DECEMBER FREE

marston times

PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS

'A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU!'



Drawing by Mary Warner

As I write this letter, the news in the paper is pretty black. The miners have turned down the latest pay offer, and so it looks as though there will be a coal and fuel shortage. Ambulance drivers in one area are not going to answer emergency calls.

The Arab countries are cutting off the oil, and petrol rationing is imminent. The price of food has risen sharply, and mortgages are going to be impossible.

Yesterday's paper says that only about 50 people a week are dying from famine in Ethiopia, but far more deaths are expected on account of disease due to malnutrition.

I think too of many in the parish for whom this Christmas will bring back so many memories of happier years. Now an empty place at the table marks an irreparable loss, and only emphasizes the days when the family circle was complete.

And yet the strange thing is that the message of Christmas in its stark realism is not just a sentimental thought.

Christ was born into a real world, in which alien troops occupied the land... There was high taxation and government regulation about a censorship. There was an accommodation problem. There was certainly disease and pain, and cruelty and aggression. There was certainly religious bigotry and all that goes with it. Yet this is the world into which the joy and hope of the Christmas Good News broke through, and still breaks through. For many, especially the young, Christmas will have an air of enchantment about it. But for those for whom this time has only a sense of grim realism, either through hardship or tragedy, the message of Christmas - Jesus our Immanuel: GOD WITH US - comes through in an even deeper and more penetrating way, which lifts the heart from sadness, and stabilizes us with a sense of peace, for we begin to realize afresh that, as St. John says: "The light shines on in the dark, and the darkness has never quenched it."

Paul W. Rimmer

Vicar.

ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH

Sunday Services

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion

10.00 a.m. Parish Communion

6.30 p.m. Evensong

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'I've never tried it because I don't like it'

The new Series III Communion Service has been "tried" now in our church since Palm Sunday - It is strange to lose the familiar words and ways of the Book of Common Prayer, but the times we live in are certainly very different from those of three centuries ago, so surely there is a strong case for re-thinking our words and actions in the Communion Service to-day.

The language of the series III Service is of the twentieth century. 'Thee' becomes 'you', 'thy' becomes 'your' and words such as 'creatures', 'meet', 'reasonable', which have a totally different meaning to-day, are brought up to date. We no longer "acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness" in the confession, and the new confession is shorter and more relevant.

"Liturgy" really means 'the work of the people' and in the new Service the stress is on active participation by the laity, who are now permitted to read the scripture lessons and conduct the intercessions. (At St. Nicholas Church the Bishop has given permission for Deaconess Lodge and students from Wycliffe College to administer the Chalice) The modern musical setting of the service by John Rutter which we sing is lively and easy to learn.

Of course we miss the poetry and mystery of Cranmer, but in updating the language and liturgy of our service the aim is to worship God in a way which is as relevant to man in the twentieth century as the former ways were to those of previous generations.

But for those who prefer to bask in the beautiful rhetoric of a bygone age, and for whom "Lead us not into temptation" is so much more preferable than 'Do not bring us to the time of trial', there is always the first Sunday of the month, when in the stillness and the quiet of the old church the 1662 Service from the Book of Common Prayer is said at 8 a.m. But for those who wish to participate in a contemporary liturgy with the main body of worshippers then 10 a.m. is the time for Series III.

C.H.

new minister

The United Reformed Church in New Marston is about to get a new minister. She is the Rev. Constance Payne and she come to Marston from a group pastorate at Royston in Hertfordshire. The Induction will be at 3.00 p.m. on Saturday 8th December in the United Reformed Church.

FAREWELL!

At the end of the month we say farewell to our People's Warden, Albert Sidebottom and to his wife, Barbara. Albert has been appointed Director of Music at Downe House School, near Newbury, where they will make their new home.

They will be a great loss to the parish in many ways. Albert succeeded his wife Barbara in training the choir, which she had to give up on account of ill-health at the time. However she continued to sing in the choir, and tested many of the Brownies for their music badges. Under Albert, the choir has gone from strength to strength, and indeed sung an anthem each Sunday at our Parish Communion. The St. Nicholas Cantata which he conducted in St. Nicholas Church, with augmented choirs, including one made up of children from the Primary School, together with an orchestra of students from the Royal College of Music will long be remembered. Albert also served on a number of our parish committees, and recorded the weekly envelopes under the Stewardship scheme.

The Church of St. Nicholas has come to mean a great deal in their lives and they will no doubt miss it in the future. They will however leave the parish with the knowledge that their departure leaves a great gap, and they will take with them not only the appreciation but also affection of many of their friends who are more than grateful for what they have given to us.

WEDDING BELLS

As a wedding compliment to Princess Anne and Captain Mark Phillips, Stephen Jeffrey, Roy Jones, Deborah Parker, Isobel Nye and Alec Gammon rang 1260 Doubles in two methods on 14th November at St. Nicholas' Church.

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What the Oxford Preservation Trust Does for Marston

You will have read the report in last month's Marston Times about the Parish Council's fears for the future of Green Belt land near Marston, a report that included the words, "one of the good things about our village is the open land around it."

Yes, indeed! It is because of this particular good thing that many of us were drawn to look for homes in Marston, and count ourselves lucky that we found them. And it is thanks to the Oxford Preservation Trust that much of this land is as safe as such things can be from the risk of development. For the Trust owns many of the fields between the village and the river, some more beside the By-pass near the Elsfield fly-over, and also the Victoria Arms. In fact, the largest area of the Trust's property lies in Marston.

A Marston Area Committee helps advise the Trust on the running of these properties. But it does much more besides: it acts as a pressure group, both within the Trust itself and outside it. Within the Trust, we have during the last three years, pressed for the purchase of more property in Marston, and though the Trust has not yet been successful in its negotiations, the fact that it realizes Marston people are keen to preserve their open spaces encourages it to keep trying.

Outside the Trust, we have successfully prevented the erection of a radio mast in Marston; we have persuaded the County Council to give top priority to its consideration of making the old village a conservation area; we have supported the Parish Council on a number of planning matters and feel that our support has helped tip the balance in Marston's favour; and we have influenced such bodies as the University and the Thames Conservancy in decisions affecting the village. Among our current concerns is an effort to find under-age motor cyclists somewhere where they can officially pursue their sport without being a nuisance to fellow villagers.

One of our major efforts in recent years concerned both the Trust and other landowners. This was a comprehensive plan, drawn up two years ago, for the treatment of the triangle of Green Belt land in the Cherwell Valley between the By-pass, Marston village and North Oxford. This has not yet been acted on, though the Parish Council's fears expressed in the last issue show that the need for action is increasingly urgent.

And this brings me to the crux of the matter: if we had a larger membership we should be in a stronger position to press for action on this and other important matters. We have already lost battles that, with more members behind us, we think we would have won. All Marston residents benefit from the work of the Trust, but only a handful belong to it. Won't you join? Your subscription will help swell the funds available for preserving and improving the beauty of Oxford and its neighbourhood, including Marston, and your support will strengthen the voice of the Trust and, in particular, its Marston Area Committee.

The minimum annual subscription is £1.00, payable either to the Secretary at 10 Turn Again Lane, St. Ebbe's, Oxford, or to me, Phyllis Nye, 13 Mill Lane, Marston, and either of us would be pleased to give you more information on the Trust and its work.

P.N.

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Parish Council Notes

At a recent meeting, the Parish Council discussed the experimental alterations to the Marsh Lane/ Cherwell Drive junction which were generally thought to be working well. It was decided to ask the City Council to make the works permanent, to widen the roads where necessary and to provide the appropriate 'Give Way' signs. It was also decided to press the County Council again for a 'No Entry except for Access' Order in respect of Elsfield Road and Oxford Road to prevent the through traffic using this as an alternative route.

The Parish Council also received a complaint about inconvenience to pedestrians caused by horses being ridden on, and fouling, footpaths. The Police have been asked to take appropriate action, but it is hoped that the practice will cease.

The Clerk reported that, as the County Council had expressed the view that an "element of hope value" should be taken into account when assessing the value of the land which the Parish Council wanted to acquire in Elsfield Road for recreational purposes, the price was likely to be beyond the resources of the Parish Council. It was therefore decided that the project should remain in abeyance for the time being.

CONGRATULATIONS

Bryan Parkinson has been awarded for the second time the Presidemt's Award for the best Patrol Leader in the County - i.e. best projects and activities for his patrol.

Dates for the Church

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICES BY CANDLELIGHT

Wednesday 19th December at 6.30 p.m.

Families with small children are particularly invited to this service.

Sunday 23rd December at 6.30 p.m.

Admission to both these services is free, but because of restricted accommodation it will be by free tickets available after any of the Services on Sunday 16th December.

CHRISTMAS EVE

11.30 Midnight Holy Communion

CHRISTMAS DAY

8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
11.00 a.m.	Family Mattins and Sermon
12.00 noon	Holy Communion
5.30 p.m.	Evensong (said with no sermon)

CHILDREN'S INSTRUCTION

Don't forget the new arrangements for Children's Instruction which will start on December 2nd. There will be instruction for children from 3½ - 10 in the Church Hall at 10.00 a.m. for children whose parents are attending Parish Communion. (The creche for very young children will, of course, continue.) There will also be, as at present, Instruction at 11.15 a.m., except on the first Sunday in each month when there will be a Family Service instead.

EVENTS

MARSTON W.I.

The December meeting will be on Tuesday 11th December at 7.30 p.m. Mrs. Hamlin will be talking about 'Party Fare' and there will be a competition for an iced Christmas cake.

MARSTON WIVES

On Wednesday December 12th at 7.45 p.m. in the Church Hall, Mrs. O. Ladbrook of the Oxford Horticultural Society will be talking about Christmas Floral Arrangements. All are welcome.

OVER 60S CLUB

The Over 60s Club will hold its Christmas Party on Monday 10th December in the Mortimer Hall from 5.30 - 9.15 p.m. Any offer of help at 2.00 p.m. to prepare the food, or of transport at 5.15 and 9.15 p.m. will be much appreciated. Please sign the list in the Church porch or get in touch with Deaconess Lodge at 5, Elsfield Road (Tel: 47956)

rubbish!

In spite of successful Police prosecutions, rubbish is still being dumped on open spaces in Marston. Everyone's co-operation is sought to prevent this nuisance. Suitable cases should be reported to the Police. The principal areas involved are round the Boults Lane recreation ground and in Elsfield Road.

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