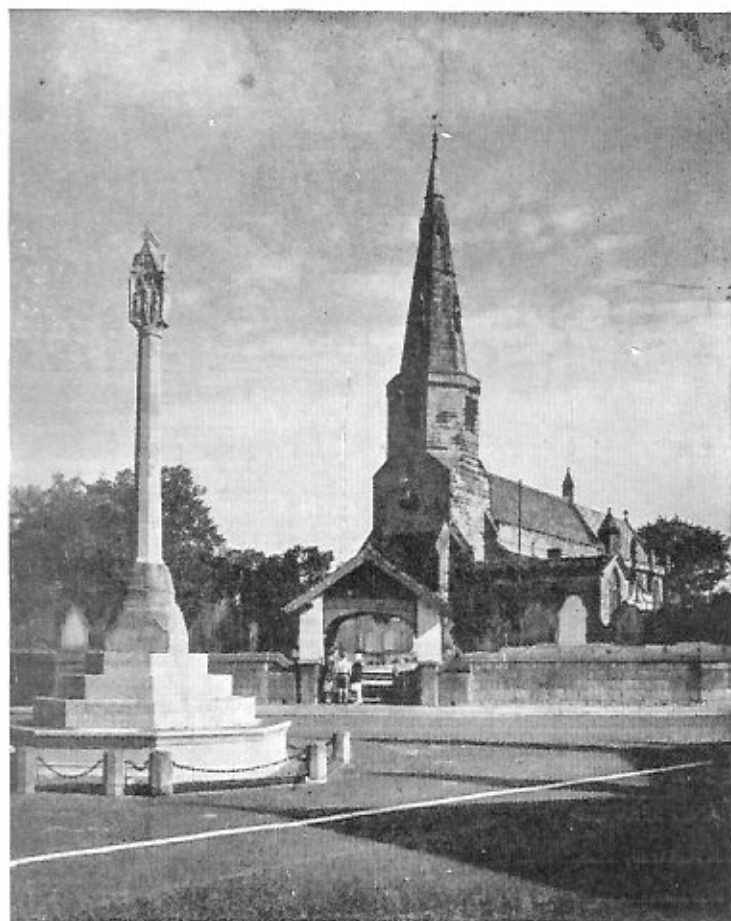


DECEMBER, 1968

HALSALL PARISH MAGAZINE



Rector: The Rev. W. H. Bullough A.K.C. (Surrogate)
"The Rectory," Halsall. Tel. 321.

Church Wardens:

MR. R. HEATON, Rector's Warden.

MR. H. DEAN, People's Warden.

Organist and Master of the Choristers:

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Sub Organist:

MR. E. CARR, L.L.C.M., 99 New Lane Pace, Banks. Tel. 85650.

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Renovations

The Rectory,
Halsall.

12th November, 1968.

My dear Friends,

When you receive this magazine the preparations for Christmas will be taking much of your time. It will be a very expensive time for all of us. May I appeal to you all to give thought to those whose Christmas will be a very poor one. There are millions of poor folks who will be hungry on Christmas Day, there are hosts of people without homes and in addition to this there are all those who are in desperate need of medical attention. Will you help? **CHRISTIAN AID NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT.** No longer are we able to say that our contributions are eaten up in administration. Christian Aid cuts all the red tape and gets on with the job. You can read about it in this magazine. Please send your gift to me and I will forward the contributions from our parishioners, direct to the Director of Christian Aid. Please act NOW. Your gift can help to save a life and bring comfort to another member of God's family. The need is urgent and the opportunity is yours, use it for God and may He bless you in the deed.

The next item of information is a domestic one. You are all no doubt aware that at the end of this year we shall have completed the first seven years of our Stewardship Campaign. I want to express my sincere thanks to all those who have helped us during these seven years. To those who decided to covenant their subscriptions, to all those in the envelope scheme and those who send donations at regular intervals, please accept my own thanks and the thanks of the Parochial Church Council. Your faithful support has enabled us to restore our Church and Organ, to play our full part in the life of our Diocese and to make substantial contributions to the Church overseas. It is our hope that you will continue to support us during the next seven year period. Alas, our expenses have increased and will continue to do so. The Parochial Church Council has given careful consideration to its policy and unanimously decided to make two important changes. The first and most important is that from January 1st there will be collections taken again at all services in St. Cuthberts Church on Sundays. The plate will no longer be at the door or by the font. The sidesmen will again officiate as sidesmen, both morning and evening. The other change concerns the Parish Magazine. From January a charge will be made for the Magazine, the price will be sixpence. This is much less than the actual cost of the magazine, but it will go some way to reduce the heavy costs involved. The Church Council has faithfully honoured all its pledges over the past seven years, and in fairness to those who have so loyally supported their church these two changes are now very necessary.

Very soon now, we who belong to the fellowship of St. Cuthberts Church will sing Christmas hymns and carols in our Church; we shall hear the deathless story of the shepherds in the fields by night — of the wise men from distant lands following a star. We shall read of the Babe born in a manger, and hear the angels proclaim the birth of Christ. Most of us will meet at St. Cuthberts in the still midnight on Christmas Eve to give thanks in The Eucharist, commemorating the night of the Nativity in communion with Him and with one another.

It will be again as if "time stood still in the hush of an age gone by." For we shall be in touch with eternal wonders, and a changeless glory will have invaded our changeful lives.

Mrs. Bullough and John join me in wishing you all a Happy Christmas and all good wishes for the New Year.

God bless you all,

Your sincere friend,

Herbert Bullough.

CHRISTMAS AT ST. CUTHBERTS

Sunday, 22nd December:

- 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 10.30 a.m. Sung Eucharist.
- 2.30 p.m. The Children's Christmas Service.
- 6.30 p.m. The Parish Carol Service.

Christmas Eve: 11.30 p.m. The Christmas Eucharist.

Christmas Day: 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
10.30 a.m. Short Christmas morning service with Holy Communion.

THE GIFT DAY

GIFT DAY 1968 will be Sunday, 8th December. The Rector will be in Church at the following times to receive the gifts from his parishioners:

- 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
- 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.
- 6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

IT'S A RECORD YEAR

Christian Aid's income up by £300,000

Despite all the economic freezes and squeezes and the rising cost of living, Christian Aid supporters have given more money than ever before to its programmes of overseas aid and development during the past 12 months.

When Christian Aid's financial year closed on 30th September the organisation's total income topped £1,800,000. This is about £300,000 more than that raised during the preceding year, which in itself was a record.

It shows that everywhere throughout the U.K. Christian Aid supporters accepted the task of raising that much more needed to off-set the effects of devaluation. Christian Aid can go ahead now with its full programme of overseas aid as planned — no cuts needed.

This is largely due to a record Christian Aid Week in May. Although the money was still coming in at the time of going to press, Christian Aid has so far received over £908,000 as compared with £813,000 last year. It is estimated that this figure will reach £920,000 when all the money has finished coming in.

While all four countries in the U.K. raised more money during C.A.W. than ever before, Scotland showed the biggest increase. This year Scotland exceeded last year's total of £103,000 by £40,000, which represents a 39 per cent increase. Northern Ireland raised £33,000 (an increase of £3,000) and Wales £27,000 (an increase of £7,000).

£500,000-WORTH OF WORLD AID

Following June's massive allocation of £447,000 to overseas projects, Christian Aid recently sent off another £100,000. This means that within a three-month period Christian Aid has contributed over half a million pounds to schemes helping the world's needy, and this does not include the emergency grants which have gone to help the Nigeria/Biafra crisis (total to date £60,000).

The recent allocations include, however, one emergency grant. The sum of £4,000 has gone to relieve the suffering of thousands made homeless by floods in Bengal and Gujarat, India. This means that a total of £21,930 has been allocated to projects in India, including three well-drilling schemes. One sum of £11,000 is being used to purchase some of the most up-to-date well-drilling equipment on the market for Action for Food Production, an organisation made up of several of the service agencies in India.

Over £50,000 was allocated to various projects in Africa. Nearly a quarter of this, £10,000, goes to help the work of the Christian Committee for Service in Algeria; £5,000 for the social centre set up and run by the Friends Service Council in Rhodesia; another £5,000 to help Rwandese refugees in Uganda and another sum

of £5,000 for the establishment of an agricultural training centre in Buhemba, Tanzania.

The remainder of allocations includes a £6,000 grant to help Biafran students in Britain whose living allowances from home have been cut off by the war in Nigeria. Without help from Christian Aid many would be unable to complete their studies. Exactly £12,975 will buy equipment for livestock stations in Pakistan and a grant of £4,250 will help the Y.W.C.A.'s hostel building programme in Singapore.

W.C.C. HELPS SYRIA BUILD NEW TOWN

A New Town has just been added to the map of Syria. Twenty miles north of Damascus, it is so new that it still has no name. But nearly 10,000 people live there in brand new housing units complete with electricity and running water.

They are Syrian refugees from Kuneitra and the surrounding district, now occupied by Israel. Since their flight last June, and all through last winter, the severest in the Near East for 40 years, they have lived in makeshift tents. So far only 200 housing units with ten rooms each have been constructed in the "new town" — so it means a family to a room for the time being.

"This new housing, however, is far superior to the tents they have been living in, but poor compensation for what they left behind," said Yoon Gu Lee, Special Representative of the World Council of Churches in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

The new unnamed town is jointly sponsored by the Syrian government and the W.C.C. whose members include Christian Aid. To date the W.C.C. have contributed over £40,000. They have allocated a further £3,000 to build a school, and U.N.I.C.E.F. will furnish the school with chairs and desks. Other gifts include two houses from the Italian government for community centres. The Syrian government plans to provide a mosque, a market place and police station.

A new highway already links it to Damascus. For its construction local farmers sacrificed some of their best vineyards with no thought of compensation.

CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS

"The season of Advent is the time of preparation for Christmas in the secular as in the religious sense: the time in which presents are bought, good foods and drink laid in, carols sung, a Christmas tree prepared, holly and mistletoe looked for, churches and houses decorated." So writes Laurance Whistler.

The Christmas tree which has become such a prominent feature of the season is not a native custom, but is German in origin. About the year 1820 a member of Queen Caroline's household introduced one at Windsor; in the 1830's German merchant families introduced them in Manchester. In 1841 Prince Albert provided one for the Royal Family, and in the following years there were several at Windsor Castle. Publicity was given to this innovation, especially in *The Illustrated London News* in pictures and articles in 1848, and 1854 there were hundreds of Christmas trees on sale at Covent Garden.

"But centuries before any foreigners' tree was lit in this country there were English children at work on the Eve, binding evergreens, fastening little presents, and at last lighting little candles on a device that evoked in them all the pleasures and excitement aroused by the Christmas tree in the Lutherans of Germany. They called it the Kissing Bough, or the Kissing Bunch. It hung from the ceiling in a luminous crown, a hemisphere of evergreens marked with a ring of candles above, and with a ring of bright red apples below. And all was but the frame for a bunch of mistletoe, suspended a little below the centre to explain the purpose, and the name of the device. (Whistler).

Writing in 1947, Whistler said there were families in Derbyshire, Cheshire, Staffordshire, Devon and Cornwall who still used this Christmas decoration, and that there were a few farms and cottages in Northumberland where presents were hung on the Kissing Bough and where the Christmas tree was unknown.

There seems to be a common notion that the Victorians invented the Christmas customs we know. But carols were sung, candles burned, presents were given, evergreens used for decoration from time immemorial. Father Christmas himself is as old as Europe. We had a carol in England in the fifteenth century—"Hail Father Christmas, hail to thee." Carols are today one of the joys of Christmas, and yet for two centuries after the death of Cromwell had fallen upon the land they were never heard in church "Not," says Whistler, "in the houses of the well-to-do, but fortunately the illiterate remembered what the educated had forgotten." Writing in 1725, Henry Bourne declares: "It is customary among the common people to sing a Christmas Carol." In the last century they were "re-discovered." Whistler comments on English carols as follows. "The only national songs to hold their ground against the forms of fragrant hair-oil that ululate towards us from the crooners of America." Most of our own carols were written as the editors of the *Oxford Book of Carols* express it, "between the death of Chaucer in 1400 and the ejection of the Rev. Robert Herrick from his parish by Oliver Cromwell.

Many of the old carols have been revived within living memory and some are still unfamiliar. The "Coventry Carol" sung in the reign of Henry VI can never have sounded more poignant than when sung in 1940 about the ruins of Coventry Cathedral!

Christmas Cards, like the Christmas Tree, appeared for the first time in England during the early Victorian days. A quite authentic card appeared in 1846 designed by an artist. No picture cards were printed commercially until 1862. For some years a high standard was maintained. Individual artists were encouraged. One firm of stationers paid £7,000 for original drawings in 1882. But the business rapidly became over-commercialised and taste declined.

On Christmas Day itself "dinner has always been a great occasion, indeed the principal meal of the year." Centuries ago master and man feasted together in the great banquet hall in genuine though brief equality. St. Francis of Assisi said that even the animals should share our Christmas festivity. It was an old custom in this country to give extra food on Christmas morning to all domestic animals, and to fix a sheaf of corn on the roof for the benefit of the wild birds. Long ago the main dish in great houses was a boar's head, accompanied by roasted swans, peacocks or bustards. They "sailed out of the kitchen at Christmas, dressed again in their beauty, spread wings and tails, and with gilded beaks, or with beaks nipped on a sponge of blazing spirit." Turkeys were unknown until European invaders discovered them in a domestic state in Mexico, and they first appeared in England in 1542. Eventually, as we know, they replaced the other birds, and by the end of the eighteenth century Norwich alone was sending 1,000 turkeys to London in a single day, but the Christmas goose has never been completely ousted.

Mince pies of many kinds were eaten in Shakespeare's time — pies of minced chicken, and neat's tongues, as well as the mince pies we eat these days. Christmas night was the time for hot rum punch, as consumed by Mr. Pickwick at Dingley Dell, but "Lamb's Wool" into which Shakespeare heard "the roasted crabs hiss" has long ago disappeared. Here is the recipe if you wish to try it — boil three pints of strong ale; beat six eggs; set to the fire in a pewter pot; add roasted apples, sugar, nutmeg, cloves, ginger, and rum as desired, and a Merry Christmas will be enjoyed by all.

THE EMPTY MANGER

CHRISTMAS, someone has written, is a time when we are ready "to forget what we have done for other people, and to remember what other people have done for us, to ignore what the world owes us, and think what we owe the world; we put our rights in the background, our duties in the middle distance, and our chances to do a little more than our duty in the foreground — to own that probably the only reason for our existence is not what we are going to get out of life, but what we are going to give life... to trim our lamp so that it will give more light and less smoke, and carry it in front so that our shadow will fall behind us; to make a grave for our ugly thoughts and a garden for our kindly feelings".

Lovely sentiments like this have given rise to the saying that "Christmas is the one time in the year when the human race seems almost human". Is there anything in Christmas which makes the pious sentiments expressed at this time of the year more than a passing fancy?

The Word of God relates the events of Christmas not as a legend but as true history of what actually occurred. It relates this true history to us today, in a passage like this one from the second chapter of St. Paul's letter to the Philippians: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men".

Words like these transport us to another age, to a little country far away, to a stable connected with a little inn in a little town, and to a manger surrounded by adoring shepherds. Viewing this scene, as many do today, through the charming haze of song and story with which the centuries have surrounded it, the sensitive soul can be expected to exclaim: "How lovely it is! If only I could straighten myself out and be like Him. I guess, I'll just have to try a little bit harder".

It is painful to point out, and probably just as painful for the modern observer to hear, that this romantically pious observation has missed the whole point of Christmas. It is not enough to take a look at the manger — even a long, fond look, and then to turn away, presumably with a higher resolve and a nobler outlook than you had when you came. This mood, as many can testify, does not stay around for long. Soon the brand-new toys are broken and forgotten, the Christmas cookies disappear, the new clothing loses its sheen and acquires an everyday appearance, and the gushy impulses of good-will melt away like a snowflake falling on a candle.

To discover the real purpose behind the events at Bethlehem is to uncover a divine source of power for victorious living, not just for a season or for a day, but for this year and for every year. The whole story is in that manger at Bethlehem, and we have not read the whole story until we have seen the manger empty.

It was just an empty manger, waiting to be filled with the grain upon which the beasts of burden could feed. On this one day — this one day of all days — the dark corner in which the manger stood was filled with the Glory of the ages, as the Ancient of Days came to be one with His people — His people, so thoughtless and indifferent, so self-righteous and so unrighteous. Into a world of empty hearts and bleak hopes there came the Eternal Son of God, the Radiance of God's Glory and the flawless expression of God's own nature, to be the Reconciler between rebellious mankind and the just and merciful God. The time had come of which the prophets had spoken: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the

earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee".

Why does there have to be light? Because without the light there is only darkness. Why did Christ have to come? Because without Christ, ours is a lost world.

Imagine the world to be a great estate. You cannot see the owner, but you can draw certain conclusions about his intelligence, wealth and power, simply by looking at the estate he has carved out of the wilderness. On the estate certain signs are posted. "Do not trespass". Watch the speed limit". "Drive to the left". Some of these signs have always been there, others have been added more lately. Pamphlets on how to use the facilities of the estate have been written by some guests who report they had instructions from the owner himself. Soon it becomes obvious that the vast majority of guests are behaving themselves in a shameful manner. They act as if they were proprietors instead of guests. They give no thanks for the good things they enjoy. Instead, they freely criticize and explain how they would have built the estate if they had had a chance to do so.

When the guests are not complaining, they are deliberately breaking all the house rules. Pride and selfishness are in everything they do. They have so many fist fights with one another that half of them are sporting black eyes. One cannot help wondering what the host will do if he ever pays them a visit.

We know what happened when the Creator of the world paid us a visit. Though equal with the Father in every way, the Eternal Son of God laid aside His privilege, became like a servant, and dwelt among us in the likeness of men. What is more, He submitted Himself in complete obedience to His Father, even to the point of experiencing death, and that the death of a common criminal. He was born the Babe of Bethlehem, but He did not remain a cute little baby making no moral demands on the rowdy guests living on the good ground of God's earth. He reiterated the flaming truths preached by the prophets, that God is the Lord and will execute righteousness. He hammered home the point that man is personally responsible to his heavenly Father, and that he will pay for his sin.

Yet, the visit of the Son was more than a call to reform or even repentance. The Son Himself demonstrated the mercy and goodness of His Father, promised to all who confess their sins. In His own Person He embodied God's "Operation Rescue", promised down through the ages. The Baby became a Boy, and the Boy became a Man, that great Man who is the Mediator between God and men, even our Lord Jesus Christ. He was a humble Man, living in the lowliest of circumstances, walking about as one who did not know where to lay His head when He went to bed at night. This is the empty manger — telling us that God had a great deal more in mind when He sent His Son than to provide us with a beautiful inspiration for a lovely holiday — just that and nothing more.

"He was found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father".

The empty manger offers its unique witness to the unmatched and unrepeatable event which is Jesus Christ. Christ lived and died, not because He had to live and die, but because He wanted to live and die for each of us. Offering Himself for us was not only in the mind of Christ. The Mind of Christ was the Mind of God, God doing something about the condition in which He found the world. It was His Mind to be born in a

manger, to vacate that manger for a cause and that cause for a grave, and that grave for eternal glory — for all of which He has given a name, a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.

The Son of God paid a price for lifting the burden of sin from the prostrate form of mankind. The price was His own Life. Because He paid the price, it is possible for me to tell you today with complete confidence, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin". In this proclamation is all the beauty of Christmas. Christ took upon Himself our predicament, became what we are, stood where we stand. Though Himself sinless. He accepted the judgment of our sin, for the wages of sin is death. By His death, He lifted the burden from our souls, freed us from all guilt, and did for us what none of us could do for himself. He is the One — the One whom the prophets foretold: "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrow . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities". He is the One.

Jesus Christ came to the manger, but He did not remain in the manger. Look at the manger, but do not remain at the manger. It is empty now. We must go on. If Christ were to be born in Bethlehem a thousand times over, and if each year Mary the Virgin were to cradle the Child in her arms, the story would still be tragically incomplete. We have more than a manger. We have Christ, the incarnate, crucified, and risen Son of God deserving and expecting our worship and adoration, yours and mine.

"Have this mind which you have in Christ Jesus". The Christmas spirit is more than an occasional mood of kindness. Christ-less sentimentality lasts for only a little while, but the Mind of Christ — that is a different matter. It offers power to live a drastically different kind of life.

Learn to know Christ the crucified and risen Saviour, and you will receive from Christ a new mind — the Mind of Christ Himself. The Mind of Christ caused Him to forget Himself and to give Himself for us. The Mind of Christ in you will cause you to forget yourself and to give yourself to others, as He gave Himself for you.

How can the Mind of Christ be found in you, unless you recognise Him personally for what He is — the Redeemer of the world and your own personal Saviour? At the first glimmer of light, the first spark of faith that Christ was born and lived and died for you, the Mind of Christ will begin to take form in you.

The Christmas spirit — the real Christmas spirit — does not die with the Christmas tree. It lives and grows. It knows that the manger is empty, not because Christmas is a beautiful legend, but because Christ who lay in the manger is the living Lord of heaven and of earth.

The living witnesses of the living Lord are those men and women, boys and girls, in every part of the world who have the Mind of Christ. As Christ humbled Himself and made Himself of no reputation, in humility they count others better than themselves, looking not only to their own interests, but also to the interests of others. Long after the candles of Christmas have been snuffed out, the fire still burns in their hearts — the flame of reconciliation and peace and one-ness in Christ which lights up the hearts of all who know what it means to have the Mind of Christ.

The manger of Bethlehem — the empty manger — is a call not to unbelief but to faith in Christ; an invitation to reality, not to the bleak reality without Christ, but to the glorious reality of life in Christ. The empty manger of Bethlehem is a divine guarantee that in this world of sin the living Christ enters in, and men of good will receive Him still. Amen.

OLD PARISH MAGAZINES

The Rector recently saw a copy of the Parish Magazine for March 1915. Interesting historical information was contained in it. Will anyone who has any old copies of Parish Magazines hidden away in boxes on the top of the wardrobe please let the Rector have a look at them. They are IMPORTANT.

THE MOTHERS' UNION

On Tuesday, 3rd December at 2.30 in the Vestry we shall meet, and at the time of going to press the speaker is not known. Unfortunately Mrs. Shaw has another important meeting, and her assistant is on the sick list. However, we shall have an enjoyable get together.

THE FARMERS' MEETING

On Thursday, 5th December, we shall welcome Miss E. Clark, A.C., P.H.A., who will introduce a discussion on the subject of "TRENDS IN THE POULTRY INDUSTRY". We look forward to seeing you all on this evening.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

Dec. 1	Mrs. L. Huyton.
8	Mrs. N. Britnall.
15	Mrs. N. Smith.
22	Mrs. H. Foster.
29	Mrs. T. Hunter.
Jan. 5	Mrs. K. Edwardson.

SERVERS' ROTA

Dec. 1—	9.00 a.m.	Malcolm Serjeant.
8—	10.30 a.m.	Harold Grimshaw, Raymond Juba.
15—	8.00 a.m.	John Pounds.
	6.30 p.m.	Michael Lewis.
22—	8.00 a.m.	Peter Balmer.
	10.30 a.m.	Tony Gaskell, John Davies.
29—	8.00 a.m.	Roger Dutton.
	10.30 a.m.	Harold Grimshaw.
Jan. 5—	9.00 a.m.	Michael Lewis.
Christmas Eve:	11.30 p.m.	Harold Grimshaw and Brian Heaton.
Christmas Day:	8.00 a.m.	Jim Heaton.
	10.30 a.m.	John Gaskell.

SIDESMEN'S ROTA

Dec. 1	H. Huyton, A. Grimshaw, P. Saunders, T. Grimshaw.
8	R. Gaskell, R. Hunt, W. Robinson, E. Blackhurst.
15	E. Serjeant, D. Swift, J. Grimshaw, R. Dutton.
22	H. Baldwin, W. White, J. Cheetham, H. Serjeant.
29	B. Heaton, J. Colley, P. Aynsley, N. Britnell.
1969	
Jan. 5	T. Swift, H. Rimmer, J. Heaton, J. Banks.

BURIAL OF THE DEAD

"In sure and certain hope"

Nov. 11	Richard Aspinwall, age 61 years, 5 Sherwood Avenue, Aughton.
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HOLY MATRIMONY

"Those whom God hath joined together."

Oct. 30	Andrew David Courtney, 141 Norwood Road, Southport, and Carole Ann Anderson, Red Lion Hotel, Scarisbrick.
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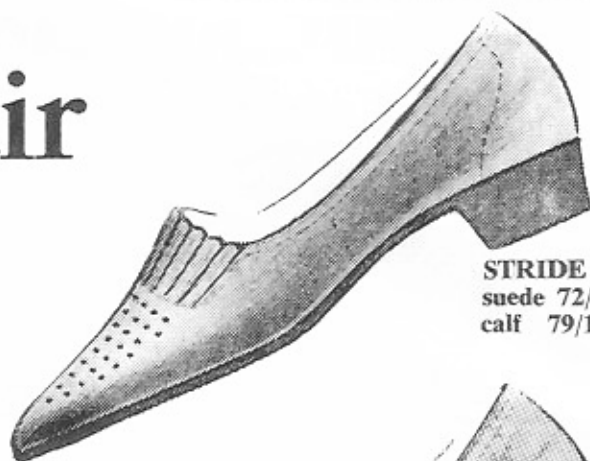
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