NOVEMBER FREE

# marston times

PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS

## 'What is the Church for?'

Sam is of Primary Age. I recognised him outside the home I was visiting and said: "Hello Sam, you don't remember me do you?" "Yes I do" the reply came back with alacrity . . . "I've been THERE!"

How often the Church is thought of in terms of bricks and mortar . . the dispenser of instant carols, harvest hymns, bunches of flowers on Mothering Sunday . . as well as the place where we go for christenings, weddings and funerals.

Yet amongst the 39 Articles ( which many only read when the sermon is boring and they are thumbing through their prayer book) the phrase occurs:

> "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance."

That reminds us that the Church is not so much bricks and mortar as human beings; not so much concrete as a congregation declaring and sharing. We share in a common baptism . . We declare 'the deeds of him who called us out of darkness into his marvellous light' (i. Peter 2.9.). We are above all a KOINONIA . . . a Christian fellowship or brotherhood. We may fail often. We may get huffy, or angry, or resentful, but deep down we know that's what we are meant to be as Christians.

But the Church is not intended to be an inward-looking, self-satisfied group. It is a congregation of people permeating society with the grace and love of God. As Canon M. A. C. Warren once said: "Christians are to take the peace of God into the world as the business man tucks his paper under his arm, in a morning."

The role of the Church in society may change as, for instance, we see our village changing from a rural community to a suburban extension.

What is the Church for in Marston today?

The answer is that its function is still the same but it is called to be, in the phrase of the leaflet 'The Diocese Looks Ahead' . . 'a serving Church in the forefront of community life'.

Centuries ago a great Christian said: "As the soul is to the body, so are Christians to the world." We shouldn't pat ourselves on the back but within one week two people said to me: "You know that in my department in my school, it is amazing how Christians are in important positions or are showing an amount of caring that cannot be paid for in a salary."

"What is the Church for?" Surely to provide the cement of society, the love that makes the world go round. And if Sam even now or later finds a Christian fellowship of caring, serving people, he has found the Church and can rightly say: 'I've been there!'

Paul N. 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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## CHILDREN AND THE CHURCH

This may seem a long way from what a Worship Committee should be discussing, but it was very relevant to the problem of Children's Instruction and Worship at St. Nicholas.

Opinion was divided at the Parish Meeting on 25th September, and also at the P.C.C. Meeting on Wednesday, 10th October.

It now looks as though from Advent Sunday, 2nd December, we shall be offering two alternatives.

Whilst parents are in Church at the 10 a.m. Parish Communion, there will be a creche at the Vicarage, and also in the Church Hall Instruction for youngsters up to the age of 10 years old.

Then again at 11.15 a.m. there will be Instruction in the Church for the same age group i.e. for those who cannot get up in time for the 10 a.m. session.

The only difference here will be that on the first Sunday of the month there will be an informal Family Service at 11.15 a.m. instead of the usual Children's Instruction. This will be on the lines of the Harvest and Mothering Sunday Services.

Of course we shall welcome children to the 10 a.m. session whether their parents come to the Parish Communion or not.

One thing we do need is more adults who will be prepared to help with the Children's Instruction at 10 a.m.

It is hoped to arrange for the young people of the 10+ age group to meet during the week for their instruction, and again we should be glad to hear of any who will be prepared to help with this. We envisage this being done in small groups in private houses.

The 13+ and Post-Confirmation Group will continue their training in the Youth Fellowship Sessions, details of which are announced each Sunday in Church.

If you would like to help in any way please contact the Vicar or Deaconess Lodge.

### Women's Institute

13th November, at 7.30 p.m. in the Church Hall. 'Christmas Decorations' by Mrs. Cadel and Mrs. Endfield.

### Marston Wives

28th November at 7.30 p.m. in the Church Hall, "Poetry for Pleasure" by the Vicar - anyone welcome.

### PTA BAZAAR

The annual bazaar organised by the St. Nicholas School Parent Teacher Association will be held at 2.00 p.m. on Saturday 24th November in the School. All are welcome.

## EDITORIAL

Editorials are something that readers of the Marston Times have been spared so far, but there are occasions when they serve a purpose. The purpose of this one is to thank Irene Read, who has just given up the editorship of the Marston Times, for all her hard work on it over the last eighteen months. It is not an easy task and she has undertaken it alongside all her other commitments. Our thanks to her.

Whilst on the subject of thanks, there are many other people involved in the Marston Times who deserve thanks: those who fold and distribute it, those who type it, those who run its finances and those who support it by advertising. With-out all of them it would not come through your letter-box each month - an event to which we hope you look forward. Of the free 'literature' which all of us find on our door-mats this is the only paper which is exclusively for Old Marston and which tries to reflect what is going on in the community and what is important to it.

The new editor is Tony Raban. He hopes that you will tell him of things which are happening and could be put into the paper, and also of things which you would like to see there. His address is 9 Clays Close and his telephone number is 65130.

### Patronal Festival

This year's patronal festival will be on Sunday, 2nd December. This is the day when we remember St. Nicholas to whom the Church is dedicated. In addition to the usual services on this Sunday there will be a family service at 11.15 a.m.

St. Nicholas's actual feast day is Thursday, 6th December when there will be an evening communion at 7.15 p.m.

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# Beat the Price Rise

Growing your own vegetables is one way and an increasingly popular one judging by the recent demand for allotments in the village. On the Court Place Farm Allotments (the ones between the Oxford Road and the Boults Lane recreation ground) there are over 170 people with allotments including 15 'senior citizens' and 4 ladies. 24 allotments have been let in the last few weeks alone and the only vacant plots now are on rough ground which will need a lot of work. Last year, for the first time for some time, all the Parish Council's allotments in Mill Lane were let, though there are now two vacant ones.

FROM 'POOR RELIEF' TO FAMILY LEISURE

Allotments were invented to answer a particular need. In the past, when many parts of England had large open fields, men who worked on the land depended for part of their living on using common land. When these open fields were turned into the small fields of our modern landscape, this common land often disappeared. This loss, together with the growing attraction of city life, drove countrymen away from their homes. Allotments replaced the common land and gave farm workers a stake in the villages and an adequate standard of living. The idea seems to have sprung up in the eighteenth century. About 1772 a landowner near Tewkesbury set out 25 acres of land as allotments for the use of the 'poor'. During the nineteenth century, the government took up the idea and in 1887 powers of compulsory purchase were granted by the Allotments Act so that every community could be properly provided for. Even by that time however a distinction had grown up between country allotments which helped to support the poor and those in towns which increasingly became a leisure amenity. In most places it is the latter role which allotments now fulfil and indeed the next few years may see them developed still further as a form of family recreation, particularly as most modern houses have very small gardens.

Both sets of allotments in Marston are on comparatively new sites. The Court Place Farm site was once tithe land and became allotments in 1948 - and the present secretary of the Allotment Association, Mr. R. Bowen, has been secretary ever since they started. The Parish Council acquired the present Mill Lane site in 1952 to replace land now occupied by St. Nicholas Caravan Site.

'PENNIES, POLES AND PRIZES'

In both cases the allotments are bargains. They come in 10 pole plots - about 300 square yards which will grow enough to feed the average family comfortably - though they can sometimes be divided. The Court Place Farm allotments cost £1.05 a year to rent and the Parish Council ones 75p. In addition to feeding your family with fresh vegetables you can compete with many of the present allotment holders in local and national competitions where they often win prizes. In case you think it sounds hard work, one keen local gardener manages three allotments one-handed!

If you and your family want to beat the freeze and get fresh air and fresh vegetables by joining the allotment holders, get in touch either with Mr. R. Bowen of 135 Oxford Road for the Court Place Farm allotments or with the Clerk of the Parish Council, Mr. L. M. Garner of 31 Oxford Road for the Mill Lane site.

# Parish Council Notes

NEW CHAIRMAN

The Parish Council have elected a new Chairman to succeed Mr. Alec Gammon. He is Mr. J. E. Busfield. Mr. Busfield is the Engineer and Surveyor to the Bullingdon R.D.C. He is also a member of the new South Oxfordshire District Council. He lives in Mill Lane and has been a member of the Parish Council since 1968.

The Council co-opted Mr. C. Hawgood as a new member to fill the vacancy caused by Mr. Gammon's resignation. He is also one of the parish's representatives on the new South Oxfordshire District Council.

GREEN BELT

For many years now a large area of land outside the City which includes the open land around the village has been proposed as green belt though it has never been confirmed as such. The Parish Council considered a suggestion which has now been made for part of the proposed green belt to be confirmed. The proposal is, however, to confirm the piece farthest from the City and not that nearer in, which would include the area around Marston. This inner area would remain merely as proposed green belt. Although this would not change the legal status of the area the Parish Council felt that to leave it unconfirmed might be interpreted as making it more liable to development. The Council are therefore writing to the Secretary of State for the Environment to ask that either the whole area should be confirmed or none of it. They feel that to leave unconfirmed the area nearest the City, where the pressure to develop is greatest, might be dangerous.

## Green Belt Proposals

As you will see, the Parish Council are worried about the fact that certain parts of the green belt area near the City, including the open land near Marston, are not included in the area of green belt which it is proposed to confirm. These are complicated proposals but they could affect the village and if you want to do anything about it now is the time A public notice has been issued which says that the plans can be inspected at either the Clerk of the County Council's office at County Hall, Oxford or at Bullingdon R.D.C.'s offices in Wheatley between 9.00 a.m. and 12.45 p.m., and 2.15 p.m. and 4.00 p.m. each weekday. Anyone who wants to object should write to:

The Secretary,
The Department of the Environment,
2 Marsham Street,
London, SW1P 3EB

by 13th November, stating to which areas of land they are referring. This sounds a complex procedure - but it is worth thinking about because one of the good things about our village in the open land around it.

### BLITHE SPIRIT

Don't forget that the Marston Players are performing Noel Coward's Blithe Spirit on 8th, 9th and 10th November in the Mortimer Hall at 7.30 p.m.

### HARLOW SCHOOL

The Harlow Association (Teacher/Parent) are holding an 'Open Forum' meeting on Thursday evening, 29th November. Mr. Day the new Deputy Director of Education for the New Oxfordshire has agreed to be on the panel. It is hoped that many people in the area will attend this meeting. Further information about this 'Open Forum' will be given out by the school and notices in local shops.

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The Harlow School held a Go-Kart Grand Prix on Sunday, 30th September. It was the first time such an event had been held in the area and was very much enjoyed by those who attended despite a bitterly cold afternoon. The final of the six heats was won by the go-kart sponsored by Kingerlees. The Ladies race was won by Pam Beard driving the British Leyland sponsored go-kart.

Additional entertainment was given by the Horspath Scout Band, Oxford United British Leyland Fire Brigade and various stalls.

### CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

The United Reformed Church are holding their Christmas Bazaar on Saturday 24th November at 3.00 p.m. in the United Reformed Church Hall in Marston Road. Father Christmas will be there for the children - and teas will be available for the adults.


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