charles Bennett. The English Anglican Practice of Pew Renting 1800-1960. TJ Burdick. 6 Things you probably didn't know about Church pews.
David Cummings. A guide to St James' Church.



CLEANER REQUIRED:

We are seeking to appoint a cleaner for the Parish Hall for four hours per week. For further information, terms and conditions, please contact one of the churchwardens by email at:

thechurchwardens@gmail.com

or by letter: c/o The Rectory, Birch Heath Lane, Christleton, CH3 7AP.