

DECEMBER 1967

# HALSALL PARISH MAGAZINE



Rector: The Rev. W. H. BULLOUGH A.K.C. (Surrogate)

"The Rectory," Halsall. Tel. 321.

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## THE CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday, December 17th, at 2.30 p.m.

THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL.

Sunday, December 24th, at 3.30 p.m.

THE PARISH CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE.

There will be no service at 6.30 p.m. on this Sunday.

at 11.30 p.m. THE CHRISTMAS EUCHARIST.

Christmas Day, December 25th

8.00 a.m. HOLY COMMUNION.

10.30 a.m. MATTINS WITH HOLY COMMUNION.

The Rectory,  
Halsall.

18th November, 1967.

My dear friends,

In a blaze of coloured lights the angels are sounding their trumpets in many of the streets in the cities. Underneath their outspread wings the daily commerce of those busy streets goes on. Toys and clothes, food and drink, cars and T.V.'s, are bought and sold. Apart from the cars and T.V.'s it was like this in Palestine about two thousand years ago. Ours is a more sophisticated age; we sell and buy and do things that once would never have been thought of, but yet we remain fundamentally the same — the same old hopes and fears, the same desires and anxieties. Certainly peace on earth and goodwill amongst men is no dead issue. Yet our situation is not just the same; "beneath the Angel-strain have rolled two thousand years of wrong." We are more possessed by our possessions and we live feather-bedded — albeit on top of a volcano. The reality of the world of the spirit has grown thin. Seldom do we hear the angel trumpets, and when we think we do — the psychiatrists are ready to warn us of the tricks of the unconscious.

What do our street decorators have in mind. Are they trying to exploit something that ought not to be exploited? Are the Angels and other decorations there to soften up the potential customer? Has big business made a take-over bid for the Christmas story in the belief that it could turn it to better use than the Church has been able to do?

Or might it be that here is a token of recognition that the story has a word to speak to business, commerce and industry? Is there here a dim acknowledgement that there are no tracts of human life and interest which lie outside the orbit and rule of Him who was born on Christmas Day?

The answer to these questions I do not know; perhaps indeed there is no answer. All our motives are very mixed up. But I do know that we who call ourselves Christians must not allow the Christmas story to become a pleasing myth suitable for children and business exploitation. We must be careful lest food and drink, presents and cards cover up the real meaning of the festival, and in seeking the pleasure we lose the real joy.

Not everyone in Judea heard the angels' song;

only a few shepherds were about and they were keeping watch. It is as we find time to ponder the Christmas story and join with our fellow Christians in praise and worship that we shall hear the angel song —

"Glory to God in highest heaven  
And on earth His peace for men  
on whom His favour rests."

May His favour rest on you and yours this Christmas.

Your sincere friend,

Herbert Bullough.

### CHRISTMAS—A RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL

"O Holy Child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us we pray;  
Cast out our sin and enter in,  
Be born in us today."

At this time of the year Christians throughout the world are preparing for the greatest of all Religious Festivals — Christmas. In mediaeval times all Holy Days were holidays, a time for feasting and merry making as well as being a time of Religious Observance. In general this habit does not prevail in England today, except for the festival of Christ's Nativity at Christmas.

The Feast of the Nativity was first kept on December 25th, in Rome during the fourth century, from whence the tradition spread westwards. Tradition has it that St. Augustine was the first to bring the festival to Britain. The Orthodox churches, however, celebrate Christmas when we keep the Epiphany on January 6th.

The four weeks preceding Christmas are known in the church kalendar as Advent. This is primarily a time of preparation for the Messiah who comes into the hearts of men through the Holy Spirit. There are many customs, some commencing during Advent, which surround our Christmas Festival. Many of these are of traditional origin.

The Christmas Crib, which is very much part of our Christmas in church, school and home, is attributed to St. Francis who made the first crib using live animals. In Germany the crib is usually placed beneath the Christmas tree. It is of course to Germany that we attribute the Christmas Tree. The tradition of the "Christmas Tree" is said to have arisen when Mar-

tin Luther illuminated a tree with candles to light the way from heaven for the coming Christ.

However we symbolise Christmas, or however pre-occupied we are with the inevitable Christmas shopping and parties the climax of all this for Christians everywhere must surely be our Christmas Communion. Here, in the peacefulness of Christmas morning, each of us, in our own church, and in our own way, can receive the long-expected Jesus into our life, as he came to the humble folk in the stable at Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago. We too can adore him with our worship as did the first shepherds and later the wise men. But perhaps, most of all during this time of unrest in many parts of the world, we should make the Angel's greeting our prayer, that there may be "Peace on Earth and Goodwill toward men."

### CHRISTMAS — "THE TRIMMINGS"

When we look at Christmas, not as a Religious Festival, but as it is seen through the eyes of many in the world today, we see that some of the so-called Christmas Traditions are in fact of pagan origin. Bearing this in mind, it is not so surprising that these have such prominence in a worldly festival.

Such things as yule logs, holly, ivy and mistletoe have become part of our Christmas decorations because originally they were linked with pagan Winter and New Year Festivals, due to their abundance at this time of the year. Many strange superstitions surround these plants, the origins of which are unknown.

We are not the only country with such strange traditions. In Scandinavia superstitions surround Yule Candles. Two candles are placed on a table, one representing the husband and the other the wife. Which ever candle burns the longer implies longer life for the person concerned. Another tradition is that a candle is lit in the evening and extinguished at sunrise by the oldest member of the family. While the candle burns it means blessing, but if it burns out it signifies death.

The idea of exchanging gifts at Christmastime originated with the children's patron St. Nicholas. In some continental countries gifts are exchanged on December 6th, St. Nicholas Day. Coupled with this is the tradition of placing shoes outside the door which will be filled with good things for the children and supposedly suitable things for the bad. In Britain of course the tradition is centred around "Santa Claus", (or "Saint Nicholas", as it came to us via America), who mysteriously conquers our chimneys on Christmas Eve. For us then, the exchanging of gifts is associated with the Christmas Festival.

The Christmas Card is comparatively new in origin. It is a descendant of the "School Pieces" or "Christmas Pieces" of the nineteenth century. These were sheets of writing paper with pen and ink designs or copper plate headings. The sending of cards began in the nineteenth century, now millions of cards are sold every year. In fact sales are so great that voluntary organisations now use this as a means of supplementing their funds.

For many the pleasure of buying gifts so easily becomes a great burden. This is understandable when one considers that everything from holly to gifts can be purchased in our shops, and hundreds of people are to be found there searching for them. However we interpret Christmas, the majesty and humility of the Christmas Festival remains so. Nothing can or will alter that for it is of God. But we, as people of the world, must determine that the extras of so great a Festival do not overwhelm its inner meaning.

### THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

As Christmas draws near, the minds of Christians turn naturally to thoughts of Bethlehem and the Holy Family. Presently we shall all be immersed in this

great festival of the family, rejoicing in the warmth, the love, the fellowship of our own homes. Those of us with children will find our festival immensely gladdened by their presence, and we shall give thanks to God for their health, their safety, and their joy in Christmas.

But alas, just as Bethlehem 2,000 years ago, there will be children coming this Christmas for whom there will be "no room". No room, that is, unless we as Christians come to their help. There is the child born fatherless through no fault or sin of his. The child whose home has collapsed about him, leaving him both broken and bewildered. The child at odds with himself and with the world around him because of somebody's sin, or somebody's personal tragedy. The child denied a proper chance in life unless we help him to find it. The child hampered by some physical impairment. At least four such children find their way to us each day.

These, then, are the children helped by the Church of England Children's Society. Your Society, because it is in your name, and with your help, that it does its saving work. Will you help it, this Christmas, to continue and perhaps extend that work?

A Christmas gift to the Society is a gift to our Lord himself. How can this be? Recall our Lord's words "...whosoever receiveth one such little child in my name receiveth me." If these words are true, as we believe them to be true, they must mean that ministering to children in trouble we are ministering to our Lord himself, who 2,000 years ago found all doors save one closed against Him.

Will you help the Society's 5,000 children this coming Christmas? Your festival will be the happier for it if you do.

Please send your gift to me at The Rectory.

H.B.

### "WHO ON EARTH"

On Thursday evening, December 14th, an exciting production of **WORSHIP FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AT CHRISTMAS** under the title of "Who on Earth" will be staged in Liverpool Cathedral.

A.B.C. TELEVISION will be tele-recording this production for transmission on Christmas Eve.

Taking part will be the actress Billy Whitelaw; the Liverpool Folk group 'The Crofters'; Peter Lewis; the Settlers; and a top-line beat group who are sympathetic to our aim and purpose. **We want also just over 2,000 young people from all parts of Merseyside to take part in this production.**

It will be necessary for these 2,000 young people to be at the Cathedral by 7-30 p.m. at the very latest on the 14th in order that a full-scale rehearsal can be held before the programme is tele-recorded at 8-30 p.m.

This letter is being sent out to all parishes, and to youth groups of all denominations on Merseyside to offer you the chance of sending a group of people to take part in this Act of Worship which will try to convey the real meaning and impact of Christmas for the world today.

We would ask that the young people who come to this should be between the ages of 14 and 24; and that all tickets asked for should be used or returned to us well before the production. We will try to be as fair as we can with ticket allocation but must stress that the earlier application is made the more likely the chance of securing a reasonable number of tickets.

(If you have not already handed in your name for this event and you would like to go, please get in touch with Mr. Midgeley at once).

H.B.



To C.M.S. Parishes linked with the Jerusalem Archbishopric.

Our Link Missionary is Dr. Barbara Hitch.

### **SUDAN — A Continuing Need**

In recent months events in the Middle East as a whole have been engaging our concern and our prayers. But the Church in one particular area of the Archbishopric still stands much in need of our remembrance and support — the Church in the Sudan. The waves of hatred and distrust set in motion by the six days' war in June washed over Khartoum — where there was much bitterness, and diplomatic relations with U.K. were broken off; but the Bishop had no particular difficulty in returning to Khartoum, after his furlough and reports indicate little noticeable change in the local attitude to individual British people.

The internal situation is complex, and the future very uncertain, especially since the resignation of the Prime Minister Sadik el Mahdi in May. This was the result of tensions which had long been building up, and the consequences cannot yet be foreseen. One may well be the strengthening of the forces which are seeking to impose an Islamic constitution. Many Muslims including intellectuals, and some in responsible positions would welcome a secular constitution, with Islam as the state religion. To this, few Christians would object. But the Southern Front have made it clear that the South could have no part in a Sudan ruled under an Islamic constitution.

The recent proposal to set up 9 regions with their own jurisdiction in local affairs, including the lower level of education is acceptable to some opinion in the South — and may be seen as a step towards keeping the Sudan together. It is not only the Southern Provinces who feel neglected by Khartoum, and are seeking to assert themselves—the same is true of other areas to varying extent.

In Education, the present policy of the government is for the use of Arabic throughout all levels of schools in every area. This might mean that Sudanese pupils could no longer be taken at the Unity High School though many parents would welcome this opportunity for education in English. One result is fewer teachers from U.K. in the schools. Regional administrations if set up might of course introduce a different system at the primary level. Southern Representatives on the Draft Committee for the constitution recently proposed that religious minorities should be free to set up their own educational institutions. The proposal was however defeated.

### **The Church in the South**

In spite of reports to the contrary, the problem of the South is not solved and a final solution seems as far off as ever. Recent events have led it to be relegated to a lower place in the priorities. With all eyes on the Arab/Israeli war, little attention is being paid to the position in the South. Indeed, with the Sudan so much to the fore—for example the recent Arab summit at Khartoum—it is not surprising that efforts are made to create the impression that all is normal. But in fact it appears that there is still little communication outside the three Provincial headquarters. The people are still scattered in the bush, with no schools or dispensaries, and violent incidents are still occurring. It is hard to see how the situation can be improved until a political solution is reached. The first step could well be a full Round Table Conference—and the end of military action. In spite of a continuing absence of reliable news from the South it is known that famine conditions are adding to the hardships of the people in many areas. Measures taken by the Government to deal with this situation have not surprisingly

brought little relief. The position of the Church has been improved by the return of some measure of confidence, and a genuine desire on the part of the government for co-operation with the Church for the welfare of the Sudan. The visit of representatives of the All Africa Conference of Churches went very well, and their full report though long delayed is eagerly awaited. Pastors and other Church workers in the South would seem to be continuing their work as best they can in conditions of great difficulty.

### **The Church in Exile**

The Bishop has been able to meet the two Assistant Bishops and many of the clergy at Arua. The pastors have been having a very difficult time, on the move with their people, but are in good heart. They all want to get back to the Sudan, but feel they are of greater service with their people in exile than cooped up in Juba, which would probably be as far as they could get if they returned. Students in neighbouring countries pose a great problem. Some have done very well — 2 are head boys of big schools in Uganda — but their future training and employment are difficult, in spite of funds being made available from many sources, including Ecumenical Programme for Emergency Action in Africa. Finance is less of a problem than might have been feared. The programme for pastors and students in exile amounts to over £7,000 and in the South to over £4,000 — in spite of the fact that over half the clergy still in the Sudan are not able to draw any of their salary. The cost of living has risen so steeply that there are grounds for considering it higher in Juba than anywhere else in the world.

### **The Church in Northern Sudan**

The biggest problem is the sudden withdrawal of the Government grant from Omdurman Hospital, probably for purely financial reasons. A radically new pattern of medical work has been prepared, and is being put into action. There is some hope for a small grant next year. Many Sudanese and expatriates in Khartoum have been concerned and helpful. Extra Sudanese clergy in the 3 towns are doing a good job.

Caught up in two of the great struggles of our time — the Arab/Israeli conflict, and the confrontation between black Africa and the Arab world, our fellow Christians in the Sudan look to us for continued understanding, concern and prayer.

### **THE MOTHERS' UNION**

We all enjoyed the visit of Miss Christian very much indeed and we hope to welcome her again in the Summer months, when it is hoped to arrange for some of her children to be entertained to tea by our branch.

Our next meeting on Tuesday, 5th December, brings us another medical personality. Dr. Joyce Riding will speak on the subject "Who cares for the halt and the blind." Dr. Riding's talk will be illustrated by sound films. Those who were absent last month missed a treat. Here is another one. Don't miss it this time.

### **THE FARMERS' MEETING**

Our thoughts and sympathies go out to all those farmers who have been caught up in the terrible slaughter due to the outbreak of foot and mouth disease. We do hope this most appalling epidemic will speedily cease.

If this is the case then our meeting on Dec. 7th will take place but we must all be prepared for yet another cancellation.

We hope to welcome Mr. A. Home, the County Poultry Adviser, who will speak and head the discussion on the present situation in the poultry industry.

## SANCTUARY FLOWERS

- Dec. 3—Vacant.  
10—Mrs. N. Smith.  
17—Vacant.  
24—The Congregation.  
31—Mrs. R. Heaton.  
Jan. 7—Mrs. K. Edmondson.

## SERVERS' ROTA

- Dec. 3 8.00 a.m. Jim Heaton.  
10 10.30 a.m. Harold Grimshaw,  
and Michael Lewis.  
17 9.00 a.m. John Davies.  
6.30 p.m. Gordon Midgeley.  
24 8.00 a.m. Peter Balmer.  
10.30 a.m. Harold Grimshaw  
and Tony Gaskell.  
11.30 p.m. Harold Grimshaw  
and Malcolm Serjeant.  
25 8.00 a.m. John Gaskell.  
10.30 a.m. Raymond Juba.  
31 8.00 a.m. Brian Heaton.  
10.30 a.m. Roger Dutton.  
Jan. 7 8.00 a.m. John Pounds.

## HOLY BAPTISM

- "Entered into the family of Christ's Church."  
Nov. 12—Cheryl Dawn, daughter of Alan James and  
Joyce Sephton, 35 Cemetery Road, Southport.

## HOLY MATRIMONY

- "Those whom God hath joined together."  
Oct. 28—James Oliver Martin, Kershaws Farm, Smithy  
Lane, Scarisbrick, and Judith Mac Wreyford,  
80 Summerwood Lane, Halsall.  
Nov. 18—Anthony John Macrae, 13 Yew Tree Road,  
Ormskirk, and Jacqueline Hazel Broasbank, 18  
Heathley Lane, Shirdley Hill.

## BURIAL OF THE DEAD

- "In sure and certain hope."  
Nov. 24—Florence Marshall, age 73 years, 39 Lytham  
Road, Southport.

## SIDESMEN'S ROTA

- Dec. 3—H. Huyton, A. Grimshaw, P. Saunders, T.  
Grimshaw.  
10—R. Gaskell, R. Hunt, W. Robinson, E.  
Blackhurst.  
17—E. Serjeant, D. Swift, J. Grimshaw, G.  
Midgley.  
24—H. Baldwin, W. White, J. Cheetham, H.  
Gaskell.  
31—R. Heaton, J. Colley, P. Aynsley, N. Britnell.

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## CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

1967

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Cake	61	11	3
Christmas Gifts	201	6	6
Fruit and Vegetables	47	17	7
Grotto	11	7	6
Guides and Brownies Dolls Exhibition	4	3	6
Hand Knitted Goods	12	10	0
Hat Bar and Handkerchief	36	17	6
Hoop-la	6	16	9
Linen	43	0	0
Lucky Dip	51	9	5
Mothers Union	36	8	7
Raffle	47	2	0
Refreshments	10	9	1
School	10	2	5
Sweets	4	16	6
Whist and Domino Drive	14	0	0
Sale of Christmas Cards	31	2	6
Donations	11	0	0
Pre-Bazaar Efforts	128	18	1
* Unspent Thrift Tickets	1	1	3
	£820	11	11

	£	s.	d.
* Thrift Tickets Sold	101	19	6
Thrift Tickets Spent	100	18	3

Pre Bazaar Efforts.

Coffee Evenings Rectory	49	10	3
Whist Drive (Mr. Greenhalgh)	30	0	0
Jumble Sale	36	7	10
Fruit & Veg. Stall Bazaar Effort	13	0	0

£128 18 1

	£	s.	d.
Hire of Hall	4	4	0
Caretaker	1	10	0
Printing	3	0	0
Whist and Domino Prizes	6	2	0

	14	16	0
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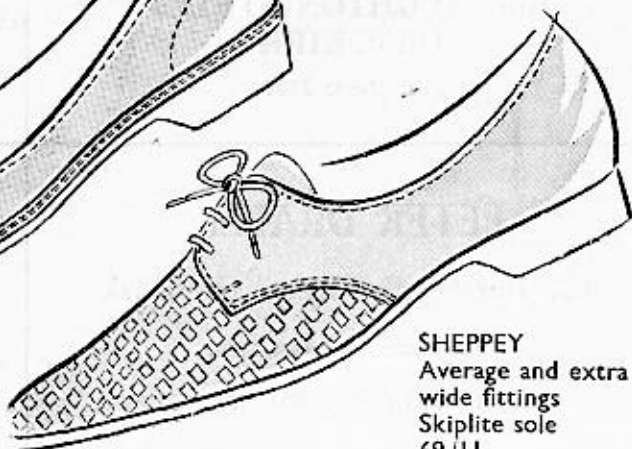


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