

Marston Times

PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS

"TRAVELLING LIGHT"

If there's one thing a modern car has got to have its a large boot. Its got to be large, for no matter how hard you try there's always going to be one member of the family who finds it almost impossible to travel light. You think you've got everything in when someone appears with an extra case and says plaintively: "But I just can't do without this. I need everything in it".

Sometimes people are forced to travel light. During the recent hostilities in Pakistan, an American had to leave behind a brief-case packed with dollar bills. There just wasn't room on the relief plane.

In our own neighbourhood, through a tragic fire, a couple lost everything, their caravan, possessions and savings.

Yet our Lord told Christians to 'travel light'.

"Take nothing for your journey - neither a stick, nor a purse, nor food, nor money, nor even extra clothes". (Luke 9.3)

So often we feel that we can't go on unless we've got this and that . . . it may be clothes, it may be a colour

T.V., it may be a car, or it may be some small thing that other people have got and we haven't.

I would like to suggest that we use this lent to learn how to 'travel light' in a spiritual sense. Why not take a look at your life and see what you can off-load? Some people are so busy, or on so many committees, or have taken on so much that there's no enjoyment of life, or their family, or their friends.

Some people carry far more worries about than they need. The Psalmist says: "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee". Jesus Christ is the supreme example of One who travelled light. He was born in a stable. He ended his earthly life on a cross. He had no fixed base, no possessions to speak of, and yet He gave the world its salvation.

When we have learnt to travel light, we shall have achieved the aim of St. Paul . . . "as having nothing, yet possessing all things". (2 Cor. 6.10)

John R. Rumbold

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" QUEER FOLK "

BY THE REV. G. W. CORNELL, MINISTER, MARSTON ROAD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, OXFORD

There is a Lancashire saying that "there's nowt so queer as folk" . . . and I suppose that is true in every human setting. But then, it has always been true, if history is to be believed, since first Homo Sapiens stood erect. How else does one account for the tragedies, the mistakes, the successes, the failures, victories, misunderstandings, the denials, betrayals, defences, for which people "folk" have been responsible through the ages?

"Queer" in the sense of being "odd" or "peculiar"? Maybe to some degree. "Queer" in the sense of being awkward? Possibly a bit difficult, cantankerous; not conformist, or just being "cussed"; something of all these is implied in "there's nowt so queer as folk". What I would wish to do is to say a little about Christians, followers of Christ - Christ's men and women, who have apparently been "queer" from the beginning and remain "queer".

The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch - and it was then rather a term of ridicule than one of commendation. They were a "joke" in the society of the time because they were "queer" enough to believe in "Jesus Christ risen and alive" - and to act with urgent deliberation in their loving and serving of other men and women - as if that were true. "See how these Christians love one another" was not at first a statement of endearment. It was a sarcasm, a cynical expression about the "queer" way they behaved because they did not conform to society's accepted pattern. But by the "grace of God" there did come a time when Christian behaviour meant something. When it came to stand for honesty, fair-dealing, sincerity, loyalty, faith, hope, love; and when "a peculiar people" became recognised as "those in whom the spirit of God was". When "fools for Christ's sake", though they suffered and were persecuted, could not be ignored.

May one be allowed to wonder whether or not our world does not need such "queer folk" again? It seems to me that much of our present frustrations in the Christian life is due to the fact that we are not "queer" enough. Oh, I do not mean being fanatical about drinking, smoking, gambling, though these may be hurtful - but there are much worse things. No - being "peculiar" in the sense that whilst we may, with St. Paul "become all things to all men" - we are sufficiently different as to be honest,

straightforward, reliable, faithful, loyal, sincere, dependable, because of "the power that worketh in us, and the Christ we serve".

What is the difference between building bridges and compromising the Gospel? How are we to live as witnesses in the world without being overcome by the world?

Queer questions to "queer folk"? Well, the old Quaker's statement may still stand. To his wife he said: "O.K. the world's queer, save thee and me, and thee's a little queer".

"As the old sign-posts are swept away, help us Lord,
As we stand uncertain and hesitant,
help us Lord,
As we hear voices bidding us both
forward and back, help us Lord".

GET WELL SOON!

The Parish sends its wishes to Miss Olive Lodge, our Parish Worker, during her spell in hospital at Exeter. We look forward to seeing her speedily restored to health.

Mothering Sunday

ADVANCE NOTICE TO CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH

On Sunday, 12th March, there will be a special Mothering Sunday Service at 11.15 a.m. We shall be delighted to welcome children and their parents.

PARISH MEETING

OUTCOME OF THE PARISH MEETING ON 11TH JANUARY, 1972

Ripington Drive Footpath

The decision was made by the Parish Council to ask the Bullingdon Rural District Council to provide a footpath from Ripington Drive to the Croft Road recreation ground.

Safety of Children Walking to School

The recommendation of the meeting on this subject was to provide railings on the corners of the Cherwell Drive - Oxford Road junction on the northern side. It was felt that this would encourage people to cross further away from the corner. It was also felt necessary to extend the present traffic island to provide a pedestrian refuge at this point.

Memories of Marston

BY KATHARINE WOOD, WHOSE FATHER, THE REV. H. A. CUMBERLEGE, WAS VICAR OF OLD MARSTON AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY.

There was no Vicarage available at Marston when my father arrived with three small children in 1899 - our mother had died not long before, and we settled into 129 Banbury Road. This house, garden and trees are identical to-day to what they were in 1899.

Into the old brougham climbed my father, three small children and an attendant nurse. Slowly we drove south right through Oxford, over Magdalen Bridge, via St. Clements and a small New Marston, along country lanes to Old Marston Church. It must have taken quite a time!

I sat behind a Mr. Haynes, then Churchwarden, while the service proceeded. We were marched out before the sermon and went to old Miss Gordon's house for biscuits etc. and games, or to Mrs. Braithwaites to run round the box-edged paths in her garden. Back we then drove the same long way and, no doubt, appeared at children's parties and danced at fetes, etc.

My father was a great walker and went every afternoon on foot down the "cinderpath", now Marston Ferry Road, over the fields to the Kings Arms Ferry and up to Marston to visit his parishioners and carry on the work of a country parson!

'Have you stopped growing yet?'

Many people who were christened stopped growing at an early age . . . i.e., growing spiritually. They never went on to Confirmation. The result is that their baptism is incomplete, for they have never ratified and confirmed their baptismal vows in church as adults. They have never had any further instruction in the Christian faith. They have never been commissioned by the Bishop and the congregation through prayers and the laying on of Hands.

Any young person of 13 years or over is invited to come to the 10 a.m. Parish Communion on the first Sunday in Lent (20th February) and afterwards to the Vicarage, when a new series of Confirmation Sessions will begin. Forms of application may be obtained from the church bookstall.

A number of adults have been prepared for Confirmation in recent years, and the Vicar will be pleased to hear of any who wish to be confirmed so that special arrangements can be made for them.

When I came back to live in Oxford in 1965 I was surprised at the number of older people who remember him, and now there is Cumberlege House for retired people. He acquired the organ, now moved from the south aisle to the gallery. It was opened by a recital given by Dr. Harwood, then organist at Christ Church Cathedral. Then he found an architect for the east end window and was searching for a site on which to build a Vicarage when pressed to take the living at St. Andrew's, Wells Street, London, where they still had a choir school and much music to organise. The family moved sadly to Harley Street, as once again there was a Vicarage scarcity. How we minded leaving Oxford and Marston, with picnics on the Cherwell.

I remember only a country lane between New Marston cross roads and the foot of Old Marston village, and when the floods came there was sometimes water a foot deep to drive through. We explored in a pony cart the lanes up to Headington, where Headley Way now is, as he looked for a site on which to build a Vicarage.

Looking back over seventy years, Marston has remained incredibly the same and I only miss the pond on the corner.

"CONGRATULATIONS"

Congratulations to Clare Rimmer who has gained a double success by being offered places for both Singing and Drama at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama for next September.

As many heard on Radio Oxford on Christmas Day, Clare hopes to sing in Opera, and her future training will be geared to this end.

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The bedrooms are comfortable, with hot and cold water and central heating. There are comfortable lounges and a library; a laundry and children's playroom. The food is good and varied, with fresh vegetables and milk from their own gardens and farm.

The unique nature of Lee Abbey lies not only in its magnificent position and its good holiday facilities, but even more in its atmosphere

of natural friendliness, which stems from the vital Christian Faith of the community of men and women who run Lee Abbey and care for the guests.

It was founded by a small group of Christians in 1945 in post war England; thoughtful men who yearned that Christianity might be more relevant and the Church more vital in a world seeking for answers. They conceived the idea to provide a holiday centre in one of the beautiful parts of England and make it available to ordinary people to enjoy themselves; and also to see the power that can be the answer when people, including families, live in a community, sharing a common life of worship, prayer and work, and living under a simple rule of life.

This then is Lee Abbey. Anyone is welcome. Any or no denomination, you share as much, or as little of the religious life of the community as you wish. It is a place for a grand holiday with perhaps a chance to think, if you will let yourself, about the issues facing us all, good, evil, pollution, war, racialism, or just our own position in the world.

This is all available at very reasonable rates by contacting: The Secretary, Lee Abbey, Lynton, North Devon.

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