

1972

FREE

Marston Times

PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS

The Sponsored Walk - TO BE OR NOT TO BE?

No doubt, feelings ran high after the deaths on the Brighton Road during the sponsored walks, and the failure to take Police advice. The death of a 45 year old woman was, of course, due to the collision of two cars, one of which mounted the pavement, so the organisers could not be blamed for this. However, the question must be asked: "Should sponsored walks be restricted?" and I think most people would like to see a number of safety restrictions imposed, with the possibility of banning walks where these are infringed. But there is another kind of 'sponsored walk' which needs looking into. The word 'sponsor' is used in the new baptism service as an alternative to 'godparent'. On the second and fourth Sundays of the month at 3 p.m. a number of adults gather to sponsor the 'Christian walk' of their god-children. Such sponsors should be 'prepared to the best of their ability to give him/her a Christian upbringing within the family of Christ's Church. They should be prepared to 'help him/her to be regular in public worship and in private prayer,

not only by their teaching but also by their example and their prayers.' They should 'encourage him/her in due time to come to Confirmation and Communion'. About seventy-five babies on average are christened each year at St. Nicholas Church. At each service the parents and sponsors answer in the affirmative to these questions. Some keep their promises. The majority do not. Has the time come, as the recent report on Baptism suggested, to restrict this Christian 'sponsored walk', and have, instead of a Christening a Service of Naming and Blessing, which would not compromise the sponsors? The children could then decide at a much later age, when they had grown up, whether they wished to take their Christian profession seriously. There is a strong movement towards this idea in the Church and it's certainly worth thinking about.

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MAY 20TH WAS ASCENSION DAY, THE DAY WHEN THE CHURCH REMEMBERS THE
RELINQUISHING BY JESUS OF HIS EARTHLY FORM. WILL HE EVER COME BACK
TO THIS WORLD? IN THIS ARTICLE, REV. JOHN COWDREY, CHAPLAIN OF
ST. EDMUND HALL DISCUSSES

THE SECOND COMING

My initial thought when asked to write about the second coming was to remind myself how very little we know, or can seek to know, about it. We know about Christ's first coming because it has historically happened, and because men alive at the time wrote of it or left their record in the witness of the church. The second coming has not happened: we can no more hope to understand how it will happen from what the New Testament says, than people of Old Testament times could have worked out from their scriptures just how Christ's first coming would occur. And as for the time of his second coming, Our Lord expressly told his apostles that it was not for them to know the times or the seasons that the Father had put in his own power. Here as so often the wisest Christian is he who knows how little he knows.

What we can know about the second coming, we must above all understand from the biblical record and interpretation of the first. The basic confidence of the Christian faith is that by Christ's death and resurrection God has already in principle accomplished all that is necessary to renew every human being in his image, and also so to renew his whole creation that he is all in all. In our lives as Christians, both individually and corporately, we have here and now an earnest, or real beginning, of this renewal. By reason of our faith and of our baptism into Christ's death and resurrection we are growing in the fruit of the Spirit which, for the Christian, it is man's highest excellence to exhibit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. We do so because of our membership of Christ, in dependence upon his grace, and through our Christian worship and commitment. But we have no more than a first instalment. Whether as individuals or together, we fall far short of the possibilities of our life in Christ. The deep disorders of human society, and of the creation itself, remain. Alike at the heights of our Christian experience and in the common affairs of our lives at large we find ourselves living in two worlds at once - a world which is in Christ, and a world which is apart from Christ.

Yet in Christ's coming of old Christians see the workings both of almighty power and of perfect love. The events of Christmas, and of Holy Week and Easter, what particularly set them forth. What God's love then began to do he is able by his almighty power finally to bring to its full accomplishment. He offers, but does not compel, the ultimate fulfilment of its being to every creature he has made. The fulfilment does, indeed, involve passing through what seems to us the utter finality and great unknown of death. But in the death of Christ we may see death itself having a positive value as the necessary completion of a life of self-offering to God: in Christ it was the gateway to a higher life which renewed and realized the life which had gone before. What God thus performed as a kind of nucleus at one point of his creation he is thenceforth working out in the whole. By the second coming of Christ we mean the decisive act by which his work, begun in the incarnation, will finally be brought to its full and final effect in each one of us and in the whole creation.

How and when, as I have said, we do not know in any detail, and with the Old Testament prophecies and their fulfilment in mind it is idle, even unwise, to speculate. Writing about the second coming for our Whit number I would rather emphasize one New Testament point. Our Christian commitment, worship, and conduct, here and now between Christ's first coming and his second, are critical for our eternal destiny. 'Knowing the time,' says St. Paul, 'now it is high time to wake out of sleep'. The New Testament often speaks of seedtime and harvest: it is seedtime which is our concern; harvest is yet to come and is hidden is the hand of God.

'All men are ready to invest their money
But most expect dividends.
I say to you: Make perfect your will
I say: take no thought of the harvest,
But only of proper sowing.'

(T.S. Eliot, The Rock.)

Cromwell in Marston

Marston has little in its history for which it is famous, but one name lends itself to conjecture and imagination of what happened in 1645-46, during the Civil War. Unton Croke of Elsfield married Ann Hall of Horton-cum-Studley in 1622, inherited land in Marston and built the Manor House.

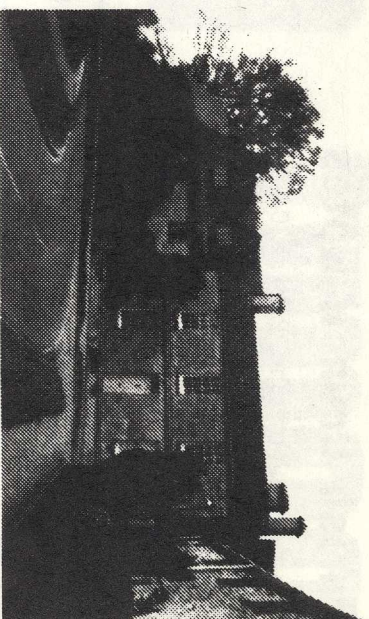
The village, as part of Headington Manor, at no time had a real Lord of the Manor, but Unton Croke, as a lawyer, was an important personage in a small agricultural community. He was a committed Parliamentarian and so the village became a safe stronghold for Sir Thomas Fairfax, Commander-in-Chief of the Parliamentarian army during the siege of Oxford.

At this time Oliver Cromwell, a general under Fairfax, regularly visited the village and is said to have surveyed the Royalist encampment in the city, and its fortifications, on the site of the Parks, through a telescope from the tower of St. Nicholas.

Later he was present in the Manor House during the negotiations for the capitulation of the Royalist forces in Oxford.

This house could tell much of the history of those times, which now will remain untold. Little is recorded, but it is known that the Croke family continued to live there after the Civil War. Indeed, there are still 15th and 16th century heraldic files bearing the Croke coat of arms.

In 1690 it is known that Thomas Rowney, an attorney and mayor of Oxford, lived here and owned land in Marston. This is the same Thomas Rowney who gave the land for the Radcliffe Infirmary and whose name is given to one of the wards. During the 19th century its grandeur decreased and it was recorded as housing six pauper families in 1800, and being used as a grain store in 1813.



Still later it was owned by two brothers, who quarrelled, and divided the house into the present Cromwell House and Manor House, building a partition wall through the main pillared entrance and reversing the front of the house. In 1923 the father of the recent owner Mr. Vernede bought Manor House and another fifty years of its history was spent with one family. Now in 1971 it embarks on yet another period of its eventful existence, and who knows what the next fifty years may bring.

The Summertown Shelter Group are holding an exhibition of paintings submitted for their children's art competition. The exhibition is to be in Summertown Church Hall on 4th and 5th June from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and on 6th June from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. Admission is free and refreshments will be available.

The organisers in Marston of the Christian Aid week appeal would like to thank all members of the Parish who contributed. The jumble sale held on Saturday, May 22nd raised a sum of £87 and home-to-home collections and donations brought this up to a total of £200.

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Parish Council Notes

The meeting of the Parish Council held on 25th May was the first since the election, when Mr. N.C. Jones of 52 Elms Drive and Mr. E.C. Tanner of 12 Arlington Drive were elected to replace Mr. P.H. Nye and Mr. D.J.K. Hodgkins who did not seek re-election.

At the Parish Council meeting, Mr. A. Gammon of 50 Oxford Road was re-elected Chairman and Mrs. B. Deam, Vice-Chairman.

The other members of the Council re-elected are:

Mr. J.E. Busfield, 4 Mill Lane.
Mr. E.C.R. Earl, 112 Oxford Road
Mr. C.R. Haynes, 12 Boults Lane
Mrs. W.M.B. Haynes, 2 Oxford Road
Mr. G.A. Hine, 21 Raymond Road
Mr. R.G. Hughes, 90 Oxford Road
Mr. A.T. Jones, 36 Arlington Drive
Mrs. M.A. Smith, 2 Boults Lane
The Parish Council's representatives on the Managing Body of St. Nicholas Primary School are Mrs. M.A. Smith and Mr. A.T. Jones, Mr. J.E. Busfield being the Council's representative on the Governing Body of the Harlow School.

The Marston Saints football teams have been given permission to use a football pitch on the new recreation ground for their Sunday

League fixtures for the 1971/72 season. Teams are selected according to age from the under-elevens through to the under-sixteens.

A MAN OF MANY PARTS

The new vicar of our neighbouring parish of New Marston is a man of many parts. Norman Greenfield came to New Marston in March from a small parish near Faringdon where he had been for five years. When he was there he was Diocesan Stewardship Adviser and had the job of helping many parishes in the area to organise their Church finances. Prior to that he was vicar in a mining parish near Doncaster in Yorkshire and he says that half his time there was spent in running a parish newspaper. 'The Link', as it was called, sold over a thousand copies every month.

As well as these interests, Mr. Greenfield is a keen football referee and has been so for 22 years. At present, he referees Oxfordshire Senior League Matches, and reckons he is the only Church of England parson in the Oxford Diocese to be a registered referee.

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