

Illustrated Version 2021

Christleton in WWII selected from the pages of the Parish Magazine.

Written by the Rector, Rev. Alyn Arthur Guest Williams.

(Words in italics from my research help to illustrate the particular story)



January 1940.

Our wishes for 1940 must be for Peace and a safe return for those we love. Yet it is a mission to the outside world for the maintenance of Christian standards of International Honour, Justice and Truth, and the conquest of ruthless, rapine, starvation and veritable annihilation. For these things we must strive.

March 1940.

We welcome Stoker Frank Morris from the "Ajax" on his return to Littleton on a month's leave, and we are very glad to see so many of our fine lads looking fit, for the most part very fit, in spite of their hardships.

HMS Ajax was a Leander-class light cruiser which served with the Royal Navy during World War II. She became famous for her part in the Battle of the River Plate, the Battle of Crete, the Battle of Malta and as a supply escort in the siege of Tobruk. This ship was the eighth in the Royal Navy to bear the name. In February 1942, she was adopted by the civil community of Halifax.



Christleton WI.

On behalf of members I have sent out many parcels of knitted comforts to Christleton men now serving in His Majesty's Forces, and to local Anti aircraft and Searchlight Units. It has been a great pleasure to receive letters of thanks, saying how welcome these comforts are. There are many Christleton men who have not yet received a parcel, and I would be glad if addresses could be given to Mrs Partington Rock House or to me, that I can forward a parcel at once. J Griffiths Vice President.

May 1940.

We offer our heartfelt sympathy to the many mourners at this season. We would like to remember Lieutenant David Oswald Smith RN who was lost on "HMS Gurka" at Narvik. He was a gallant Officer and had the potential qualities of the highest rank, keen, enthusiastic and devoted. We are proud that he lived at Christleton Green throughout his young boyhood.

HMS Gurkha was an L-class destroyer in Britain's Royal Navy during World War II. She was originally to be named Larne in line with her class letter. However after the Tribal-class Gurkha was sunk in April 1940 the officers and men of the Gurkha regiments each subscribed one day's pay to replace her and Larne was renamed before launching.



Tom Broster was one of our promising young men, keen on his work, keen on his play. He had been in our Sunday School, Choir, Boys Bible Class and Sports Club. His sudden death by accident, just when he was about to join the forces, is a very severe blow to his family and to Christleton.

During the period of January 1st to April 28th, the working party at Stoneydale, supplemented by very generous gifts from Mrs Rea- Anderson, Miss Parker and the Rev. AA Guest Williams despatched 390 garments to the following destinations.

Lady Smith Dorien's Bag Fund 108

British Red Cross 9

Mine Sweepers 22

Mersey Mission to Seamen 15

Naval Comforts Fund 16

HM Destroyer "Forester" 20

HM Submarine "Porpoise" 33

Balloon Barrage & Anti Aircraft 41

Total 390

June 1940.

We congratulate Mrs Granger upon raising £1,000 for the Red Cross Hospital Supply Depot.

July 1940.

We are urged to save every scrap of paper, and all iron and other metals that we can salvage, for which purpose dumps have been provided at suitable points. Please make use of these for it is of the greatest National Importance, and **Please do it now!**

The war savings movement is growing apace, and we congratulate the ladies who are undertaking this valuable work at Christleton Green.

Still more recruits are needed for A R P and L D V works. As some of the youngest are drafted away for other work, it behoves some of us who are older, and some of the youngest too, to come forward. Names should be given at the ARP Post for messengers

and Ambulance Work to Mr Solloway, Chief Air Warden, who appeals for 20 volunteers and to Mr Dolphin for LDV.

Many will like to express their appreciation of Miss Dorothy Strettell's Roll of Honour in the Church Porch. There is ample space for further names, and we do want to be correctly informed.

August 1940.

It would be well to hold a PCC Meeting about the removal of some of the railings in the churchyard for scrap metal. We would like to say how splendidly the Women's Voluntary Services are carrying out their War Savings Campaign, and their working parties collecting aluminium for GFS, and the Mothers Meeting are working too, and have already added many articles to Mrs Dolphins Depot and the Cheshire Regiment Comforts Fund. The fruit canning and preserving are going splendidly under the aegis of the Women's Institute who are indebted to Mrs Cullimore for lending the room at Christleton House.

We are very sorry to learn that the youngest son of our late friend Mr Healy is missing, and that there is no further news of him since the sinking of the "S S Lancastria".

17th June 1940 Ship RMS Lancastria was a requisitioned Cunard cruise liner, which served as a troop ship during world war two. She was sunk by an air raid off the French port of St. Nazaire during Operation Ariel on the 17th of June 1940, whilst attempting to evacuate civilians and troops from France.



September 1940

Sunday September 8th, a year after the declaration of war will be kept as a day of National Intercession. We will hold services at 8.00am, 10.45 and 6.30pm.

We especially welcome, The British Red Cross, St John's Ambulance, Women's Voluntary Service, The British Legion, ARP and AFS, The Home Guard and the Scouts and Wolf Cubs.

From time to time I have to ask for more voluntary workers. This month I am asked to state that there is a great need for; Messengers for the WRVS preferably, young ladies with skill and speed in the art of bicycling. Perhaps we have had a good laugh once again at the old fashioned idea of the bicycle being fast and unladylike! But no doubt all this prejudice has passed and in these days it is both patriotic and economical to ride a bicycle. Only please be very careful, very careful do.

The days are darkening and the black out is a problem.

It is one of our greatest pleasures in these times to welcome back home men on leave, some for a week, some for a flying visit of 48hours. For the most part they look wonderfully fit, but we can also see the strain on some of them. Happily a glimpse of Home sweet home works wonders, and what a gladdening their coming makes for their mothers, children and perhaps sweethearts too.

We are proud to see that Pilot Officer James Eric Storrar RAF as the recipient of the DFC. the first in Chester to be awarded this high honour.

We have also had another letter of thanks for our supply of Knitting to the Cheshire Regt. Comforts Fund. Some of our knitters are indefatigable.



October 1940.

We have been obliged to alter the time of the evening service to 3.15pm in place of 6.30pm. I hope people will come.

There is much to be thankful for in spite the war. There is a happier and more confident atmosphere about our doings, especially our aerial activity. Though we have suffered much, we have probably punished the aggressor for more than he dares to admit.

The ARP will be losing the skilful presence of Mr Welsby, and they have been depleted in other ways also. I hope that some will come forward to take the places of those who have gone, particularly in the matter of Ambulance and Car driving. The Christleton Home Guard is to have a Parade Service on Sunday 13th October at 10.45am and Mr Dolphin has promised to secure a Chaplain from the Camp to preach. He has also received a letter of thanks form the RAF Benevolent Fund, a sincere thanks for the kind donation to this fund following the appeal by Lord Wakefield in “The Times”.

November 1940

The war has entered upon a new phase, and there are not wanting signs that the tide has turned though it is too soon to say that the end of the turmoil is in sight. London and other places in closer proximity to ourselves have suffered very grievous bombardment, and we are asked to send something particularly in the form of warm clothing for the relief of those who have been bombed. Mrs Cullimore has a depot for these articles.

I would like to congratulate the industrious members of the WI for their efficient work of canning and preserving fruit at the centre.

Also on Armistice Day itself there will be a short service at the War Memorial. Flanders Poppies will be on sale.

December 1940.

The Ringers too will have to forgo the ringing in of the New Year, which will be a great disappointment. However the course of the war seems to be shaping more clearly in our favour, and although we are saying goodbye to more and more men, we hope that this is for a short time only, and that they may return from their long voyages and travels to build a better order of things. They are a fine lot of men and we are very proud of them yes- and we are very proud of the women of our country too, for the great and womanly things that they are achieving.

It is of interest the war wedding which took place recently in St Peter’s Glasbury on Sunday 3rd November, of Peter Cooper Royal Corps of Signals son of Major Brian Cooper of Marken Castle Co Sligo to Ursula Clarke, daughter of Lt Col. Marshall Clarke,

by his wife Olive, daughter of the late Canon Lionel Garnett & Mrs Garnett Rector of Christleton. Her sister Mrs Audrey Clarke was the only bridesmaid, and a small reception was held at Treble Hill after the ceremony.

January 1941.

Dear Friends

May the New Year now opening bring the fulfilment of all our hopes of Victory over the enemy and Peace and Security in the days to come.

April 1941.

Chester War Weapons Week.

Christleton raised the magnificent sum of £3,276-17-0d.

May 1941.

“We regret to record the death of Charlie Rathbone who died at sea from burns received as a gunner. He was the great grandson of Nurse Johnson and a grandson of Mr & Mrs Partington. This is the first actual loss that we have sustained, though Eric Lockley has been missing for many months”.

Charles Frederick Rathbone son of Robert & Lillie Rathbone and husband of Sarah, was a Gunner serving with the Royal Artillery 4th Maritime Anti Aircraft Regt. He died on the 3rd June 1941 and is buried in the Freetown (King Tom) Cemetery in Sierra Leone. He had previously served with the East Lancashire Regt.



June 1941.

We are passing through very anxious days and we have had very heavy blows. These sorrows and anxieties bring us together in an act of unity of prayer and effort, and a realisation of the things that really count. Some people who have lost all their possessions show a brighter and brave side of their character than we thought was theirs. Every day we hold out, brings us nearer to the goal of Victory and Peace.

The people of the USA seem hourly more aware of the tremendous issues that are at stake. Statesmen from all over the world are asserting that this is a fight of Christian Civilisation against brute barbarism. Even the captured German sailors pray that we will not confound with the Nazi Party. The ARP First Aid personnel acquitted themselves well at the Rally at Bolesworth Castle.

Mrs Garnett has presented the church with the chest from the Old Rectory. She has at the same time given a complete set of the Parish Magazines with all their wealth of local and personal details for the last seventy years. We are very proud to have this record of our forefathers in Christleton.

August 1941.

We've had the sad news of the death of Eric Lockley, so long reported as "missing". He died of his wounds some long time ago. He was a man we all liked, and my last glimpse of him was that of a good husband helping his wife and looking after their youngster.

Lance Sergeant Eric Lockley son of William and Rossetta Lockley of Hoole, and husband of Elsie Lockley of Christleton had served in the Army with the 14/20th Hussars between 1930-1936. He left the Army in 1936 and was placed on the reserve list. Eric was then called up when war was declared, and enlisted with the 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards. He only visited home once at Christmas 1939 before he was killed in action. There is some uncertainty how he died as he was involved in the evacuation from Dunkirk in May 1940. He is commemorated on the Dunkirk Memorial and also remembered with Honour on the Tyne Cot Memorial near Ypres Panel 8.



To know that James Bunnell and Frank Mitchell are prisoners of war is a great relief after the suspense of knowing them being reported as "missing".

The War savings Campaign is taking on a definite objective, that is to say that they are aiming to raise the amount of £2,500 for an anti aircraft gun.

October 1941.

"It has been a great pleasure to welcome officers and soldiers from Vicars Cross. Perhaps it helps us to realise that our own men away, appreciate the same friendly attention when it is possible to do this". Mrs Dolphin has resumed her working party. We have many faithful knitters for the Cheshire Regiment Comfort Fund.

There is a fresh impetus given to the National Salvage Campaign by the appeal for 100,000tons of waste paper! Here in the Christleton the WVS, The Boy Scouts & others are organising the collection. Mrs Dodd has kindly lent her premises in the front of her house in the centre of the village. Mrs Granger has got very near the mark of her fourth thousand pounds raised by the British Red Cross at her shop in the Arcade. This is a notable achievement.

December 1941.

There are many things we are grateful for now. The progress of the war effort in North Africa, and the heroic Russian resistance, it is all so immense that we find it difficult to grasp the significance of events in places we have never heard of, and with names we cannot pronounce. The marvellous thing is that we are fed and clothed and cared for, mostly through the vigilance of our Naval Forces and the RAF.

Mrs Grangers fund for the Red Cross has now reached £5,000. The WVS are doing marvellous work with their salvage scheme. The organisers of the fruit canning and jam making, deserve the highest praise. Their work is of the highest quality.

The Garden Association is a newer organisation, and will need a like degree of planning and training. The purchase of the right seeds, fertilisers, and the proper means of storing more perishable vegetables. The President is Mr Dolphin, and Chairman Mr Kirk. A Garden and Allotment Association has been formed in Christleton and it is hoped that all who are interested will join. The aim is to expand food production in the village.

January 1942.

It is good to get cheery letters from and about our men in the forces. I had a particular happy letter from William Fleet telling me about his meeting with a number of his friends from Christleton and expressing his longing to be back sitting in the choir between Fred Bennion and Cliff Boddy.

February 1942.

Events were held to raise funds for Warship Week, and the dance for "Aid to Russia Fund" had to be postponed due to the arctic weather. It will now be held in the Boys School on 20th February.

March 1942

Warships Week will soon be here and we need to raise gigantic funds to bring the war to an end as speedily as we can. The easy giving of a trifle is not enough; The Russians, Chinese and the Dutch are displaying a spirit of true heroism and some of our own people have given us tremendous examples of individual and collective saving.

June 1942

The death is announced of Lt Commander William Eyre Hussey. We will remember with gratitude Lieutenant Commander William Frederick Eyre Hussey DSO, DSC. He lived up to the highest traditions of the Royal Navy, and was killed in action when in Command of "HMS Lively" in the Mediterranean. We ourselves are better for knowing such a gallant Officer and we feel his loss acutely. What it means to his wife and little children is something inexplicable. We know his memory will be sacred and we pray for God's strength and protection in their bereavement.

HMS Lively was an L-class destroyer of the Royal Navy. She served during the Second World War, and was sunk in the Mediterranean in an air attack on 11 May 1942. Commissioned in 1941, she was briefly active in home waters, sailing in the North Sea, but was soon reassigned to the Mediterranean, where she was active as part of the Mediterranean Fleet, and Force K, based at Malta. Lively took part in escorting several convoys to and from the island, as well as intercepting enemy supply convoys to North Africa. She took part in the First and Second Battles of Sirte, and was damaged on a number of occasions in air and surface attacks. She was eventually sunk off Tobruk in May 1942 while trying to intercept an enemy convoy.



HMS Lively

George Guest junior is appointed organist and choirmaster.

Later as Dr George Guest CBE FRCO he goes on to become one of the most revered Organists and Choirmasters in the Country with a long term appointment at St John's College Cambridge. He was a lifelong supporter of Chester Football Club, and attended evensong at St James' when he was visiting Chester.



September 1942

A good letter comes from N Scarratt and another from Mr W Fleet by Airgraph mail, and we have had messages from Dennis Morgan and others far away, who think with longing of their native land.

October 1942.

It has been a blow to lose our young organist so soon after his appointment. The PCC have decided to make a temporary appointment of his father Mr E J Guest as organist. We hope to have occasional visits from George Guest FRCO

November 1942.

Congratulations to Mrs Granger on making £6,000 at her shop for our British Red Cross and St John's Ambulance Funds. The speaker at the Cathedral will be General Davison O C American Forces.

December 1942.

A well attended Service on Civil Defence Sunday was greatly enhanced by the sound of the church bells, ringing for the victory of the 8th Army in Egypt, and for the successful landing of the Allied forces in North Africa.

January 1942.

Good letters reached us from our organist George Guest and from Dennis Morgan in the Middle East. There will be a meeting of the Fire Watchers on Friday 22nd Jan at 8.00pm.

February 1943.

On Sunday January 10th we had a Memorial service for Edward Walter Weaver of the 1st Commando Troop who was killed in action in North Africa.

Private Edward Walter Weaver Welsh Regt & no1 Commando was the son of David & Constance Weaver of Christleton. He was killed in action on the first day of Operation Bizerte in Tunisia. 1st December 1942. He is remembered on the Medjez-El-Bab Memorial Face 23. He was 20years old. Acting under orders to support the advance of the 36th Infantry Brigade by turning the enemy's sea flank, cutting his lines of communication and harrying his withdrawal, No 1 Commando embarked in the Port of Tabarka on the evening of November 30th. The Commando which consisted of six British and four American troops gathered under the walls of the ancient fortress before embarking on a flotilla of small landing craft for the sixty mile journey to the beach landing place. By 0315 all landings were made but it had been a wet landing with water rising up to the armpits of the soldiers. Their job was to get behind Axis lines and to cut off the enemy forces as they retreated. Nobody opposed them when they landed and they headed south marching eight miles to where they were supposed to take action. Due to other events taking place elsewhere where British forces had retreated, they found that they had been sent into a dangerous position behind enemy lines.



Memorial to Commandos at Achnacary

We regret that Lieutenant Hemelryk reported missing, is now presumed to have lost his life in HM Submarine P222.

HMS P222 was a third-batch S-class submarine built for the Royal Navy during World War II. Commissioned in 1942, the boat had an uneventful first war patrol in the Alboran Sea. She intercepted the Vichy French merchant ship SS Mitidja in July, then provided protection for an Allied convoy to Malta in Operation Pedestal the next month. The navy intended that she was to be sighted on the surface by enemy aircraft to discourage potential attacks by surface warships. Though P222 did not encounter enemy forces, the convoy arrived at its destination on 15 August after sustaining severe losses. She then reconnoitred along the coast of Algeria in advance of Operation Torch, and was attacked by a French patrol ship, but sustained no damage. On 30 November, P222 departed Gibraltar to patrol off Naples, Italy, but failed to return at Algiers. The Italian

torpedo boat Fortunale claimed to have sunk a submarine with depth charges on 12 December, south-east of Capri. This remains the most probable cause of her loss, although the sinking has never been confirmed.



P22

April 1943.

Dear Friends

No doubt the outstanding event of the past month has been the success of the local "Wings for Victory" Campaign. Here we set out to raise £5,000 and £13,452 was the total achieved which reflects great credit on the Women's Voluntary Service, The British Legion Civil Defence Services and the Post Offices in Christleton and Vicars Cross.

June 1943.

Next Sunday evening the Rev, Major Brundick Chaplain of the US Army has agreed to preach. It has been pleasant to have another fleeting visit from our organist George Guest RAF who seems to flourish in his new element. Eddie Allan, formerly organist of Tattenhall, has written a long description of life in the RAF in Canada, and his letter is full of interest and problems.

The Home Guard are to be congratulated on the admirable precision of their display and march past on May 9th which made a great impression on all who witnessed it.

It is an honour to learn that Richard Campbell Evans who had a distinguished career at Cambridge, has passed out at Sandhurst, was among the Royal Armoured Corps reviewed by the King & Queen.

The American Army Base in Vicars Cross.

US Army Camp at Vicars Cross consisted of the 14th & 16th Military Police Criminal Investigation Section. 56th Army Postal Unit.

July 1943.

I have received a excellent letter from Alan Mathews now a Chief Petty Officer, full of the things he remembers as a boy. He has been all over the world wherever a ship can sail.

September 1943.

An effort is being made to raise sufficient sum of money to send out gifts at Christmas to those serving abroad.

October 1943.

Mr George Guest gave a very good recital at short notice on the evening of 5th Septmeber on the repaired organ.

November 1943.

We congratulate Edward Allman on obtaining his commission as a Pilot Officer in the RAF, and we are proud to record that Squadron Leader James Storrar has been awarded a bar to his DFC. Ian Solloway has been accepted as a candidate for a Commission.

A tribute to Jas Storrar, written when he died, highlighted his record of 15 confirmed kills as a pilot in the Battle of Britain as well as describing him as “a giant of a man”. Well over 6ft tall, he was barely able to squeeze into the cockpit of his fighter,” it read. “Over the years he retained something of the flamboyant style of a Battle of Britain pilot. His jackets were lined with red silk and his Jaguar XJS 12 bore the registration JAS.” In 1949 he joined No 603, a Royal Auxiliary Air Force Squadron, and resumed flying, and went on to command No 610 County of Chester Auxiliary Squadron based at Hooton on Wirral. The 610 Squadron offered former regular pilots the chance to continue flying after they had left the RAF. He was the Squadron’s last CO when it was disbanded in 1947, but not, according to legend, until “Jas” had flown under Grosvenor Bridge in Chester in a Hurricane. Wing Commander Storrar died on 29 March 1995 aged 73. His wife Winifred (Freddie) also died in 1995 on 27th November. They are buried at St James Christleton.



There is a meeting of the Village Produce Association in Christleton. Mrs Cullimore has given notice of a combined WVS & Gardeners Plan for sending supplies of green vegetables to the men serving in “HM Little Ships”. If you have any surplus vegetables or apples which are so much needed by the men at sea, send them to Mrs Cullimore at Christleton House, or Mrs Dolphin at Stoneydale. The idea is to send a regular supply every Tuesday morning.

December 1943.

Another effort that lies before us is the Church China Fund..... We realise the need, for China has been at war far longer than ourselves.

February 1944

We congratulate Lt Commander Carmichael RNVR on the award of his DSC.

Commander Peter Carmichael, OBE, DSC (11 August 1923 – 25 July 1997), nicknamed "Hoagy", was a combat pilot with the Royal Navy during and after the Second World War. Later, he became famous during the Korean War for shooting down a jet-engined MiG-15 while flying a piston-engined Hawker Sea Fury, the only recorded victory of a piston-engined aircraft over a jet fighter during the Korean War.

March 1944.

The death of David the younger son of Mr Houston, a midshipman in the Royal Navy was a grief to us all.

Confirmation has also come of the death of Sergt. Harry Briggs Mellor RAF, who was buried in Grave 3 Polygone des Enfants, Recey sur Ource, Dept Cote d’or France on 16th July 1943.

Harry was the son of Harry Briggs and Mary Mellor and an employee of the Chester Depot, Crossville Motor Company. He was the Pilot of a Handley Page Halifax Bomber from 10 Squadron RAF flying from Melbourne to bomb targets in Montbeliard in France. The aircraft was shot down at 2.25 by a night fighter, piloted by Major Wolfgang Spate and crashes 4k NW of Recey-sur-Ource, Cote d'or, some 52km NNW of Dijon. All the crew of seven are buried in Recey-sur-Ource Communal Cemetery, alongside a soldier from the Special air Service Regt. Private Joachim Kalkstein.

May 1944

Arthur Carman has joined the forces. We are glad to have more reassuring accounts of P O Dan Moore who is reported seriously injured, and of Ernest Garner who is wounded and has had several operations. It is also a relief to learn that W E Jones Grenadier Guards is a Prisoner of War. He had been reported missing for a considerable time.

June 1944.

The Red Cross and St John Ambulance Shop in St Michael's Row has now passed £10,000 which is a magnificent achievement and we congratulate Mrs Granger for her considerable work. We congratulate the village on its wholehearted support of the "Salute the Soldier Campaign" £12,906 is a great sum to contribute and it meant a great deal of planning and organising by various bodies in the parish.

The new Ration Books will be issued for the convenience of residents in Christleton at the Boys School on June 21st.

July 1944.

My dear friends

No doubt the outstanding feature of the past month has been the success in the initial stages in the invasion of France, for the liberation of the cruel oppression.....

...With the taking of Cherbourg we hope that events will move still more rapidly and that the promised deliverance will come in time to save some remains of civilised progress.

August 1944.

It is not without cost however, and we mourn today the loss of Lt. Richard Campbell Evans 17/21 Lancers who was one of the true leaders of his generation, full of promise for the attainment of the highest possible career. Now he serves not an earthly, but Heavenly King. At his Memorial service Bishop Tubbs preached a most inspiring sermon.

Lieutenant Richard Campbell Evans Royal Armoured Service Corps 17/21st Lancers was the son of William Henry and Margaret Crawford Campbell Evans of Vicars Cross. He died in battle on 28th June when his regiment was engaged in the battle for the Po Valley in Italy. The 17th/21st Lancers were taking their turn as the infantry on the Gothic line in the Apennine Mountains, not only manning trenches but machine guns and mortars. The Battle was to prove their final action of the war. By VE Day the 17th/21st Lancers had lost 21 officers and 135 other ranks killed, Richard being one of those killed. He was 21 years old and is buried in the Assisi War Cemetery VIII E 7

With him we commemorate Frank Baker who died having served in the forces until he was discharged, and then worked at a Munitions Factory beyond his strength.

Private Frank Baker served with the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and died on the 15th July 1944. 15/07/1944. He is buried with Honour in the churchyard at St James' Christleton with a CWGC Headstone.

News has reached us of the death of Alfred Parry Jones who has left a widow and eight children.

Alfred Perry Jones Bombardier 61 Anti Tank Regt. Royal Artillery & Royal Welsh Fusiliers was the son of Harry & Ellen Jones and husband of Ada Mary Jones of Flint. He was killed in action on 17th July 1944 and is Remembered with Honour at Ranville War Cemetery Normandy. The Regiment served in North Africa in August 1942, before arriving in Egypt on November 21st. They crossed into Libya, then Tunisia and served there until July 1943. They were then moved to Sicily where they stayed for 6 months before returning to re group in the UK. On 6th June 1944 they were part of the Normandy Landings and Ranville was the first village to be liberated when the bridge over the Caen Canal was captured by 6th Airborne Division who landed by parachute and glider. Alfred was killed in action as the troops moved further into France.

Eighteen months ago news reached us of the death in action of Lionel Britland, whose mother was nee Vera Postons. Now we have news that his elder brother, George Douglas Britland (also of the Royal Canadian Air Force) has been killed in a crash on 11th July. Major Faafel, Chaplain to the U S Forces has just learnt of the death of his only son in a similar accident. To the many who proudly cherish the memory of their brave and gallant dead, we offer heartfelt sympathy.

It is good news that our organist George Guest is safe after his watery escape. Ernest Garner is home again having been discharged from the army after his wounds. We hope he will soon recover.

September 1944.

Events have moved rapidly and our advances have been so extensive that it is impossible

to be really up to date with our grasp of the military situation. We have two of our lads home wounded, happily not seriously, Ian Solloway and Kenneth Testi. As Ian says, "we shall have to run hard to catch them up when we get back." Benjamin Dutton from Vicars Cross is also home with a wound in his foot, which he thinks is lucky, as it enable him to make acquaintance with his son and see him Christened.

October 1944.

Christleton Victory Fund held an Agricultural Show at Littleton Hall on 7th August. The balance is now £1,303.1s.0d H Kershaw Esq JP has written a very kind letter of gratitude for the Service for Battle of Britain Sunday.

Nov 1944.

We felt great sympathy for Mrs Gwendoline Grayston whose husband died of his wounds in Holland very soon after her brother, his comrade in arms. It was just at the beginning of the year that their marriage took place. We know that in Lancaster Christopher Walker Greyston was esteemed as a good son and brother, and a loyal member of the choir.

Christopher Walker Greyston Lance Serjeant 3rd Battalion Irish Guards died on 1st October 1944 aged 24yrs. He was the son of Ernest and Elizabeth Greyston and husband of Gwendoline Greyston of Christleton. Reading the war diary for his battalion, it appears that they took over from the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards on 28th September, who had been involved in the battle for Nijmegen. By the 30th the 3rd Battalion Irish Guards were in a high position over looking the village of Aan

to the east of the main road to Arnhem. They were engaged in a counter attack from the German troops who also suffered heavy losses. It appears that Christopher was badly wounded sometime during the engagement and was being taken back behind the lines for treatment, as he is buried at Bergen-op-Zoom 140km from Aan.

Ernest Garner was discharged from the Guards on account of his wounds.

December 1944.

It is a pleasure to have a glimpse of George Guest our organist who is home on leave and will be our organist on Christmas Day. The Christleton Branch of the British Legion is to form a Women's Section on 11th December at 8.00pm in the Boys School. Tom Solloway (Capt) Hon Sec

January 1945

The death is reported of William Henry Evans just a few months after the loss of his son Richard Campbell Evans. The Rev. Capt Crosby, Chaplain of the US Forces came and preached on the 31st Dec. We were grateful for the help of Captain Baldwin for two Sunday's previously.

February 1945.

The progress of the war is marvellous. There are many anxious hearts and perhaps many unduly optimistic forecasts. Yet in honour of our loved ones, we must try to make the world better. The plight of the people in the war liberated countries cannot make us apprehensive of that which man in his unaided blindness may selfishly seek to obtain.

March 1945

I have had many and grateful letters from those serving; Frank Postons, Clifford Rainford, Ian Solloway, W A Lloyd, James Salmon, Vincent Smith, Leslie Attwell, Jean Peacock, Pamela Minto and Roberta Sykes, all expressing delight at being remembered by us.

April 1945.

My dear friends,

The long expected advance of our forces across the Rhine into Germany has begun, and great success has attended our efforts. We have complete confidence in our leaders and we are very proud of all our carefully trained men and their superb courage. Every endeavour must be fully maintained until final victory is given to our arms. This makes the strain at home on mothers, sisters and sweethearts all the greater. Our sympathy goes out to them all and particularly we pray our tribute of honour to the memory of Norman Weaver. He had served faithfully in the Home Guard and all who knew him felt that he was one who could be utterly trusted. He shirked no duty, he spared himself no effort and he was always willing to volunteer in any emergency. When he joined the regular forces the Home Guard knew that they were sending forth a man who was already a soldier, and in his death they personally felt a very deep loss. They came to the Memorial Service on their own initiation, proud to testify their regard. His memory will strengthen the formation of E Coy. 5th Cheshire Home Guard Old Comrades Association, which is to hold an inaugural meeting on 4th April in the Boys School.

Private Norman Weaver the son of Richard & Eliza Weaver of Chester, and husband of Margaret Weaver of Boughton was a Private in the 7th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders. He died on the 15th February 1945 during Operation Veritable aged 32yrs. He was buried in Reichswald Forest War Cemetery. 44 G17 It is thought that he died en route to the capture of Moyland Castle. The 15th Division had orders to capture Kleve, but on the night of 9 February they were held up on the outskirts. The 47 Panzer Corps under General Heinrich Freiherr von Lüttwitz was directed to Kleve and the Reichswald. On 11 February the 15th

had cleared the town. Having expanded the front line to 14 miles, the II Canadian Corps, with the 2nd and 3rd Divisions and the 4th Armoured Division, became responsible for the drive along the Rhine to Kalkar and Xanten. XXX Corps were to operate on the right and take Goch before swinging towards the Rhine and linking with the Americans – once Operation Grenade had been launched. On February 10, 1945, British troops of the 2nd Seaforth Highlanders advance into the Reichswald during operations intended to breach German defensive positions and reach the Ruhr, the industrial heart of Germany. Bitter German resistance upset the British timetable and delayed the advance envisioned by British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery.

The Womens Voluntary Services held a special collection of articles of household use for the people most bombed in Bermondsey- a good neighbour and re housing scheme organised by Mrs Cullimore.

May 1945.

We offer our sincere condolences to the many mourners, and we would like to put on record that a Memorial Service was held for Alfred Kenneth Testi on Sunday April 24th at which a very large congregation showed their affection for this brave and unselfish lad, whose frank and happy nature endeared him to all hearts. He took part in everything that concerned the village and the church. Growing up in our midst he sang in the choir, attended the Sunday School and became a ringer in our tower, and was always a delightful companion.

Alfred Kenneth Testi, Trooper 14420904 in the Royal Armoured Corps, was the son of Alfred & Gladys Testi of Christleton . He was serving with the 3rd/4th County of London Yeomanry Sharpshooters when he was killed in the same battle as Norman Weaver and is also buried in the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery. 54. A 10 His date of death is given as the 28th March 1945 aged 19years. We have no further details of his service at present.

It has been a privilege to have the opportunity of making friends among the Officers and men of the American Army stationed locally. Colonel Branson had been with us for a considerable time and we deeply sympathize with him on the loss of his son.

Events have been moving so fast, that there is a feeling of unreality about the end of the war in Europe. We seem to be in a dream, yet we have gigantic tasks before us. First we offer thanks to Almighty God in a Nationwide Thanksgiving on Sunday May 13th. We invite representative bodies of all kinds to attend the morning service at 10.45am and knowing that many have links that connect them with several organisations we are anxious that they should all be represented. British Legion, ARP, Home Guard, British Red Cross, St John's Ambulance, NFS, Police, WVS, Cadets and Boy Scouts, and members of the Land Army. Later on there will be time for celebrations when the Japanese are finally defeated.

We can begin to think of the right kind of welcome to give to our boys and girls when they return home. The Comforts Fund has the nucleus of a sum which we shall be ready to augment, as our plans develop. Meantime the provision of houses is one of the first essentials. A reminder that we still have to live economically comes in the shape of the announcement that "Ration Books" will again be issued at the Boys School on 5th June.

Sincere congratulations to Mrs Granger & her helpers at the Red Cross Shop and passing the sum of £12,000, a great achievement.

Your faithful friend

AA Guest Williams

June 1945.

To all who mourn we tender our very sincere sympathy, and we include the young widow of our friend "Eddie" Allman, together with his father and mother, brother and sister. He had been "missing" a long time since his bomber was known to have crashed. Now authentic information has been received of his death. We rejoice that he had the happiness of holding his young son in his arms.

Flying Officer Henry Edward Allman, Royal Air Force Reserve 90th Squadron flying Lancaster LM189 was the son of George and Mary Allman of Chester and husband of Gwynneth Vaughan Allman. He died on the 30th August 1944 when his aircraft was shot down over Denmark. He is buried at Aalestrup Churchyard. Grave 967-968.

Detailed Account of Lancaster LM 189 30th August 1944.

The pilot of the plane was Flight Lieutenant David Sumsion, born in Herefordshire on 21st August, 1922. After his education at Cheltenham College he joined the Royal Air Force Voluntary Reserve in July 1941. He was trained as bomber-pilot in USA and transferred to 90th Squadron in August 1944. With him in the plane he had his good friend Pilot Officer Henry Edward Allman, born on 12th January, 1911. He was an assistant to a technical engineer, a skilled piano player and director of the choir of Tattenhall Church near Chester. The very day the war broke out Allman joined the RAF as a volunteer. After his training in Canada in 1943 he participated in many bombing raids over Germany. In July Mrs Allman gave birth to a son, who was named David after his friend. The navigator of the plane was Flying Officer Jack Leadbeater, the wireless operator was Sergeant Eric Raymond Atkinson. Sergeant Douglas Davey was the flight engineer and the two gunners were Sergeant Albert Ernest Hall and Flight Sergeant JMS Turachek. On 29th August, 1944 this crew with nearly 600 others flew over Jutland at about midnight. Lancaster LM 184 targeted Stettin, but it was shot down by a German night fighter and crashed burning to the ground just south of Aalestrup in Himmerland. All of the crew were killed, including Flight Officer Henry Edward Allman.

A very happy and spontaneous Victory Tea was organised in Littleton for the children followed by races and competitions "Ices" and two or three bonfires. By a fortunate coincidence it was the day Jim Bunnell returned home. The whole of the village is to have another children's party, and you will see there is plenty of planning ahead for the celebrations when the complete cessation of hostilities comes.

July 1945

It is delightful to see some of our servicemen returning home after years of service abroad. They look splendid and there is a happy look of sober satisfaction in their eyes. A very large congregation came to honour the memory of Flying Officer Edward Allman. We now also have the official report of the death of W E Jones, a lad we all esteemed and loved.

Guardsman William Edward Jones 5th Battalion Grenadier Guards was the son of Edward and Sarah Jones of Rowton. He was killed in action on 7th April 1945 age 36 yrs. He is buried in Italy and remembered on Panel 3 of the Cassino Memorial.

Edward was taking part in one of the last battles of the war in Italy codenamed Operation Grapeshot. This was the final allied attack into Lombardy which started on the 6th April and ended with the surrender of the German forces in

Italy on the 2nd May. Edward was killed during a fierce heavy artillery bombardment which was attempting to gain control of the land across the River Senio. The Allied crossing of the River Senio was one of the last hurdles that needed to be overcome in order to capture the Po Valley Basin and complete the war in Italy. The German defenders were mostly elite parachute unit, fierce fighters, and the British 8th Army took many casualties in affecting this defended river crossing operation.

Colonel Dudgeon MC OBE, after many months of waiting for news, has learned of the cruel death of his son in cold blood at the hands of the cruel enemy. Words cannot express our sense of horror or adequately convey our sympathy.

Captain Patrick Laurence Dudgeon MC, Mentioned in Despatches was 23yrs old and a member of the Royal Corps of Signals. He was captured on 2nd October at Lacisa after many special missions by sea and air. He was shot on 3rd October 1943 and is remembered with Honour at Florence War Cemetery in Italy.

August 1945

There is news that Ian Solloway, now promoted to Lance Sergeant, may shortly be accepted for training for a Commission. The Royal Corps of Signals have come to sojourn at Vicars Cross, and we hope in a quiet way we might be able to entertain them. We feel that we may have much in common with them, and they might like to take part in our village life. The Chaplain made himself known to us some weeks before their arrival at the camp, and we have been delighted with the spirit of co operation which has already been displayed.

September 1945.

My dear Friends

Victory final and complete came to us and our allies a little sooner than most people expected..... Here in Christleton we were hardly behind. In a few moments flags were flown, our bellringers turned out a full team in the morning and the evening, and there is hardly a better way to express feelings of joy and thanksgiving than the sound of bells over the countryside, our Tower echoing the music of its neighbours. We had a short and simple service at 7.00 O' clock, and an impromptu dance in the Boys School, at which the Band of the Royal Corps of Signals generously gave their services.

On the Sunday following VJ Day the church was filled to overflowing. Mr Granger and Colonel Campbell read the lessons and the choir led the singing. It was all spontaneous. Our rejoicings were probably the counterpart of those in hundreds of other places. We know that problems lie ahead but we shall thank god for all he has done already. We shall naturally wish to express our gratitude to the Men & Women of the Forces when they return home. No doubt themselves would like to slip quietly back in their places without any sort of fuss or demonstration, yet it will be good for them all to rejoice together as far as possible and to hear one and others account of the great things that have happened. Col Shaw DJO Chairman of the parish Council would like to call a General Parish Meeting to discuss future plans of celebration and commemoration.

October 1945.

We are told the food situation in the world is in a precarious position, it is therefore our duty to be careful of all the food we have, and to make sure it is not wasted..... More must be sown and grown till the stocks and reserves are brought up to the normal level. The boys and girls particularly must realize the dignity and importance of work for it is only by hard work on sound lines that re construction can take place. The men and

women will come home gradually and steps are being taken to ensure a suitable welcome for them all.

The thanksgiving for Victory War Savings Week was highly satisfactory and we congratulate the WVS on the total achieved - £7,791-5-0d. I am told that "Christleton Green" as a centre is closing down for all special war efforts must come to an end, but the habit of thrift, once established, will be continued we hope, through the medium of the Post Office, as well as in the schools and Women's Institute.

We are grateful to the Padre of the royal Corps of Signals for the help he has given on two successive Sundays, and the Padre of the Dale Camp has promised to preach on the evening of Oct 28th. The camp at Vicars Cross is somewhat migratory in its function, but I do feel that the young people there are grateful for any hospitality we can offer.

The Senior members of the choir had an enjoyable excursion to Llangollen, Betws-y-Coed, Llanwrst and Llandudno. We hope that it is only the prelude of the resumption of many of our pre war outings and festivities.

November 1945.

There will be a special parade service on Sunday morning and the new British Legion Banner will be dedicated. It is a good and worthy insignium of the inauguration of Christleton as a Branch of the British Legion.

February 1946.

We have not heard much of the demobilized members of the forces. It might well be that younger married couples might undertake the work if a house could be provided.

There is to be a dance for the Camp at Vicars Cross on Thursday Feb 7th organised by Major Lucy.

March 1946.

Victory Celebrations are now officially to take place on Whit Sunday. We hope that all the various bodies and organisations in this parish will co-ordinate their efforts into something really worthwhile, in spite of the problems and difficulties through controls.

May 1946.

New "Ration Books" will be issued on June 4th at the Boys School between 4-8.00pm "Probably during the present month, Mrs Guest Williams, Mrs Beeching and I will be moving to the Old Hall. For all practical purposes it will be regarded as the Rectory and therefore be called "The Rectory" I hope it may prove beneficial to the Parishioners as well as bringing us nearer the church.

Your faithful friend

AA Guest Williams.

July 1946.

For the Victory Celebrations on the Saturday before Whitsun, the Ringers succeeded in obtaining their quarter peal. This was followed by a splendid tea for all the children which was organised by a wonderful team of ladies. Mrs Greenway, Mrs Williams, Mrs Solloway, Mrs Kirk, Mrs Partington, Mrs Astle, Mrs Postons, Mrs Davies, Mrs Chapman, Mrs Parry and the Misses Evans. Mrs W E Morgan, Mrs Raynor, Mrs Fleet, Mrs Garside, Mrs Eaton and Mrs Brierly. There was a well planned programme of sports organised by Mr Solloway, Mr Fleet, Mr Griffiths, Mr Astle, Mr Cummins, Mr Bateman, Mr W Mayers and Mr Partington. This had to be postponed twice due to the weather. It was eventually held however on the Grange Park with the kind permission of Mr & Mrs Magnall, who were as keenly disappointed as any at the postponement on account of the rain.

August 1946.

The loss of Ronnie Jones aged 18 is a very real one. He was a boy full of joy and friendliness, and his sad accident whilst swimming in the Gowy cast a great gloom on "Roadside". He had been evacuated from the bombed area of Wallasey and had made his home with his uncle and aunt.

An event to which we had all looked forward was the coming of the King and Queen to Chester on the 17th. They actually passed through the Parish at Vicars Cross and we had a very good view of them on their way to Chester. Their Majesties car slowed down enabling the children to obtain a little more than a fleeting glimpse. The Queen smiled radiantly and waved her hand to the young people. The event will be remembered for years to come.

Two days later we set forth for Rhyl after foregoing our trip for six years. Though it poured after we left Christleton, we had a lovely ride in the six coaches provided by Mr George Taylor which exactly fitted our requirement. The children had a wonderful tea at Christ Church Rooms, and although we again had some rain, we had on the whole much sunshine, and I think everyone had a real good outing and would have liked to go again next week.

September 1946

Then came the Welcome Home Party on August 24th. This was a very happy event which had certainly entailed much hard work and thinking in these days of rationing of nearly every commodity of food and drink even tobacco. The Party had been very kindly sponsored by the Comforts fund of the British Legion.....

We began by ringing the church bell. When I wished to thank the ringers they said it was a pleasure. Captain & Mrs Magnull had offered the use of the Grange for a conversazione. This however was nigh impossible on account of the rain, and the Men's and Women's Institutes were used instead. Captain Granger gave an inspiring address of welcome after the church service. The photograph of those present was however taken in the grounds of the Grange. The church was decked with flags and the British Legion Banner with the assistance of Miss Roberts and Mrs Heap had provided splendid gladioli for the altar. Col Shaw and Mr Dolphin read very appropriate lessons and the singing was hearty.

We cannot adequately express our gratitude to all the ex service personnel, yet I think this effort shows something of our feeling towards them, and the British Legion will continue to foster their interests.

November 1946.

This Remembrance Day will be a very special one being officially recognised as the Day of Remembrance for those who died in both wars. We must remember one who died on his way home, Huw Ashley. We held a Memorial Service for him, which was attended by a great many friends and neighbours, for he gave his life in as true a sense as those who died in the field of battle.

ASHLEY, HUGH Gunner. Royal Artillery who died on 25th August 1946 aged 23yrs. He was the son of Hugh and Elizabeth Ashley of Vicars Cross, Chester. He is buried at Heliopolis War Cemetery Ref. 6 G 14. Cairo. Egypt. It seems that Hugh was possibly involved in keeping the peace in Cairo with the United Nations Force after rioting was taking place.



Those brave fellows loved Christleton as much as we who still live here, and won honour with their bravery and devotion by observing the Day of Remembrance. Needless to say Flanders Poppies will be sold once more and the need of support is as urgent as ever before.

December 1946

The Service on Remembrance Day was very well attended and we were glad to welcome officers and men of the RASC who have come to the Camp at Vicars Cross, which is to become a permanent training centre for recruits. We may here fittingly congratulate Ian Soloway on his very rapid promotion to the rank of full Lieutenant.

January 1947

We are very glad to have our organist Mr George Guest back once more.

March 1947

We have an excellent organists and choirmaster, and our choir is making great strides and showing real enthusiasm. Mr Guest has promised to give an organ recital on Sunday March 10th at 10.45 & 6.30pm, and the choir will sing an anthem. On Sunday evening 23rd February we had the privilege of hearing Miss Troutbeck sing two contralto solos and the organist played pieces by Bach, Stanford and Ireland. All who came were enthusiastic about this experiment. Now we would like to make it more widely known, and so we ask you all to help in telling others about the Recitals when they are announced.

Meantime the "Christleton Village Players" which has not functioned since March 1939 has held a meeting and is anxious to re start activities. They have a good record so that anyone joining is helped by the tradition and experience of the past.

April 1947

"There are descriptions of terrible weather, heavy snowfalls and rain followed by flooding."

We had a great treat on Sunday 9th March when Mr George Guest gave an organ recital and the choir sang an anthem. "Lord for thy tender mercies sake". Mr Frank McGee from the Chapel Royal sand solos from Messiah and Elijah and we were all helped by this special music. The choir has been diligently practicing for Easter, rehearsing The Hallelujah Chorus and Purcell's "Rejoice in the Lord". We feel a personal satisfaction in the success of our organist in obtaining the offer of two scholarships, one at Oxford and one at Cambridge, and we must congratulate him even if it means sooner or later we will lose him again.

May 1947.

Lastly we had some really inspiring music. Purcell's anthem "Rejoice in the Lord" and part of the Messiah, "Behold I show you a mystery" "The Trumpet shall sound" and the Hallelujah Chorus. We congratulate our organist and choir and all the good work they have done lately, and the great advance they have made. Last Sunday they gave us Bach's anthem, "Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring" When this is sung, as it was sung, simply and carefully, sustained and accompanied the effect is wonderful. I would like to record that the Church Council expressed a special message of appreciation to our organist, choir and helpers.

July 1947

Our organist Mr George Guest has given us so much help during the time he has been with us, which is lamentably short. On Sunday St Peter's Day he gave a short recital both in the morning and evening, and it was a delight to hear him. In addition to this he has done so much in the training of the boys and choir. As one who is almost always present at the practices I can say that I've never know any choir trainer who inspired so much respect and enthusiasm, or wasted less time. The results have been evident to the congregation both in the rendering of the music and in the reverent behaviour of the choir.

September 1947

The choir excursion to Barmouth was most satisfactory & admirably arranged. Mr Guest had taken great pains and the route was well chosen, and the catering especially the tea, beyond praise. We had a visit from the Patron of Christleton Captain Henry Garnett. It seems only the other day that he was a boy at Eaton. Now he is the father of a family and a worthy grandson of the old Rector.

We have had to say farewell to our organist Mr George Guest, but we are glad to say that his place is to be filled by Mr R A Sutton ARCO who will also be assistant organist at the Cathedral. We trust he will have the same enthusiasm and support from both the choir and congregation.

December 1947

The tentative plans for the War Memorial of the architect Mr Hal Beswick FRIBA were favourably considered, together with the inserting of the names of those who fell on the inside wall of the church in the space to the west of the existing memorial to those who died in the Great War in the South Aisle.

We would like to record that the bell ringers in conformity with tradition of their predecessors for many generations on occasions of National importance attempted to ring a peal of grandsire triples on the occasion of the marriage of Princess Elizabeth to the Duke of Edinburgh. Unfortunately, as is well known, a rope broke. An endeavour will be made to ring a complete peal in the near future in honour of this great event.

DC

Ref.

Copies of Christleton Parish Magazines 1940-1949