

ANSLEY CHURCH MAGAZINE

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Arrangements for Baptisms, Banns, Weddings and Funerals should now be made with the Vicar.

Dear Friends,

ANSLEY CHURCH SCHOOL

One of the features of Ansley village is its school at Church End. We can count ourselves fortunate that we still have one—many villages have lost their schools in the trend towards larger establishments over the past ten years. It seems to me that there is a fund of goodwill and interest in our school—but is that enough?

NUMBERS

Over the past few years the number of children of primary age has fallen dramatically and there is a constant threat of closure over many of our smaller schools. It is a fact that there are fewer children about although there are signs that numbers are increasing again. Church End school has about 40 on the roll this year, a number which reflects the national trend. It follows that if we want our village schools to continue, we must support them.

EDUCATION

It is now eighteen years since I left school, and in that time there have been many changes in the way our children are educated. These changes can make parents in their thirties suspicious of some modern methods and trends. Amidst the changes it is difficult to find a consistent basis for truth in what is taught. Many people think that on matters of morality, truth, and religious commitment children should be left to "make up their own minds" and not be influenced one way or another. Any form of teaching that takes some positive religious or moral commitment as its starting point is dismissed by the emotive term "indoctrination."

CHURCH SCHOOLS

Church End School is a "Controlled School." This does not mean that the Church of England controls the running of the school; that is in the hands of the Local Education Authority. The fact that it is a church school means that staff and pupils seek together to work out a positive Christian life for the school and teach the pupils the basic elements of what it means to be a Christian and to participate in the life of the local church. This is not always an easy task especially in a society where there is widespread misunderstanding of the Christian message and active hostility from those who do not wish to see an extension of Christian teaching today.

'KIDS' STUFF'

In their teens many pupils think that 'Religious Education' is totally irrelevant to them and has no future or meaning in the decisions they will have to make in adult life. It is 'kids' stuff,' something to grow out of and be discarded. Sadly their best example here is often their parents who have done just that. The RE specialist in schools is often the cinderella (male or female) with little opportunity to develop the subject. Thus education reflects the wider world, where people have little time for God.

The Christian faith has sometimes been presented as an escapist dream, irrelevant to life, anti-learning and anti-everything else! This should never be the case. The world belongs to God. We are his stewards. We are supposed to find out all we can about it. Otherwise the Christian faith becomes a

religious hobby, a museum-piece, a memory of the past. What is needed now is a recovery and revival of confidence in God.

CHURCHYARD COMMENTS

One of the features of Ansley is its churchyard—an area with many memories for local residents. I wonder if you have looked closely at the trends over the past few years in memorial stones? Until the 1950's and 1960's it was not a regular practice for every grave to have a stone—see for yourself in the new part of our churchyard. Since then, loved ones have been commemorated regularly by uniform stones of a type quite foreign to our area set in regular lines. In part this rather unnatural and rigid pattern is forced upon us by space considerations and in part by contemporary custom and regulations. Have you noticed how few people are commemorated by a text from the Bible? Is this a comment on our contemporary forgetfulness of God's word and the hope it offers for life eternal? Look at some of the older slate memorials and their Christian texts.

Then there is a very unhappy feature that I have noticed. Quite frequently, in the summer months, there are as many people outside tending the graves of their loved ones as there are inside listening, learning and singing about God and his Son who gives us hope and assurance of eternal life. We all wish to be respectful and to honour those who have meant so much to us, but one or two folk have commented to me that they wish they could give up the habit of visiting the churchyard so often, as so many painful memories are brought back. Perhaps we have question-marks in our minds about Christian truth and need to listen to the words of Scripture in Paul's letter to the Christians at Thessalonica:

Our brothers, we want you to know the truth about those who have died, so that you will not be sad, as are those who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will take back with Jesus those who have died believing in him.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-14)

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"Give my greetings to . . . Nympha and the church in her house."
(Colossians 4:15)

This sentence at the end of one of Paul's letters shows how the first Christians met in each others houses for fellowship, encouragement and learning and if the truth be known, for just a chat! So in imitation of them we are starting a group at the Vicarage on **Monday, January 25th** at 7.30 p.m. We shall be looking at a short passage of the Bible and trying to apply it to Ansley! Quite an interesting task. Anyone is welcome.

With Christian greetings for 1982,

TIM GOULDSTONE

NOTES AND NEWS

In December there was a highly successful **Joint MU Service** at Ansley, with members from Ansley, Arley, Fillongley, Corley and friends from Hartshill—and very good refreshments afterwards. Thanks to all who arranged this event. Our **Concert** in the Village Church Hall for TEAR fund was also very well attended (about 90 or so) which was most encouraging considering the hard weather had set in the day before. It turned out to be quite a confused programme but none the worse for that. We look forward to an even more successful event next year. The sum of £36 was raised for the work of TEAR fund through admission charges and the TEARCRAFT stall run by Mrs. Sue Downie of Arley. Unfortunately the weather affected some other Christmastide events and two evening services had to be cancelled (13th and 27th) and numbers were a bit down on previous years—but well supported nevertheless. We tried **Carol Singing** but the weather beat us there as well, and the **Beetle Drive** had to be called off.

ELEVEN-PLUS GROUP

A start is to be made with this on **Friday, January 29th at 7.30 p.m., in the Village Church Hall**. I have invited the Revd. John Curtis, from Chilvers Coton to come with some people of similar age range—they have had a group for some years now. Remember such a group can only be successful if people are prepared to come and join in! At this meeting the aims of the group will be explained and we might have a few games.

BAPTISM

We welcome into the family of the Church (December 20th, 1981): Charlotte Greenway, 4 Grange Close, Chapel End.

DIARY FOR JANUARY 1982

- 10—(Epiphany 1) 11.00 a.m. Parish Communion
(The Revd. Alan Morgan).
6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer (Mr. Geoff Nichols).
- 17—(Epiphany 2) 11.00 a.m. Family Service.
6.30 p.m. Holy Communion.
- 20—Wednesday 7.00 p.m. St. John's MU Communion, St. John's Hall.
- 21—Thursday 8.00 p.m. PCC — Village Church Hall.
- 24—(Epiphany 3) 11.00 a.m. Parish Communion.
6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer.
- 29—Friday 7.30 p.m. 11-15 Group — Village Church Hall.
- 31—(Epiphany 4) 11.00 a.m. Parish Communion.
6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer.
- GFS — every Monday evening at 5.45 p.m.
(Mrs. Valerie Whitworth, Chapel End 393626).
- Toddlers — every Wednesday at 1.15 p.m., Village Church Hall
(Mrs. Wilson, Chapel End 394433).
- Sunday School — every Sunday (except third in month) 11.00 a.m.
Village Church Hall. (Mrs. Cove, Chapel End 394114).