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Parish Church of St. James, Christleton

Parish Magazine

Extracts from Parish Magazine for February 2001

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DO THINGS EVER CHANGE?!

This is the first of a new series of local stories from the past gleaned from old Parish Magazines. Below are extracts taken from the year 1973 and written by Rector Charles Mack.

'What a wonderful Christmas Eve and Day our Parish had. When we sang carols for an hour outside church on Christmas Eve, there was a wonderful spirit abroad. What a shame that a few individuals wrecked the lighted Christmas Trees on the Village Green and in the churchyard. It will be a great shame if the majority have to suffer the loss of two lighted trees just because of the selfishness of a few individuals who smashed a great number of bulbs, left pop bottles and strewed rubbish in the churchyard under the cloak of fog!' (Many coloured light bulbs were smashed on The Green over the Christmas period this year.)

'The Lent Project 1973: Now For Nepal

This will be a challenging project and one which we can all share in an exciting and yet demanding experience of Christian Mission. The aim of the project is to provide Health - a Landrover essential to bring sick people to the hospital at Baktapur and to reach isolated villages. Education- a primary school building is required urgently for village children living high in the mountains at Luitel. Fellowship- a hostel is wanted for young Christian students coming into Katmandu and who need security and fellowship in a strange city. People who care- people who are willing to go and live in another country, working there and witnessing to the Lord.' The aim was to raise money locally to share in the main CMS project, costing in all about £20,000. The Rector said that there are about 200 Nepali-speaking Christians, spread in some 20 small congregations.

David Cummings

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THE ORIGIN OF THE CHESHIRE CAT

While researching documents for an article about the new Vintage Inn on the site of Christleton Lodge, I asked the question, 'Where did the legend of the Cheshire Cat come from?' Here are some possible explanations. Many people will think of the Cheshire Cat in the stories of Alice in Wonderland. The author Lewis Carroll, or Charles Dodgson to give him his real name, came from Daresbury in Cheshire and he includes many local legends in his stories about Alice. The grinning Cheshire Cat was just one. In the stories the cat regularly appears then mysteriously disappears, before reappearing again, always with a wide grin on his face. Alice is perplexed by its behaviour, but then she lives in a wonderful world of mad tea parties, together with remarkable characters like the Mad Hatter, the Duchess and the Mock Turtle as well as the Cheshire Cat.

However the grinning Cheshire Cat probably predates these stories by many hundreds of years. Some say that it comes from as long ago as 1086, when in an engraving of the coat of arms of Hugh Lupus, the Norman Earl of Chester, the artist has given the head of the wolf a wide grin, which might be mistaken for that of a cat. Another legend says that early Cheshire cheeses were made in an oval shape, which looked like a curled up cat, and perhaps the cat would be pleased at the thought of eating the cheese. A further interpretation says that when pub signs were painted with emblems of a lion or leopard they were known as cats, for example, The Red Lion in Christleton. These creatures were always portrayed by heraldic carvers and artists with a mouth that curved upwards right up to the extremity, hence giving it a wide grin. In Chester, the Arms of the first Earl was inscribed along with the Lions of England hence the possible interpretation of a Cheshire Cat.

Wherever the name originates from, it certainly gives us several wonderful signs to this new Vintage Inn in Christleton, which somehow bear an uncanny resemblance to the grinning Cheshire Cat in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll.

David Cummings

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CONGRATULATIONS

to Gertrude Wright on gaining the award of Master of Philosophy with Distinction for her recent study of the Gospels at University College Chester. She is a real inspiration to everyone in the village, especially those of us who gave up studying long before retirement

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A LETTER FROM LADAKH

Many greetings to all at St James from our Ladakhi girls. They have all done very well, and have finished their studies. Ruth Mary and Anju are teaching at the Mission School in Leh. Ruth has recently passed her finals at Medical School, and is now a doctor at the hospital. Bilques is married, has a little daughter and now lives in Kargil a village near the border with Srinigar, where she is helping to establish a school for severely disadvantaged children. Recently she had to flee to her parents in Leh, when Kashmiris attacked the village. There is great news from Bimla's parents- see the accompanying invitation to Bimla's marriage which I have just received. Bimla will be living in Kashmir and hopes soon to be teaching at the famous Mission School in Srinigar. Gertrude Wright.



The photograph was taken in the village in 1987 when the Ladakhi girls spent the winter with us at the Primary School and in the village. From left to right they are Anju, Ruth Mary, Bimla, Bilques and Ruth.

WEDDING INVITATION TO GERTRUDE FROM LEH

Programme
Saturday 28th October 2000
Dinner 6.00pm
at The Hotel Broadway, Srinigar

Sunday 29th October 2000
Marriage Ceremony 1.00pm.
at All Saints' Church, Srinigar
Reception Thereafter at
All Saints Church Premises.

Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make him a suitable companion to help him. That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one.' (The Holy Bible)

Mr & Mrs Nathaniel Batapa
solicit your gracious presence and prayers on the auspicious occasion of the marriage of their daughter
Bimla Angmo
with
Shahbaz Rigzin
to be solemnised at All Saints' Church, Srinigar
RSVP Bimla Hotel Leh.
Best compliments from All Near & Dear.

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EMMA HINDE

Emma Hinde, for many years a resident of Christleton and a member of St James' Church, died in Kent on 10th December 2000 aged 94.

She was born Emma Needham in Lower Bridge Street, Chester in 1906, the third daughter of Frank James and Alice Needham. The family moved to The Square, Christleton when their wheelwrights' business transferred to Great Boughton in 1915. She married Walter Hinde of Tarporley, who was for many years manager of the Cash Supply Stores (opposite the Red Lion, now the Ring o' Bells) in February 1930. They lived first in Plough Lane and later in Woodfields. She and Walter were regular members of the St James' Evensong congregation and supporters of St James' Church. Emma was for many years an active member of the Mothers' Union. Since leaving Christleton after the death of Walter in 1968, she lived first with her eldest son in Yorkshire and Scotland and more recently near her second son in Kent. She kept in touch with village affairs through her friends, sadly diminishing in numbers as the years passed, but also through a regular subscription to the Parish Magazine, which she had sent to her and her three sons.

She is sadly missed by her sons and their families and is survived by three sons, ten grandchildren and thirteen great-grandchildren.

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CHRISTMAS IN AN AFRICAN MISSION HOSPITAL

By the time you read this, roast turkey and Christmas carols will be a fading memory. Before you leave Christmas 2000 behind, I'd like to share with you some Christmas moments from a mission hospital in central Africa where I am spending my medical elective attachment. As I write the day is Boxing Day and I am sitting in Ekwendeu – a mission station established by Scottish missionaries at the end of the 19th century in northern Malawi. Malawi is one of the world's six poorest countries; unemployment levels are more than 50%; population growth stands at more than 3% a year; infant mortality is around 20% and Ekwendeu hospital estimates that up to 60% of the in-patient population are HIV positive. On paper these statistics are frightening and depressing. Despite these hardships, however, I have rarely experienced Christmas being celebrated with such joy and enthusiasm as it was here.

The countdown to Christmas began in earnest at the hospital in the last two weeks of Advent when a general competition for the best-decorated hospital ward was announced. Nurses and nursing students made decorations using toilet rolls and cutting shapes out of old magazines. The judges were somewhat surprised as they passed through the labour ward to find a stable there occupied by a sheepish looking Joseph and his wife, who had given birth to Jesus a few hours earlier and was busy breastfeeding the infant – thereby managing to be both Mary and fulfil the World Health Organisation's guidelines to encourage breastfeeding!

On the eve of 23rd December, the nursing students decided to sing Christmas carols on the hospital wards. With candles in their hands they passed through every ward bursting into joyful vibrant song. Singing seems to come naturally to the Malawians; it is so infectious that many of the patients joined in, clapping their hands to the rhythms of the songs. Only on the children's ward did they encounter a persistent three-month old protestor, who would have preferred to sleep.

The next evening had more in-house entertainment in store for the hospital patients. The nativity play was being performed by the nursing students. The patients were the audience, many with sleeping infants strapped to their backs in cloth slings. The Angel Gabriel flitted madly around the stage and almost stumbled over Mary in the process. Baby Jesus suddenly appeared from the audience, the anxious mother looking on as the baby was bounced between Mary, Joseph and the shepherds. The play ended more like a Shakespeare tragedy with the Slaughter of the Innocents being carried out with great gusto and the audience bursting into applause as the last ragdoll was killed.

On Christmas Day, clothes and teddy bears from overseas' donations were distributed in the paediatric ward. The children were delighted as most of them wear rags and have no shoes on their feet and have never had a Christmas present before.

What struck me most about Christmas here was that the days were infiltrated by prayer and acknowledgement of God's presence at all times. This was highlighted by an incident when a Malawian nurse asked me what I was doing for Christmas. I replied that I was not sure and asked what she was doing. She said, "Going to Church and praising God of course." which was to her the most obvious answer in the world.

If you fear that I am going to conclude with the clichéd view that in the west we are materialistic and have lost the spiritual aspect of Christmas, then I'm sorry to say that you'd be right. Malawians cannot even contemplate becoming materialistic over Christmas for there is nothing to buy and in spite of this, they thank God for it.

Sacha Bull

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ILLUMINATING EXPERIENCES IN YEAR 2000

In the Rector's Advent Quiet Hour held in Church on Monday 11 December, he talked of how "Christ came, Christ comes and Christ will come again".

The hour passed in quiet and peaceful calm with ample "space" for meditation, in preparation for the "coming" of Christmas.

The Rector used personal "snapshots" to illustrate the 3 sections of this reflective time. He explained how we all have these images stored away and how they mean more to us than just the visible surface – special memories are often attached to those "snapshots".

This brought to mind my own recent visit to Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon and the many "snapshots" that I will be able to recall in the future.

In stark contrast.....

Christmas 2000 was another special time for the Nilssens as we travelled to Norway to be with family and friends.

Whilst we were in Norway many friends visited us including Anna's cousin who is her penfriend. We also visited Morten's cousin Thor, who has a beautiful house situated on a mountain side, which can entail some very tricky manoeuvres reaching it in the car on thick snow!

Thor's son Terje and his wife Tonje have a son, Lage, who is 7 years old in March, and last year they had a daughter, Liten. Liten was born with double the usual number of chromosomes, resulting in her parents being told that she would only live for 8 to 10 weeks. Apparently, there are so few cases of this type in the world that there is very little research and obviously no treatment or potential cure for the condition. However, Liten is now 9 months old and as each day goes by her parents grow more used to her as part of their family. It was a great privilege and a delight to meet Liten, and indeed, nurse her to sleep! She needs round the clock care and is fed by a tube into her stomach, but her mother treats the whole operation so naturally and the love and care that Liten receives is wonderful to witness. Liten (which means little one) is a very special person and meeting her was an important lesson for all of us as a family – to remember that what you see is only part of the picture, it is what is below the surface that really matters. Liten's attempts to laugh and communicate, her comfort after being fed and then sleeping are all the reward that her parents receive, but nonetheless they love her unconditionally – she is their little miracle.

Our return back to Britain was an experience of yet another kind. We were due to fly back to Manchester via Heathrow, but after leaving

Skien at 7am and a three and a half hour train journey to Gardemoen, Oslo Airport, we arrived only to be told that our flight had been cancelled. After queuing for some time at the British Airways desk we were told that as we were in fact travelling to Manchester we could take the delayed direct flight, which was due to leave in half an hour! We literally had to run through the airport to reach our gate, with only a short time to get our breath back before boarding a 50 seater plane and arriving back in Manchester 3 hours before we were originally due to land! Ours were the last 4 seats on the plane as all our other fellow travellers only had tickets valid to Heathrow and could not therefore take that flight. We could not believe how lucky we had been, especially as we had to make a series of telephone calls via family to inform the taxi firm collecting us from the airport. Incredibly, our taxi arrived just as we came out of Manchester Airport.

We have been extremely lucky this year to have had such memorable trips and so I think back to the theme of the Rector's Advent Quiet Hour.....Christ came, Christ comes, Christ will come again.....

Pat Nilssen

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Map Story 23 - Consigned for a Penny

When the Post Office needs to spend vast sums on giving itself a new name and logo it is nice to remember the man who established the Penny Post in 1840. His name was Rowland Hill. At the age of 5 he built his first working watermill and at 11 he was teaching in his father's school. He built a flat-bottomed boat but when finished the Birmingham and Worcester Canal where it was meant to sail was only half built. Not deterred but inspired by water he taught navigation to midshipman. When he was 22 a woman named Mary Ashford was murdered near his Birmingham school. There was full coverage in the newspapers but no map to inform the public of the area. He took his class to the spot, measured up the features and produced a map. A man named Thornton was acquitted at a trial. The map was published 6 months later when locals were trying to raise money to revive the long disused right of appeal against acquittal. Thornton in return used an ancient procedure and challenged the Kings Bench judges to armed combat. They could not respond which meant a victory for Thornton. An Act was then passed abolishing both wager of battle and appeal against acquittal.

Richard Nicholson