FEBRUARY FREE

marston times

PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS

CHILDREN & CHURCH-GOING.

IS IT REALLY WORTH IT?

When I was a youngster I used to go to Church with the family on Sunday morning. I remember that the Te Deum seemed interminable and I used to play trains with Hymns Ancient and Modern along the pew ledge. On the fifth Sunday there was the Litany and a retired doctor, who was the Lay Reader, sang the Litany with a voice that resembled a cross between a hacksaw and a dyspeptic raven.

Later I joined the choir. We used to have to stand the whole time for the practice and afterwards we would race off to Picossi's for chips and peas. I felt I'd earned them! My choir payment was 3d a quarter, but I remember that I put this amount in the collection at each service.

Looking back on those days, I remember how there were certain psalms one loved . . . "There go the ships and there goes that Leviathon". (I used to think of Leviathon as a galleon. Since that time I've learnt it means a whale!) . . . "O praise God in his holiness" . . . and the majestic Easter Anthem: "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us". We used to sing the Creed once a month at a service which liturgiolists now nickname "mangled matting", because it mixed part of Mattins with the Holy Communion Service. The setting was no doubt sentimental, but I still remember how wonderful it was to hear the head boy singing the solo part for "and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary . . . and was made man" . . .

The liturgical seasons, and also the natural seasons of Spring and Easter, and Harvest and Winter, all brought their variety of worship, culminating with Handel's Messiah at Christmas time.

Now we are in the 'pop age', when everything has to have a 'jingle' and snap, and parents say to me: "I can't get John and Mary along to Church. They get so bored". Or, "I'm leaving it to them until they're old enough to make up their minds for themselves".

I still believe that the regular habit of "Church once a Sunday" is immensely worthwhile. Sooner or later the atmosphere of worship, the hymns, readings, sermon and all that goes on in Church 'rubs off' on young people and becomes a very real and enjoyable part of their lives.

Today with services in modern English, much shorter sermons, good music and more lay participation, Church-going need not be a dreary task, but something to which we can look forward. And if the service is too long, there's no need to be present all the time. Some could come and leave early. Others might prefer to come in half-way through the service. Let us be flexible about this. I am sure, though, that in the end, regular worship in Church can have a lasting effect on children that helps to give them a faith for these days.

Paul N. Rumsey

Vicar and Rural Dean.

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ENVY

A second article in the series by Mr. M. G. Harris

"Keeping up with the Joneses" is a phrase which has come into being since the beginning of the 1960's. It is felt that if our neighbour has a coloured television, top rate stereo, car, caravan or whatever, we should at least have the same possessions (or one of better value or standing). Keeping up with the Joneses is only another name for envy. When we feel that friends or neighbours have better and grander things than us, in many cases this stimulates envy. Envy then urges us to 'up one better'.

However, the problem arises if a better or similar possession is unobtainable, e.g. a certain type of house or property, a 'one-off' commodity. It is at this stage that complications can set in. Envy is bad enough by itself but fruits of envy are much worse. Take the story of the Queen who wanted a better garden.

Apparently one of the citizens of the town in which the Royal Palace was situated owned, by birthright, (having been handed down over the generations from father to son), a piece of ground which had in the passage of time become a well-cultivated garden, growing melons, cucumbers and various other 'fruits' known at that time. The Queen envied this garden and wanted it, and offered the citizen a garden elsewhere. Because of the birthright situation he refused to part with it. The Queen pulled a few strings and had the man wrongly accused of a serious crime. The citizen was condemned to death and the Queen took over the garden. However, she did not live long enough to enjoy her new possession for she was killed.

Obviously the average person does not stoop to physical murder because of envy and yet will commit mental or spiritual murder. They will refuse to spend or associate with those who before had been friends. All the ill-feeling, hatred, that can be evident with envy is really as bad as physical murder. While the thought may not be consciously there, yet the desire to 'eliminate' a friend from one's every-day presence is tantamount to the action of the Queen in the preceeding story.

Envy is one of the passions on which we must keep a tight rein for we are no better than Queen Jezebel if we let envy rule us.

Parish Council Notes

STREET LIGHTING - Street lights which are not working can be reported direct to the Electricity Board by phoning 85-4311 and asking for "Street Lighting Department". Messages are taken at almost any time. Or inform Mr. Garner who will pass on the message. The Electricity Board inspects each area only fortnightly, so delay may occur if the fault is not reported.

RUBBISH DUMPING - A growing cause of complaint in the parish is rubbish dumping. This can best be stopped if the public are prepared to report to the police any instances they see, with the number of the car concerned, or any other evidence of identity.

EXPENDITURE - The precept for next year's expenditure was for £3,000 - £50 expected deficit on Burial Account, £800 on Lighting and £2,150 on General Account. The last includes provision but not a definite commitment for a bus shelter in the Cherwell Drive/Oxford Road area.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - The Annual Parish Meeting will be on 13th March, 1973 at 7.30 p.m. at St. Nicholas School. More details in next month's issue, but please note this important date.

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CONFIRMATION 1973

All young people of 13 years or thereabouts who are interested in the prospect of being confirmed are invited to the Vicarage for tea on Sunday, 4th February at 4.30 p.m.

We shall discuss plans in regard to Instruction and Confirmation at a later date, probably in April.

THE WHETHAMS

We're going to miss Joe and Peggy Whetham and the family tremendously. Those of you who have enjoyed the Marston Times. might like to know that 1200 copies were folded by the Whetham family each month prior to distribution. But Joe has also been a valued member of the P.C.C., as well as a server. A House Group has met regularly in their home, and Peggy (who was a Sunday School teacher) and he have been keen supporters of Christian Aid, and the Mission of the Church overseas.

They move to Pinner, and with them take our love and wishes for their future.

Albert Gammon

On 16th February, Albert Gammon, Secretary and Treasurer of St. Nicholas Ringers, will have rung in this tower for a quarter of a century. He has also been for the same number of years a member of the Diocesan Guild of Change Ringers. We offer him our congratulations.

marston players

The Marston Players are producing Somerset Maughan's "Sacred Flame" on 8th, 9th and 10th March at 7.30 p.m. in the Mortimer Hall. Please book the date in your diaries.

CRECHE

The Creche has closed down on account of the coldness of the Scout Hut, but will restart on the first Sunday in April.

Parish Get-together

Shrove Tuesday is the traditional day for a beano, and all parishioners are invited to a Wine and Cheese Party at the St. Nicholas County Primary School on Shrove Tuesday, 6th March at 8 p.m. We especially invite newcomers to the parish, when this will give an opportunity to explain our Lent programme and all activities of the parish. The cost will be 20p per head. R.S.V.P. Mrs. Rimmer, The Vicarage, Marston. Oxford 47034.

MARSTON RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

The A.G.M. of the Marston Residents Association will be held on Monday, 5th March at 7.45 p.m. in St. Nicholas County Primary School.

P.C. Thompson, well-known to many in Marston as the local 'bobby', will open the meeting by outlining the work of the Thames Valley Police, with particular reference to the policing of our own area. There will be time for questions.

Next on the Agenda: (1) Committee elections (2) An opportunity for people to raise any matters concerning Old Marston.

Finally, we shall put on a colour slide show, covering a variety of subjects. This feature has proved popular on past occasions.

Please book the date now - all are welcome.

G. Hind

BROWNIE GUIDES

After much discussion half of the £30 profit from our Christmas Bazaar has been used to buy pots and pans to support a mother and child educational scheme in Haiti (through OXFAM), to help disabled children in England (through the Guide Friendship Fund) and a donation given to St. Nicholas.

Excellent news was received this month of the leper boy we had 'adopted' for 1972. He improved sufficiently to leave hospital during 1972 and our donations are, therefore, still paying for his outpatient treatment.

Scout Jumble Sale

The 43rd St. Nicholas Scout Group wish to thank all those who worked so hard and those who gave so generously to the Jumble Sale. They will be pleased to know that the approximate sum made was £55. This will help to make Scouts interesting and worthwhile for the youth of our area.

We apologise to anyone who was not called at for jumble. This was due to not having sufficient members on our Scout Committee. Anyone interested, parents or otherwise, in helping, please contact Mrs. Lord, Oxford 42450 or Mr. Bradbury, Oxford 21591.

R. Bradbury, Secretary.

ENTRY TO CAMBRIDGE

Congratulations to Stephen Sawaryn who has gained an entrance to Cambridge from Peers School.

ON T.V.

Mrs. Iris Rathbone recently appeared on T.V. talking about her new book on crochetting. We are fortunate to have such an expert on the subject in the village.

Oxford Beneath Our Feet

By Mrs. M. Harlow

If we are honest there are not many of us who do not enjoy a good detective story. There may, however, be some who are not quite as enthusiastic about a lecture on archaeology. If so they should have been in the Church Hall on 3rd January, when Dr. Tom Hassall talked about the excavations which he and his team are carrying out below the surface of modern Oxford.

Dr. Hassall left us in no doubt that archaeology is not only an exacting but an exciting form of detection. From what seemed at first to be the most slender clues he built up a picture of how our ancestors lived, cultivated, cooked and ate long before William the Conqueror invaded England.

At the corner of St. Aldates and Speedwell Street, below successive layers of occupation, traces have been found of a Saxon settlement of the 9th Century. Here the water-logged nature of the ground has preserved in a remarkable way timber structures, wooden and leather objects, including a man's boot. The most important of these discoveries was a clay bank set with wattle fences lining a gully containing a large quantity of flax seed, set to soak prior to being spun and turned into textiles, this less than a hundred years after the death of St. Frideswide, the founder of a Religious House on the present site of Christ Church College.

Excavations nearer the centre of the city give evidence of continuous occupation during late Saxon and early Norman times, but, as always, it is the kitchen midden - that joy of archaeologists - which has revealed the more homely side of daily life. Besides many broken pots there are the bones from a stew, the shoe with a slit to accommodate a bunion and the charred grain of some cooking mishap.

Although there was never a Roman town at Oxford the Roman road from Towcester to Dorchester skirted it to the east and along this road were known to exist a succession of Romano-British pottery kilns. One, on the site of the proposed extension to the Churchill Hospital, has already been extensively excavated. Here the archaeologists have been fortunate as the building will not be started for eighteen months thus giving them time to remove part of the kiln and site it elsewhere. It was a very different story on the St. Ebbes and Parks Road sites where they were working literally with the bulldozers at their heels.

Moving through the centuries and from one site to another might well have been a little confusing if the lecture had not been so carefully illustrated with excellent slides. First coloured ariel pictures of modern Oxford, with each site clearly indicated, followed by photographs taken on the ground of the work in progress.

Our thanks are due to Dr. Hassall for a most stimulating lecture and to the Marston Wives for making it an Open Meeting.

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