

# Parish Church of St. James, Christleton

## Parish Magazine

Extracts from Parish Magazine for December,  
2003

**St. James'  
Christleton**



### **CHILDREN'S SOCIETY**

I am delighted to report that our annual box opening has raised over £900! This is a tremendous achievement and I would like to say on behalf of the Society A VERY BIG THANK YOU to everyone who contributed to this total. If anyone would like to become a box holder please do let me know!

Many thanks  
Lesley Morgan

### **MOTHERS' UNION**

10th November 2003

Many thanks to our leader, Margaret Renner, for organising an outing to the Albert Dock, Liverpool, for us to see the exhibition on The Blitz in World War II. Members from Helsby Mothers' Union and Christleton Methodist Ladies Guild joined us and we had a marvellous afternoon with time to look at several exhibitions taking place at the Albert Dock, followed by refreshments, before returning home by coach.

On Monday 8th December we will be having our Quiet House in Church, followed by mince pies in the Parish Hall, and on Wednesday 10th December we have been invited to join Helsby Mothers' Union for their Christmas Party. Mothers' Union members are reminded that subscriptions will be due in December.

### **CHESTER AID TO THE HOMELESS**

will be holding a sponsored SLEEP OUT on Friday 5th December, commencing at 10 pm at the Friary Car Park, Grosvenor Street, Chester and St Mary's Church, Handbridge, Chester.

Forms can be obtained from or donations given to Chester Aid to the Homeless at their registered office: 1st Floor, Watergate House, 85 Watergate Street, Chester CH1 2LF. Donations can be gift aided.

### **RETURN FLIGHT**

Many, many thanks to all who supported the event "Fly to South Africa". As a result the sum of £400. was raised for "Granny Groups", a project working with children suffering with or orphaned by AIDS, in South Africa. There will be a return flight. Date of departure to be announced.

David and Sheila Roberts

## **CONFIRMATION 2004**

The Bishop of Chester will come to St James for a service of Confirmation in May 2004. There will be a first 'get together' for 'junior' candidates (12+ next May) on Monday 15 December at 6.30 pm in the Lady Chapel. If anyone is interested but cannot manage that time please let me know. Would any adults who are interested in Confirmation please let me know and we shall be meeting in the new year.

Rector

## **W.I.**

The AGM was held in November when two new members were welcomed. A slide show presentation was given by Alan Parker describing a tandem ride with Barbara Dawson across the United States. The distance covered was 3,209 miles over a period of 86 days. They are giving a series of talks about their journey and all proceeds will be donated to Clatterbridge Cancer Research, The next Christleton W.I. meeting will be a Christmas Evening with demonstrations of crafts, a quiz, mince pies and Christmas carols on Wednesday 10 December, 2003. All new members welcome.

## **NEW ARRIVAL AT PARISH HALL**

The Parish Hall Management Committee would like to thank the Christleton Wednesday Group for their generous donation of a new Cooker. It is a welcome addition to the Hall's facilities and is appreciated by all users of the Hall. The installation and testing of the cooker was donated by Gordon and Ian Brownm Corgi registered gas installers.

## **GET WELL**

Good luck to Stan Davies for a complete recovery following his recent operation at Aintree Hospital. Best wishes from all your friends in the village.

## **CONGRATULATIONS**

To Webmaster and Parish Magazine Collator, Richard Nicholson, who recently announced his engagement to Dorothy Checkley. With sincere good wishes to you both, from all your friends in the village.

## **CONGRATULATIONS**

Birthday Greetings and many congratulations to Mrs. Edna Talbot, of Bridge Drive, who celebrated her 90th. birthday in September.

## **Nature Notes**

Quite often villagers tell me about extraordinary sunsets they've see over Christleton, and the wonderful effect they have on the canal, the pit, or when

looking in the direction of Chester. During the last few weeks there have been several magnificent displays. However did anyone see an aurora! Several displays were reported in Britain during late October, as far south as Dover, when a huge explosion of solar flares led to some breathtaking displays of these coloured lights in the sky. An aurora display can last over six hours, and consists of shimmering patterns of light across the whole night sky, like a moving rainbow, or huge curtains of colour which constantly changes shape, with purple, orange, green and yellow colours predominant.

I was responsible for recording displays like these in the Arctic in 1959, and would be delighted to see such a display over Christleton. The only one I have records for, was on March 11th 1716 when Henry Prescott, a visitor to The Old Hall, wrote about seeing one in his diary.

“A sharp but kindly day. Accounts describe a phenomenon in the sky from 8 o'clock until 3 in the morning. Tis called the Aurora Borealis, a light or moisture sometimes dilated, sometimes embodied into column's sometimes broken and divided into figures and strands”.

Eric Beech reported a very late swallow (24thOctober) at Brown Heath, whilst the sighting of the goshawk (see last month) was confirmed by another villager, and I've since seen it myself. Colourful green and great spotted woodpeckers, together with noisy jays have been seen in Christleton, Littleton and Rowton, whilst a beautiful coloured kingfisher with flashes of turquoise and salmon glinting in the sun, was seen flying between Christleton Lock and the Ring Road. Lapwings have returned to their autumn roost near the Law College, whilst redwing and fieldfare, colourful migrant thrushes from Scandinavia, can be seen flying over the village, and recognised by their making distinctive, “chack chack” calls. They can also be seen on fields and hedgerows near the Sports Club and at Hockenhull Platts. Our three remaining cygnets seem reluctant to leave their parents, but are now quite independent and can be seen flying around singly or as a group.

How strange the seasons seem to be, with the warmer weather that we've experiencing in recent years. We would not usually expect to see clematis montana, cowslips, magnolias or winter jasmine flowering in the gardens in late October or early November, but this is now becoming the norm. Farmers are also still cutting silage from the fields which must be about as late as its ever been done.

David Cummings

### **A journey back in time.**

Last month I wrote about the damage created by the volcanic explosion of Vesuvius. What became apparent in our visits to the historic towns of Pompeii, Herculaneum and even on the Isle of Capri, where we visited the villa of Emperor Tiberius, was the importance of water in this hot climate. One of the most important men in the towns and cities was the water engineer, the “Aquarius”. He was responsible for the provision and maintenance of a fresh water supply, running through tunnels and aqueducts over sixty miles long. It brought water to a quarter of a million people in nine main towns around the Bay of Naples. Sufficient water for drinking, for bathing in the superb public bathhouses, and for the newly invented sewerage systems running under the streets. The power for the supply was provided by gravity, a gentle slope built into the rocks and the landscape, with the occasional collecting pool for storage

along the line. In the older town of Pompeii, they still had stepping stones for people to cross the narrow streets, to avoid the excesses of human waste, animal manure etc which poured onto the streets from pipes, but were washed down twice daily by running water. However by the time Herculaneum was built, a system of pipes and sewers were placed under the streets to take this waste.

The Roman engineers managed to seal their water pipes by inventing a special waterproof mortar, which was also good for lining water tanks and reservoirs. There were eight huge reservoirs, built under the Emperor Tiberius' villa on Capri, where water from the roofs of the villa was carefully directed down into the water chambers, enough to give a constant supply all year round. However most houses also had a water collecting point, where through the design of their roofs, rain water fell into a marble feature called the impluvium, which was in the centre of the atrium, a large open courtyard which also gave all other rooms their light. The impluvium was not only very practical, but provided an interesting focal point, and was sometimes surrounded by a small border of herbs or flowers. The roof tiles above the atrium were usually highly decorated, and made of terra cotta, and the end pieces were often shaped like the head of a lion, or occasionally of arcanthus leaves. Incidentally if anyone is looking for a good present for someone at Christmas, I can recommend "Pompeii" a novel by Robert Harris, published recently by Hutchinson, which tells the story of the "Aquarius" in Pompeii at the time of the eruption in AD79.

David Cummings

### **My Favourite D**

When I was aged eight I lived in the heavily Jewish populated Chapelton suburb of Leeds. The place I saw my first television, the place I first had pet rabbits and the first and last place I entered a dog in a dog show. Each morning with my leather satchel on my back I used to run down the hill and along the main road to catch a tram to school in Headingley. You could hear the trams coming as they rumbled along the tracks with the occasional bright sparks from the top of the pole that scrapped along the overhead wires and the grinding of their brakes. Before I was halfway up the stairs the conductor shouted "hold tight". Two short sharp dings on the bell and the driver swung the big brass lever and the maroon and yellow machine grinded into motion. The athletic conductor bounded up the stairs and had the amazing ability of being able to stand upright as the tram lurched from side to side taking my fare and dropping the coins into his well worn black leather bag hung from his shoulder and with the quickest of wrist movements his bright chromium dispenser issued a green ticket. Gone are the trams and with them the conductor. In October I started running again and there to greet me is a conductor. He doesn't actually say "hold tight" although that is what I am doing. He does say things like "Well we will try that again next week"

In those far away young days I had such an angelic voice. No note was too high as I could glide through "Oh for the Wings of a Dove". Things changed though as they so often do. Adolescent nerves set in and nothing would persuade me to sing so I hid behind trying to play the piano. I got away with it as my father could be persuaded to part with a rendition of A Wandering Minstrel from The Mikado.

His party piece was The Yeomen of England. He was not persuaded to sing this song one night in an Irish bar in the village of Bray outside Dublin when we were on holiday and so I am thankfully here to tell the tale.

Back to the conductor who will have probably have guessed by now is a musical one. He is taking rehearsals at Arrowe Park Hospital with just one section of a large choir who will make only one performance of a carol concert this month. The only possible excuse I can give for joining is that it is something I have not done before. My singing voice has been locked up for half a century and I am finding it very difficult. It is no good that the talented members of St. James' choir and other choirs should start rolling about on the floor with harmonious laughing at this point. The biggest initial shock was when I discovered I rarely got the chance to sing the actual tune. Asked on my first visit what I was I could have said a mad fool but instead remembered one of the first 78rpm records I bought. It was "How Much is that Doggy in the Window". A few weeks later I bought "The Yellow Rose of Texas". On returning home I put the record unopened on my bed, turned round, forgot it was there and sat on it. I can distinctly remember the noise as a sad and fatal sharp crack. It took a long time to recover from this traumatic and catastrophic drain on my pocket money. It was so long that my taste in music changed and my next purchase was "Serenade" which starts with the words "Overhead the Moon is Beaming" by Mario Lanza. My impressions of a howling dog have always been disappointingly underrated in all of my many performances. My Hopalong Cassidy has caused cattle as well as people to stampede so a tenor modelled on Mario Lanza it was to be. Having a sex change to become a soprano and to actually be allowed to sing the tune seemed to be too high a price to pay at that moment.

Sitting alone on the front row, the only tenor and the conductor ready to start I desperately tried to remember if I had any other appointments that evening or was I not a tenor and should I be a bass. A mental picture of Paul Robson singing "Old Man River" and I decided I should remain in the front row. Then in came Wilf and sat beside me saying "I heard we had someone new". The piano had started when big John with his white beard dashed in. There we were on the front row. The Three Tenors had arrived. The hour soon passed and the weekly practices come and go. Whether I am improving I am very doubtful. Some pieces of music are slightly easier than others and some I would say are at this point far beyond me. I have come to the conclusion that my favourite note is d flat. Music that has more than the usual number of d flats I like very much. In fact I would say that I can feel a strange affinity with the composer who can include many d flats in his works and should there be a piece of music entirely of d flats then I would embrace the composer as a total genius.

Wilf is my tuning fork. I tap his arm and hold my finger up to my ear each time to get the starting note. He sings in many choirs and is a member of an operatic society. Big John takes the whole thing very jovially. One week we received a tape with just our part on it. A bass singer told me his tape recorder had conked out so he sat in his car all night on his front drive practising. My tape was fine but it seems as if there had been an error with the other tenor tapes as they played last years carol concert. Big John was unaware of this. He had listened

to his tape but could not really remember what he had heard. The conductor is very encouraging. "Would the tenors now start from bar 50". Pause for the rendition. "That sounded very good from here". A muttered comment from Wilf "Well you had better stay just there". The men are greatly outnumbered by the women in the choir but when we all sing together it does sound very good from where I am standing as well. I would like to make a special point of mentioning how beautiful and enchanting the altos sound. If this has anything to do with my becoming engaged to an alto recently I could of course make no comment.

The conductor has been very kind to me saying "You will probably just be a passenger this year". I know this to be very true but what a wonderful journey I am going to enjoy as the venue for this single performance is Liverpool Cathedral. When all the other parts of the large choir are brought together and backed by the cathedral organ and a full orchestra I know it will be an amazing and unforgettable personal experience for me. There will be no need to ring a bell, I will be holding tight for the ride of a lifetime.

Richard Nichoson

### **Rambling Group**

Festive December Ramble

Sunday 14th

Meet at 1.30 in church car park.

Drive to Llangollen for a ramble on the Panorama walk, a long limestone escarpment above the town. This bit is entirely level. Climb up Dinas Bran – this can be a bit scrambly depending on the weather and must be described as steep but is not very big.

The latter could be optional but no mince pies till you get to the top!

Walking boots or stout shoes advisable.

Brilliant turnouts so far for the rambles, so look forward to seeing you all!

Back in time for evening service.

This ramble may be cancelled at short notice if weather conditions are seriously unfavourable!!

Any questions, contact Liz McClure 01244 409414

### **CHRISTLETON CRICKET CLUB**

The 1st team has had a highly successful season winning the Cheshire County League, Division Two and also the Boughton Hall Knockout. The 3rd team won Division Four of the same league. The 2nd team ended in 5th place and the Women's team were Runners Up in the Cheshire League. Altogether an excellent season.

The Cheshire County Cricket Ground Reports judged Christleton in 1st place out of 36 teams – a high complement to the voluntary ground staff.

The 30 year lease for the Sports ground recently expired. At present we are eagerly awaiting a reply from the current trustees, Christleton Parish Council, concerning our application in October for a further 30 years lease. Confirmation will enable us to continue with our plans to develop Christleton Sports Club.

Recent acts of vandalism have resulted in the tractor being damaged beyond

repair, along with two memorial benches and other damage. A total replacement value of around £2000 will have to be raised. In fact we have no tractor to cut the Sports ground and the village field at present.

On a more positive note, we would like to thank the Cheshire Cat for donating the main prize for our Christmas Draw – Christmas Dinner for 4.won by Miss D.Totty.

Our thanks also to the following for sponsoring matches during the season 2003:

Huw Davies, Mike Rooney, Arthur Broster, Gareth Davies, Phil White, Jason & Jill Lea, Vince Parsonage, Phil Edwards – Adoption matters, Owen Davies, David & Joyce Gray, John & Penny Bell, Simon Watt- Smith, Brian Ruks, Terry Brooks, Jim Partington, Allington Hughes, Towry Law, David Cummings, Bill Malkin, Geoff Stanworth, Pizza Guy, Russ Crowley, Brian Davies, Mrs Gordon Williams, Briscoes Dairies, Derek & Alun Garner, Walker, Smith & Way, RKQ82 and the Cheshire Cat.

Finally, Christleton Sports Club is now available for meetings, parties, functions, training courses and classes. Full kitchen and bar facilities are available. Excellent parking.

Contact: Brian Wareing - 01244 332326

### **Close Dates for the Parish Magazine in 2004**

January 2004 Friday 5th December 2003  
 February Friday 9th January 2004  
 March Friday 13th February  
 April Friday 12th March  
 May Friday 9th April (Good Friday)  
 June Friday 14th May  
 July Friday 11th June  
 August Friday 9th July  
 September Friday 13th August  
 October Friday 10th September  
 November Friday 15th October  
 December Friday 12th November  
 January 2005 Friday 3rd December 2004

The editorial team would like to wish our contributors, distributors and readers a very Happy Christmas and all good wishes for 2004!

#### **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.

**Mobile Library Van Service**

The van calls fortnightly: for details of when the van is next in your area, please telephone Upton Library on 380053.

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