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Parish Church of St. James, Christleton

Parish Magazine

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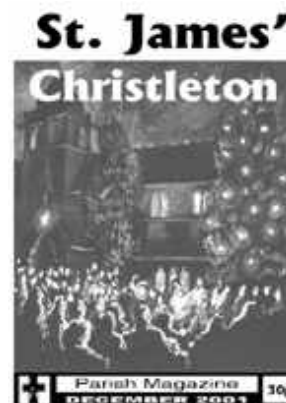
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FAMILY 'TOY' SERVICE AT ST JAMES'

Sunday December 9th

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

ST JAMES' VISITING GROUP

Our next meeting will be on 23rd January 2002 at 2.30 pm at Whitehaven. We would like to invite anyone who has a little time free to come along to this our first meeting in the New Year. We badly need more visitors and would explain how we undertake our support.

Gill Hibbert

MISS SAIGON –MANCHESTER PALACE THEATRE

I now have two spare tickets for the Thursday 7th February 2002 performance at 7.30pm. The tickets cost £28 each plus the cost of the coach from Christleton, which will depart at 5.30pm from the Village Green, and leave Manchester at approximately 10.35pm.

If you are interested in either/both tickets, please telephone me as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Pat Nilssen (336013)

CHRISTLETON CHRISTMAS CARDS

David Cummings has produced Christmas cards of his photograph of Christleton in the snow. They are for sale from the back of Church price £1.60 for 5 or £3.00 for 10. Profits to Christmas Fair Charities.

GREETINGS FROM ZIMBABWE, WHERE IT'S HOT!

Here is this month's bulletin. Please keep people praying, and also giving to Crosslinks, if you can. You'll see that I've been up to no good. Trust me to get involved.

The government has just quietly asked for US\$200 million of emergency aid to fend off the starvation that its own policies have caused. At this end it is all about votes. If the people are starving they are less likely to vote Mr Mugabe back in, despite all the threats, beatings, burnings, rapes etc. If they are starving and the government can show that only those who vote for Mr Mugabe will get food, then he will get more votes.

Anyway - happy reading.

Ben

WHEELCHAIR REQUIRED

For use in the Church. If anyone has one they do not require please contact either Liz Evans (335468) or the Rector.

Confirmation 2002

The Bishop of Birkenhead be taking a Confirmation Service at St James' on Thursday 16th May 2002. There will be a first 'get together' for junior candidates on Monday 17th December at 6.30 pm in the Lady Chapel. This will be a chance to meet each other and make arrangements for regular meetings in the new year. If anyone is interested but cannot manage this first meeting please contact the Rector.

Magazine Contributions

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the magazine this year. Here are the cut-off dates for 2002.

7th December for January issue
 11th January for February issue
 8th February for March issue
 8th March for April issue
 12th April for May issue
 10th May for June issue
 7th June for July issue
 12th July for August issue
 9th August for September issue
 13th September for October issue
 11th October for November issue
 8th November for December issue
 6th December for January 2002 issue.

We welcome contributions about 500 words long, accompanied, if possible and suitable, by good quality photographs (but not photographs or pictures from other publications). It is now possible to send contributions in on computer disk (saved in text) or emailed (please ask for details). The editorial team look forward to receiving your contributions during the next twelve months.

This Is The Eye

This is the eye
 that stared at the clouds,
 that started to form
 raindrops are born.

This is the eye
 that has seen the field,
 green as can be
 for us to see.

This is the eye
 that saw the flower,
 colourful petals
 hiding in the nettles.

This is the eye
 that gazed at the sunshine,
 shining bright

bad for your sight.

This is the eye
that stared at the clouds
that has seen the field
that saw the flower
that gazed at the sunshine
this is the eye
that will always be mine.

Lara Nilssen
Waverton Primary School

This poem was the winning entry for the Years 5 & 6 Group in the Chester & Ellesmere Port District School's Competition, which is run in conjunction with the Chester Literature Festival. The presentation of prizes was held at the Gateway Theatre and the renowned poet, Roger McGough, OBE, recited the winning poems at the beginning of his show during the recent Literature Festival. Richard Sayle, from Bishop Heber School, Malpas, congratulated all those who had contributed and took the opportunity to invite more local schools to participate in this competition next year.

W.I. News

The October meeting began as usual with the members singing Jerusalem. Apologies were voted and the minutes of the previous meeting read.

Mrs Siddall then gave a report of the half-yearly W.I. Group Committee meeting she had attended at Winsford where David Battie had given a talk on his career in antiques.

A new member, Mrs Bolton, was welcomed by the President.

Then a very informative talk was given by Betty Manford of the Trading Standards Office warning us about goods which were actually substandard and copies of well-known brands, and telling us of our rights as customers. It was a very interesting evening.

W Thompson

On Inspiration

As one gets older, one realises with gratitude that certain people inspired and shaped our lives. Enduring for me have been my two geography teachers, both of whom have now died.

Gwen taught me at secondary school and Robert was my tutor at university, and my affection and respect for both grew in the years that followed.

Both loved their pupils as they did their subject. Gwen was a Quaker and spent 21 years teaching at the Friends' School at Wigton in Cumbria. Her innate modesty belied the depth, quality and length of her teaching ministry. Even Gwen's teaching of geography focussed on that God in each person and in each situation. She had an honest discipline as reliable as her lovely smile.

Gwen's spoken ministry from the silence of the Quaker Meeting was mostly in those shuffly gatherings where reluctant pupils lined the benches. Yet Gwen won us over by her simply sincerity and her appetite for what was going on in other churches and faiths. Her ministry, like her life, had real perspective and inspiration. Gwen's former pupils may still be seeking the Truth (as in the school motto) but thanks to her we have a better understanding of what we are looking for.

Robert's influence was similar, yet, unlike Gwen, his connection with one particular denomination was less continuous. A real seeker to the last, at 89 he was asked on his final admission to a nursing home what faith he belonged to. "You know," he said after a long pause, "I've not quite made my mind up yet." His love of landscape and of God's wonderful world spread to students taught by him. Robert's quiet inspiration derived from great personal humility and kindness. Each time I left my tutorial, Robert bid me farewell with his cherished trademark, "Do well Carruthers, do well!"

I often think that God says that to each of us as we leave Sunday worship, "Go out into the world, listen, understand, be aware." Just as Gwen and Robert did.

John Carruthers

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Cathedral Link

The Bell House and Bellingers

Nick Fry, Visitors' Officer at the Cathedral, has been doing a little history digging. The erection of a free-standing Bell House or Tower at Chester was the first to be built by a cathedral since the 15th century. Studies showed that bellringing in the central tower of the Cathedral could not be continued as the tower had never been designed for that most English of traditions – change bellringing – and movements in the tower had caused all bellringing to stop in 1963 for safety reasons.

The architect, George Pace, was faced with a complex problem. "With 13 bells hung for change ringing and with the maximum movement in the structure and bell frame not to exceed $\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch, very careful investigation of many thousands of different stress combination has been essential." When the final design was approved, its critics were not impressed and comments ranged from "farm silo" to "moon rocket". The materials chosen – a base of red sandstone and sides protected with small rough Welsh slate cladding – were all materials already used in the important buildings of Chester. At present there are 12 bells known as a "Ring", but because of noise regulations in the city, these can only be rung infrequently throughout the year. The Cathedral has around 10 bellringers with an age range of 17 to 70. People from all walks of life join in this activity and a great camaraderie is formed among the membership. The present captain is Chris Roberts.

Margaret Croston

CATH (Chester Aid to the Homeless)

This year's Annual Sleep-Out takes place on Friday 7th December. This is the main fundraising event of the year. But remember – for a donation as small as £5 you can still support and sleep in, in your own warm bed.

After many years of struggle, the Harold Tomlins' Day Centre officially opened its door in September, and the Duke of Westminster cut the ribbon. It is currently open daily offering hot drinks, a midday meal, showers, clothes and tender loving care, along with counselling and health facilities. It had been estimated that perhaps 36 clients per day would attend. However, it is already proving a victim of its own success as on average 93 people per day are currently being accommodated and over 36 meals being provided.

Special thanks go to the CATH staff and to the many volunteers who are willing to give their time.

Chester Aid to the Homeless, Watergate House, 85 Watergate Street, Chester CH1 2LF. Tel: 01244 314834.

Margaret Croston

Bellringing – Volunteers Wanted

A ring of bells has rung in the tower since 1743 and has rung for many state and local occasions in addition to the Church services. We have always had a strong band to ring them. This is a notable achievement, but sadly one which we are in serious danger of losing. With two at university and unlikely to return to Christleton and Colin Harris on the transfer list to St Mary's, Monmouth, we have dropped to the smallest number of ringers we have ever had. Modern-day working practices add to our difficulties.

If regular ringing ceases, it will be difficult to maintain a band and once this happens, it will be only a short step away from having no band at all. Attempting to restore ringing from this situation would be virtually impossible and another long-standing Christleton activity and tradition will be lost.

Bellringing is a fascinating and sociable activity. You don't have to be Superman or woman to ring and we are very much part of the Church organisation. We even try to keep the clock at the correct time!

Please consider the future of bellringing at St James' very seriously and if you feel that you would like to join us then please contact me or my deputies (our telephone numbers are on the back page) or any of the ringers. You could, of course, come up the tower and watch the ringing on a Sunday or the Tuesday practice night before committing yourself. We would be delighted to see you.

Roy Fisher

DARBY AND JOAN CLUB

The December meeting will unfortunately be the last meeting for this club as they cannot get any help and the membership is down to less than 12. Apologies for any inconvenience this causes.

J Davies

WEDNESDAY GROUP FESTIVE LUNCH

The Christleton Wednesday Group Festive Lunch will be held on Wednesday 12th December from 12 noon – 2.00 pm in Christleton Parish Hall. Tickets are £6.50 and include a glass of wine. Tickets are available from Wednesday Group Members.

This is our last event this year in aid of Save the Family.

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Childhood

With shining face, Dad sang love and delight

Mam, in more sombre tone, told moral rhyme.

My Grandad spoke of pressure, length and time.

Om showed me looks and style to make things bright.

I listened, quiet, and tried to get things right.

You sought my heart, I called You for its Prime

To reign in it and wash it clean of grime.

Despite the war, the world seemed clear to sight.

For an old man, to trace the tortured lace
Is hard. To please is still in me ingrained.
But prayer and trust, my feeblest joints, are sprained;
The glass more dark. That serving be attained,
Keep me a child still, knowing by Your grace
As fully known, I see Your shining face.
Stan Wood
c/f 1 Corinthians 13:12-13



Photo of the Month

This month's photograph is the first we have of St James' Church, and dates from around 1870. It compliments the previous two months' illustrations, in that it shows the "Georgian 1737 building" and is in the same style and by the same photographer as that of "The Grange" in the November magazine. The photograph was given to me by Mrs Priddey who lived at Castle Cottage in Littleton, one of many photographs that she gave to our village collection before she died.

David Cummings

Nature Notes – Christleton Swans

This month has seen the splitting up of the swan families from the canal. The pair from Rowton have seen all their six cygnets fly. A wonderful sight with them all in the air together above the canal. The village pair and their two cygnets have been flying in and around the village for some weeks now, and my latest sightings were of the cob roosting on the nest site at the Pit, with the pen and one cygnet near The Trooper bridge. The second cygnet seems to have flown away, possibly to the Menai Straits or the River Mersey at Warrington. As many of you will know, when possible our swans are ringed by the Cheshire Swan Study Group. A blue or green plastic ring is placed on their leg and these can be seen by observers wherever they might sight the swans. Of the 64 Christleton swans ringed since 1989, 60 (90%) have been seen again. Twenty two percent have been seen in North Wales, and 20% have been to Winterley Pool near Crewe. The furthest sighting is of 2SS at Cranham near Gloucester (164 km away). This swan was also seen at the mouth of the river near Cardigan Island in mid Wales.

2CB visited Porthmadog for five successive summers in the 1980s.(150km) Another swan, TTX, was seen at Caernarvon (104km). Four have been observed in Lancashire, including one recently at Cavendish Dock, Barrow in Furness. The oldest cygnet still living is 2YX, who lives at Telford in Shropshire and who is 11years old. YIJ and TOU are eight years old, and can be found at Wigan and Rhyl, respectively. The original cob and pen from 1989 both met very sad ends: 2SD the cob died after hitting the power lines in Chester Zoo, and was eaten by the lions in their den directly underneath; and 2SL, his mate of ten years, was lonely for 18 months, and was then driven from the Pit by the new residents, chased by them again on the canal, and was eventually found dead, having flown into Golden Nook Bridge on the canal near Hargrave.

Tropical Weather!

The warm weather of the last month has seen some remarkable sights with cowslips, clematis and roses flowering in the garden, and several butterflies and dragonflies still on the wing. The Very Reverend David Garnett, Archdeacon of Chesterfield, also saw two Barn owls in bright sunlight on his way to take the service at St James' on Sunday 29th October. They were either late going to roost, or possibly they hadn't remembered the hour change!

David Cummings

Village Christmas Cards

These are now on sale with the proceeds going towards St James' chosen Christmas Charities. Packs are £1.60 for 5 cards and £3.00 for 10. They can be ordered from me, or found at the back of Church.

David Cummings (332410)

News from Ben & Lisa in Zimbabwe

Occasionally when we hear of incidents taking place in the world on radio and television, we feel temporarily sorry and then perhaps forget all about them. We might occasionally feel that the truth hasn't been told or has been exaggerated. Just recently several of us at St James' have been alarmed to read of an incident that happened to Ben Bentham whilst he was doing his daily work as a missionary in Zimbabwe. This incident brought the news that the media doesn't always report fully, possibly because of fear of causing even more difficulties.

However, Ben was able to give us his story directly via the Internet, and I hope that this short summary will give you a more accurate picture of what is going on in that country. Ben was making a pastoral visit to a farm in September when, together with the white farmer and his wife and an American researcher, he was held under house arrest for over three hours. He stressed that in the current climate, all people, black and white are in need of spiritual and often financial support, and there is often great intimidation taking place.

On this occasion the farm was being visited by a government valuer, who was supported by two soldiers with AK47 rifles. When Ben asked why armed soldiers were necessary, he was told that all white farmers were very violent and that they couldn't be trusted. The family dog then took exception to the intrusion and attempted to bite one of the soldiers. This caused a major diplomatic incident and, although the farmer retrieved the situation, the government valuer and soldiers left, only to return later with 14 more individuals, including armed soldiers, a policeman, war veterans and a member of the ruling Zanu PF party. They then submitted the family, Ben and the American lady to very intrusive questioning over several hours, and refused to allow the visitors to leave. Ben wasn't even allowed to collect his sons from school, as he had obviously caused offence by seeming to side with the white farmer. He was called a spy, a liar and a racist, and yet his task in Zimbabwe is to care for his congregation consisting of 200 black members and nine white. He was simply doing his job working as a parish priest for the Anglican Church of Zimbabwe. As Ben says, "I am not taking any stance either on party politics or the land issue." He agrees that land has to be distributed, but that should be done within the confines of the constitution and international law, transparently and without violence.

Subsequently he had another long interview with four policemen and an immigration official. It seems that they were looking for ways to kick him out of the country. He was obviously in the way and preventing the officials carrying out their "duties" in re-designating land.

Please pray for Ben, Lisa, their sons, and all their parishioners as they try to carry out God's work in this turbulent country.

David Cummings

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Slow Slow Quick Quick Slow

Would you know what to do with a right armlock turn, an ocho or cross cucurachas to the right? The answer is that you could put them to good use on the dance floor.

With faint memories of evenings long ago in front of the box and Judith Chalmers introducing Come Dancing I arrived one evening in June this year at [Aspirations](#) just to see if it was possible for me to learn to dance. This was something that I had never ever done before.

On my arrival that first evening Stephanie the receptionist took my details and I then cautiously opened the glazed door and entered to be confronted by the empty dance floor with music already playing. Some dancers had already made their way down to the refreshment area. Other single men stood around moving their weight from one foot to the other with one eye on the entrance door in case a single lady entered. All who came through the door were laughing couples that quickly walked passed the increasingly pessimistic males. I sat down not wanting to run out of energy before it all began.

The music suddenly stopped and the instructor Richard appeared on the floor with his partner Jane asking if there was anybody without a partner. They all seemed to be fixed up but me. Richard then somehow produced Tracy for me. Well, who could forget my first dancing partner? She was in her late twenties, long blond hair, beautifully dressed with a small top surmounting a vast expanse of midriff flesh and a jewelled navel. Returning home that night I felt rather pleased at my first attempt and decided there and then to give it a go. I signed up for a gold card entitling me to go as often as I liked over the following year and having made this considerable investment I purchased a comfortable pair of dancing shoes with suede soles.

Over the next few weeks my confidence grew. No longer did I stand around waiting for a partner. I went in search asking the ladies on their own if they would like me to be their partner. One night I asked Diane. "Yes", she said "but I am over 6 feet in height". So eager for a partner I just said, "That's fine". It was not really as I had to stand on tip toes as she walked under my raised arm of the Jive. Then there was Carol who stared at me through half closed eyes. It was two weeks later that I danced with her again. "Hello Carol", I said. She jumped slightly. "Sorry, I do not remember your name" she replied. One up to me I thought. If you want to impress chaps just start working on a system to start remembering names. Then there was Jo. "You smile a lot", I said. "Oh I smile all the time" she replied. Perhaps she was thinking about her holiday in Peru in about a month where she would get a real taste of Latin American dancing. One thing you quickly discover is that it is just about impossible to chat to your partner and do the correct steps. There is no co-ordination between the mouth and the feet and the slightest verbal utterance causes chaos in the foot department.

Then there was Marie with her soft Scottish accent and hands so delicate I was scared of crushing them dancing the Tango. Only the second lesson but as we glided round the floor I was struck by the sheer magic of what happens when you stop thinking about the steps and everything seems to go right, until you have a pileup with another couple enjoying the same experience. Carol who now remembered my name turned out to be a trainer school teacher with two children, married to a rugby player who would not be seen dead on a dance floor. She had done all the lessons before so one evening she started telling me all the things I was doing wrong. "You are holding my hand too tightly". "You are turning far too fast". Then she showed me by the use of the hands how the man should lead. I had been wondering about leading but she said it was in later lessons. Carol became one of my regular partners and we are going to the Christmas Ball together. I did eventually learn to lead and now do not tolerate any steps that the lady thinks she might like to do. On the dance floor the man is in sole charge and his decision is final. On returning to the carpet things are not quite so simple and life returns to normal.

Changing partners each evening is great fun being able to compare the jerkiness and large steps of a beginner with the rhythmic hip movements and small steps of an experienced dancer. It is tempting to look at your feet when you are a beginner but when a lady is showing a little more cleavage than usual it seems more polite for the man to cast his eyes in an upward direction. Lesson three of the Tango and my partner was Kate with lovely long wild hair and an infectious smile. That was the night of my first dramatic lunge, backwards for the man and forwards for the lady. The next evening Kate fobbed me off with her friend Wendy who danced all night with her eyes closed which is perhaps why we kept getting flattened against the wall. The Samba arrived and Sarah was my partner. Little did I know I was dancing with an ex dance instructor. It turned into an evening of intense learning with my brain reeling under the pressure. "You can breath you know," she said. How is it possible to do all these things at once and breath, I thought. Sarah enjoyed giving me some tuition but it did not turn out to be a good nights dancing for her. Then there was gentle Linda, a doctor's receptionist whose shyness prevented her from enjoying the freedom of the centre of the dance floor. The cure for this is confidence, which I have more than enough of and will be prescribing for her. Four months later just as the electric clock did not strike ten with the coloured lights moving and jumping across the dance floor Linda, now full of confidence, and I were alone on the dance floor with the Salsa. A new Tango step arrived where the lady strokes the front of her foot down the back of the man's lower leg. My partner was a stockbroker named Nicola who of course was an expert with the FTSE. One night I stayed on for the intermediate classes which was a step too far at that time but thanks to Elizabeth and Delyth I got a taste of the delights to come. Joining the intermediate classes later became a normal routine as the hunger for new steps grew.

After a special workshop my Rumba really took off thanks to my extremely talented competition winner dancing partner Gina. The dances I had with Gina over the weeks were a sheer exhilaration and the highlight of each evening. Christine was delightful company but needed firm support to be held upright at times. When I started performing the fancy bits I had learned in the Rumba workshop she just went into a state of giggles interrupting the dancing so I had to slightly quell the passion. At this point three months into the classes I was totally confident and able to dance all the steps we had been taught for the Tango, Rumba, Samba, Salsa, Meringue, Mambo, Cha Cha and Jive.

Early September and the dance floor was full of new beginners who I enjoyed dancing with, helping where I could and giving encouragement. Amongst the friends I have made there is Ann who is a lady who likes to jive and insists on many repetitions of a dangerous move kicking under your partners open legs. I must also enjoy this also as I partnered her on many evenings. Then there is Bob and his wife Vivien who I had gazed on in awe as they danced the Tango on my very first night. They truly inspired me and ignited my wish to dance. It was later in the summer that I got to know them and on some evenings I had the excitement of being able to partner Vivien thanks to my good fortune of Bob working nights.

I am sure that all of you who pursue exercise activities will know what I mean when I say how they add to your well being and feeling of fitness. I have never felt so fit for a very long time. I immediately started to lose weight when I started dancing and now have to consume vast amounts of beautiful food to keep my weight steady as I am probably burning fat off at up to ten calories a minute. A New Year will soon be here so why not improve your lifestyle and health by taking up an activity. I hope that I may have tempted you to try Latin American Dancing and if so please lookout for me ladies for if I ask you to dance I hope you will say yes. I guarantee you will not be disappointed.

My sincere thanks to Richard Colley for his light hearted and expert tuition, Stephanie and Sandra who always gave me a warm welcome, Jane for her smiles and encouragement, Sophie who is always willing to help, Beckie for her never ending patience, Gina for awakening something in me I did not know existed, the foolish husbands who do not want to go out dancing with their wives and all those lovely lady partners in my first year of dancing.

Richard Nicholson

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Leprosy Mission

Stamp out leprosy!

Please donate your used stamps so that money can be raised for Leprosy Mission. Stamps should be trimmed to quarter inch border around the stamp, and can be left at the back of Church.

PLEASE TELL US...

If you know of any special birthdays, anniversaries or anyone celebrating a special occasion, who is a Parish Magazine reader, please inform the editor, David Bull.

AVAILABLE AT ST JAMES CHURCH:

"Loop" system, for the hearing impaired

Large print books for the visually impaired & large print weekly notice sheets

Easy to follow Communion Service Books for children

Access for wheelchairs

Please ask any of the Churchwardens or Sidesmen if you need assistance in any way.

NATIONAL CHILDBIRTH TRUST (N.C.T.) OPEN HOUSE GROUP:

Informal coffee mornings are held locally offering support to mums-to-be and families with young children (whether members or not) in a friendly, informal way. Please contact your local organiser Debbie Tel. 332103 for further details.

Christleton Local History Group**Books for Sale**

Christleton 2000 years of History.

136 pages of text, fully illustrated with b&w photographs, maps & drawings, and including 8 pages of colour photographs. Laminated cover with water-colour painting of the Church & Pump House by Phil Hodges.

£12.50 & (£2.75 postage & packing.) Free delivery locally.

Christleton Village Trail

A self guided tour of the Village in aid of the "Well for Africa" Appeal.

£2.50. (+30p postage & packing))

From David Cummings, 25 Croft Close, Rowton, Chester CH3 7QQ
or from Christleton Post Office.

CHRISTLETON UNDER-FIVES COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP

Registered charity 1022817

Christleton Under-Fives is an established pre-school playgroup attracting children from a wide area. It enjoys good and well-founded links with Christleton Primary School.

Children from the age of 2_ years until school entry age are accepted.

Please contact the Supervisor, Carole Penney, on 336586 for further details.

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