

Christmas Special

CIRCUIT NEWS

CIRCUIT NEWS AND VIEWS FOR BANGOR & HOLYHEAD METHODIST CIRCUIT

THE MISSION OF THE BANGOR & HOLYHEAD CIRCUIT IS TO LIVE OUT GOD'S WORD AND SHARE THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST BY LOVING AND CARING WHOLEHEARTEDLY THROUGH SERVICE AND WORSHIP WITH FUN, FELLOWSHIP AND JOY FOR ALL THE CHURCH FAMILY AND THE COMMUNITY.

A Christmas Hymn (tune Dix)

From "Kellet's Christmas"

by Arnold Kellet

(used with permission)

1 Happy Christmas! Let us sing,

Celebrate the Saviour's birth!
Essence of the Unseen God
Gloriously revealed on earth,
Blazing into time and space,
Dazzling star of hope and grace!

2 Jesus Born in Bethlehem,
Far away and long ago,
Ever - present in our hearts
Now your gentle beauty show,
Ever weary life refresh,
Mighty Word in feeble flesh!

3 With the shepherds may we know
With the Wise Men may we see
Yearning Universal love
Cradled in simplicity,
Born that misery might cease
Lord of life and Prince of Peace!



4 Through the glib, commercial blare
Of these overcrowded days
Let the joyful tidings sound
With authentic Gospel Praise!
Mary's Child, once born to bless,
Seal our Christmas happiness

Image Copywrite

Royce Warner for the M & M Warner Trust

This is a photo of one of a set of paintings "The Revelation of God" that Royce Warner had commissioned. Copies of the paintings in the form of a limited edition 2021 calendar: Price £6:00 are going to be available from Joan and Royce with proceeds for Mission and Development.

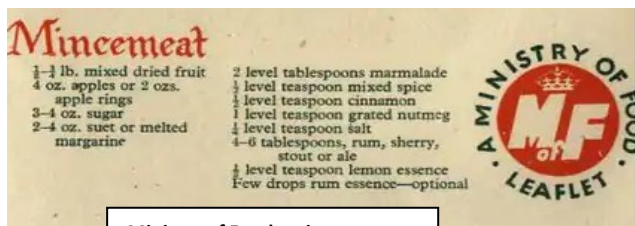
Wartime Child's Christmas

Howard Jackson



It's strange what things you remember from an early age but Christmas is certainly one of them. The first one I remember is when, at three years old on one of our regular shopping trips, my mother took me to see the toyshop window full of Christmas toys. The brightly painted train with two carriages took my eye. Now in our household there was a Christmas Eve ritual that took most of the day. The living room and parlour had to be decorated with coloured streamers from wall to wall. The imitation Christmas tree had to be hung with glass baubles. But at bedtime, a letter to Santa with a wish list had to be left fixed to the fireplace ready for his annual visit. On the hearth, Santa would find a mince pie and a glass of something warming. So when I went off to bed, full of excitement at what was to come,

all was ready, including the final touch, a large sock hanging from the mantelshelf. That same year, I remember playing with a brightly painted train set on Christmas morning and Dad showing me the half-eaten mince pie and empty glass. Good old Santa!



Ministry of Food recipe

But for the next few years, being at war with Germany affected Christmas dramatically. Food was rationed. Even at age 4 I knew I had a Ration Card and an Identity Card (number NWHI 204/3), and I carried a gas mask to and from nursery school. There were additional food coupons for Christmas, but that didn't allow families to enjoy the kind of food they had been used to. My father first converted the garage to keep hens for extra eggs and converted most of the back garden to a mini allotment. Later on, he had a proper allotment where he kept ducks and geese as well as growing vegetables. So our family did manage to have a goose for Christmas, with the traditional trimmings on more than one occasion during the war.

But how to find toys to give to a small boy? Toys were in short supply, so there was a market for up-cycled second-hand toys. Many parents made toys for their children. There were children's books available, with pictures printed in black and white! Even so, the Christmas mornings I remember were me waking very early to find mysterious parcels at the foot of the bed, containing toys and books and a stocking with a one or two small toys, a bar of chocolate, an orange and a piece of coal(!) Apparently to bring good luck. I never questioned how Santa

managed to get down the chimney, sort out the gifts, eat a mince pie and a drink to warm him and then get back on the roof so quickly and quietly. Perhaps I was too busy playing with new (to me) toys, like the Tudor Minibrix building set, or reading the Dandy Annual, my all-time favourite, with its picture stories of Desperate Dan, to wonder about it. Good old Santa! Being an only child, I had no older siblings to let me in on the secret of Santa Claus, so it was a few years before I realised who he actually was.



Tudor Minibrix building set 1940s.

Another thing that seems strange now is having a postal delivery on Christmas morning. There was always a Christmas “box” and a drink ready for the postman, not just at our door, but everywhere he called. This practice came to an end in 1960. Just imagine having to be at work at 6 every Christmas morning sorting cards, letters and parcels, then going out on the road for two or three hours whilst most other families were enjoying a well-earned holiday.



I remember Christmas being a family time as well. At the beginning of the war, my paternal grandparents lived about 15 minutes' walk away from us and I have a memory of visiting them on Christmas day for tea. But later on, my maternal grandmother, a widow, came to live with us “until the end of the war” to get away from the nightly bombing raids on Stoke-on-Trent and soon after we moved to another town as my father's work moved. That was the end of big-family Christmas teas.

I attended the CofE Sunday School. Every year approaching Christmas the Sunday school held its own carol concert. One year, aged 7, I was chosen to open the concert singing solo and unaccompanied the first verse of “Once in royal David's city”. My very first public performance!

But Christmas food was still very special. Somehow, in spite of the rationing, Christmas dinners always included Christmas pudding with brandy sauce and Christmas cake with icing and mince pies appeared at teatime. All home-made, of course. Living on the edge of the Pennines, we experienced plenty of winter frost and snow. Every year I hoped for a white Christmas, but was usually disappointed. Only once can I remember snow falling at Christmas where we lived during the war years.

There was always a risk of an air raid occurring and the warning sirens sounded fairly often during the early years of the war. However, I can't ever remember any interruption to the Christmas festivities. There was noise and excitement when the air raid warning sirens sounded, especially at night, when Dad had to get out of the house quickly to meet up with the transport to the air-raid warden HQ where he would be allocated an area of the town to patrol. One moonlit night when he was off-duty, he took me outside to see the scores of German bombers returning home after bombing raids on Manchester and Liverpool.



In spite of the dangers and difficulties faced by my family due to the war, as a child I was unaware of their fears and worries. My overall impression is one of a happy, almost carefree childhood in spite of the war. I was used to restrictions on where I could go, what there was to eat and being prepared for bombing raids at any moment. What I learned at Sunday school laid a lasting foundation for life, because at age 6 on my way home one Sunday morning, I decided to follow Jesus. That has made me who I am today.

Howard Jackson.





Christmas eve in the hospital during the 1970's

I was a student nurse during the late 1970's and the highlight of Christmas in the hospital was Christmas Eve. By evening everything was settling down and anyone well enough to go home had gone. The wards were reasonably quiet with plenty of beds to spare. During December lots of groups had been carol singing round the wards but Christmas Eve was the nurses turn.

We would gather in the hospital chapel for a short nativity service with children from the local Brownies dressed in costumes. After the service we would don our capes, light out lanterns and set off behind our nativity tableau round the wards. We would walk from ward to ward singing carols as we went, the lights would go out as we arrived and a little of the Christmas story was shared with those poorly enough to stay in hospital over the holiday.

The big day itself was also a time to celebrate and the surgeons really did carve the turkey on each ward. A far cry from the extreme business in our hospitals this year. The pressures from lack of staff, the constant search for beds and releasing capacity in casualty will not stop. Please pray for the staff across our hospitals that they will have the strength to cope with a stressful and busy time.

Heather Bonnebaigt

Mysteriously the National Elf Service put the decorations up deep in the night!!

Christmas customs

I am sure that most families have their own Christmas customs that are meaningful and important within the family setting. Here are a few from folk around the circuit.

Christmas afternoon, instead of a post-dinner sleep why not spread all the wrapping paper over the floor and make party hats?

When she worked in Debenhams, Barbara Tottle was able to get some fake snow which she would use to make a trail from the back door to the dinning room table where there were carrots, mince pies, and a glass of sherry for Father Christmas and his reindeer, in the morning all but the snow and a few crumbs were left. The children loved it.

Not being allowed to talk about Christmas before Bonfire Night!

Putting silver threepenny bits in the Christmas Pudding when we made it for a fun way of eating it on Christmas Day. Extra little fun presents on the Christmas Tree, all numbered so we all got a surprise . *Jean Owen*



Who's coming for Christmas?

As many of you know, David and I have a large family- Two birth children, three adopted mixed-race children and two adopted girls with extra problems plus the delights of twelve grandchildren. In 1974 after having a boy and girl we decided to adopt children who would not find homes easily.

Then in 1974, having just gone into ministry, our GP knocked on the door on Boxing Day and asked us to look after two 10-year-old boys. Since then, whilst carrying on adopting, we have fostered over 70 children, a baby who stayed for a night to a very disabled child who came for palliative care aged 2 and is now 22 years old!

We were asked to think of an amusing anecdote from our fostering life- many come to mind.

In 2006, our first Christmas on Anglesey, we got a call two days before Christmas, would we take an 8-year-old boy, who's six-year foster placement had broken down?

The next twenty-four hours were spent trawling around the shops to buy him a kite like the other five children! Poor little guy was in a dreadfully mixed-up state when he arrived and spent the first twenty-four hours in the foetal position in a corner wailing!

However, on Christmas Eve, two of our grandchildren arrived. Suddenly life changed for this young man- he was not going to cry and show these smaller boys and Priscilla that he was a baby, suddenly he was "king pin" in his new home!

On Christmas Eve, we all went to a nearby farm who put on a real show for Christmas, including Father Christmas. The boys were all amazed that Father Christmas spoke Welsh!

We had a lovely Christmas that year (we always do). Luke stayed for three months until another long-term placement was found nearer his home with a lovely carer who saw him through the rest of his childhood and adoption.

Fostering had given us so much love, fun, heartache, and tears. But we have been truly blessed with all the different children we have met



More Christmas Customs

We always have a mug of tea and open the Christmas tin of shortbread when we get back from the Christmas Eve Midnight Communion Service. We also open a small present.

Christine Hughes

Early on Christmas morning Christians Awake is played on the piano - this is the signal for cups of tea in bed and opening stockings.

Lorna Sykes

We loved it when the children brought their pillow cases into our bed and we watched them open their presents, we also did it as children with our parents, The only time we were allowed in their bed..

Margaret Jones



Puzzle time

grab a coffee or tea and maybe a biscuit and see if you can work these out.



FIND THE BIBLE BOOKS There are 18 hidden in this passage

Dear Friend

I wanted to act soon in bringing words of encouragement to you, my courageous friend or, as I know you are a Francophile, 'mon brave', during this challenging time. The story of Captain Tom Moore is a revelation and it will bless you. At the time of writing, he, with Michael Ball, numbers one in the charts. Inspiration must be in his genes, isn't it remarkable? "Should you buy this song of songs?" you ask? Don't wear your frugal ,at", I answer. 'I am from Bristol.' "I am from am not a harridan, "I elaborate, "but don't get into a rut, have a go at something new." Captain Tom's life chronicles many a difficult job, but he is not full of lamentations. He is a most positive and inspiring man who seasons his story with warmth, wisdom and joy. So singalong if you can; a hum would be fine and, although this Covid-19 is not just flu, keep hope in your heart. Times are abnormal, a childlike faith will help as we remember - we never walk alone.

What's the Carol?

All of these are lines from Christmas Carols and hymns, but what's the first line?

Bonus point if you can name the tune. Perhaps you can do the Quiz with your family either in person or on line and you could sing the first verse for bonus points?

All are from Singing the Faith (but no looking till you have finished)

1. God with us is now residing
2. Every eye shall now behold him
3. Close by me for ever, and love me I pray
4. and open wide your heavenly home
5. And to those who never listened
6. Sing in Exultation
7. through his own redeeming love,
8. Late in time behold him come,
9. what your joyful news today;
10. Holy Jesus every day keep us in the narrow way





Carols on Your Doorstep

You are invited to join a
community wide Carol sing
on Christmas Eve at 7:00 p.m.

Let us invite Christmas into our
homes this year in song.
Simply stand at your doorstep (or
gatepost)
and start singing!

Silent night, holy night:
All is calm, all is bright,
'Round yon virgin Mother and
Child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Carolau o'ch Trothwy

Estynir wahoddiad i chi
ganu Carol yn gymunedol
ar Noswyl Nadolig am 7:00 og.

Gwahoddwn y Nadolig i'n
cartrefi mewn cân.
Sefwch ar eich trothwy
(neu ger eich giât) a
dechreuwch ganu!

Dawel nos, Sanctaidd yw'r nos;
Cwsg a gerdd waun a rhos,
Eto'n effro mae Joseff a Mair,
Faban annwyl ynghwsg yn y
gwair,
Cwsg mewn gwynfyd a hedd,
Cwsg mewn gwynfyd a hedd.



Cryptic Christmas card.

A man sent his friend a cryptic Christmas card. It said:

A B C D E F G H I J K M N O P Q
R S T U V W X Y Z

The recipient puzzled over it for weeks, finally gave up and wrote asking for an explanation.

In July he received the explanation on a postcard: "No L."



New Technology:

As a little girl climbed onto Santa's lap, Santa asked the usual "and what would you like for Christmas?"

The child stared at him open mouthed and horrified for a minute, then gasped:

"Didn't you get my e-mail?"

The nativity images , apart from the one on this page are part of a collection that Rev Rosemary and John Nunn have collected over the years.

The knitted nativities have been keeping Heather Bonnebaigt busy through the autumn.

We need you to help us to fill future editions of Circuit News. If you have any words of wisdom, jokes, pictures, stories you would like to share please send them

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