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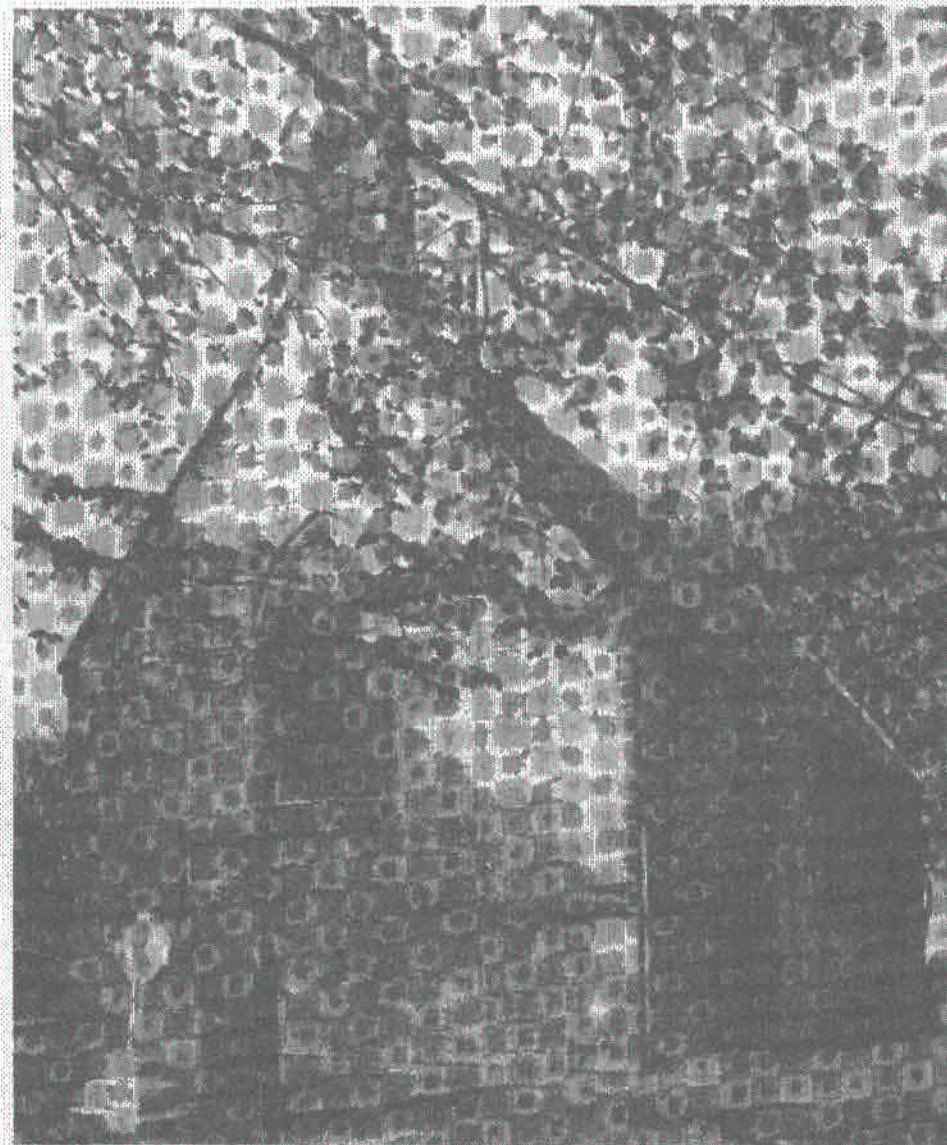
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CHRISTMAS 1984

*Don Morley*  
**EAST RAINTON**



**PARISH NEWS**

CHRISTMAS 1984



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Editorial

The launch of any new publication, even though it be a parish news magazine, is an anxious time for its sponsor. Will it prove to be of public interest? How will it be received? Is the balance of the contents about right? Is it really worth the effort?

The purpose of this magazine is not only to publicize the affairs of St. Cuthbert's Church but also to dispense news and interest of a secular nature which, it is hoped will be both interesting and useful to the community.

Although it is alleged that we are living in a material age, there has recently been an increasing interest in material matters including the affairs of yesteryear and particularly of the last century. We have therefore included a short article about the village in the mid - 19th Century. If this proves to be of interest we hope to continue this arrangement. No doubt readers will have information - even original documents and photographs - which may add to our combined knowledge of the area.

Interesting as the past may be we must of necessity involve ourselves with the present. How have changes in society affected both the church and the village? Are our plans guiding us in the right direction?



How are we coping with the increased amount of vandalism?  
Could East Rainton ever be considered as a suitable candidate  
for a 'Tidy Village' award? If not, why not? Are we a  
thriving community? Perhaps these are some of the many questions  
which we should be addressing ourselves.

#### ATTENTION ALL ADVERTISERS

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE WE PROPOSE TO INCLUDE

#### COMMERCIAL ADVERTISEMENTS

WHICH WE HOPE WILL BE READ BY THE MAJORITY OF

EAST RANTON RESIDENTS

OUR MODESTLY PRICED ADVERTISING RATES ARE:-

FULL PAGE	£3.00 PER ISSUE
	£8.00 PER ANNUM (3 ISSUES)
½ PAGE	£2.00 PER ISSUE
	£5.00 PER ANNUM

PLEASE CONTACT THE EDITOR FOR DETAILS

#### THE VICAR'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

First of all I must say how pleased I am to see a renewed  
interest in a magazine in East Rainton. I therefore commend  
it to you, emphasising that its success depends on you, each  
one of you; by that I mean not only buying it (which is vital!)  
but also promoting its circulation amongst your friends and  
neighbours and passing on information to the editor or myself  
that could be of interest to the village. Obviously it is a  
"church" magazine but we see it also as a village or community  
magazine, publicising past or future happenings in all aspects  
of the life of East Rainton. So don't be shy - help to make  
it your magazine, something which interests you!

What do you think of life in the world today? The break-ins,  
the muggings, a government that is more interested in a civil  
war than the thousands suddenly (?) found to be starving to  
death - then criticising the help other nations offer! I  
could go on, but you can paint the picture for yourselves; we  
see it and hear about it every day. Can you make sense of  
this? I admit there are times when despair takes over and I'm  
sure you too will wonder what is going on. Where will it end?

Recently I read something which I think throws some light on  
the subject. Dostoevsky said "If there is no God, then every-  
thing is permitted!" Atheism produces nihilism (nihil-nothing)  
or belief in practically nothing at all. If there is no God,  
not only does anything go, but also the very worst is encour-  
aged. If there is no God, no immortality, then life is too  
short to think about much of anything except "eat, drink and be  
merry, for tomorrow we die." Selfish enjoyment, enjoyment at the



expense or others, complete disregard of others, taking or destroying what is others - are these things not to be expected in a world, a nation or a village, that seems to have turned its back on God and failed to teach its children a Faith, a hope and a Love of God and neighbour, which has been the basis of the Good Life which we now complain has been lost? In a very real sense we are all involved in the blame for this.

The next step? Can we put things right? I believe we can do something. First of all, on entering a dark room it is always helpful and comforting to be able to switch on some light, have a torch or a lighted candle. Such light enables us to see what is in the dark, frightening room. Fears and problems are only solved by facing them, meeting them squarely and dealing with them. Atheism or lack of faith in God and an ultimate purpose for the universe, naturally leads to an amoral or immoral situation. This has developed noticeably over 50 or 60 years. We have all seen the decline in church attendance and the increase in "bad behaviour" over the years. Is there not a connection? I believe that only by reversing the trend and getting back to a living Christian Faith will life in the nation and village improve.

For a time it seemed that Science could provide the answers to life's problems, that Man could at last dispense with the old fashioned God. Well I think we see the folly of that idea, or, if we can't, then we will never learn or deserve any better.

Life in this world only works reasonably well when we look to the One who made the world and who sent us One who lived a human life to show us the way, leaving us a living organisation, the Church, to continue that work of teaching and guiding and

encouraging, that we all might enjoy the fruits of His work. Read your Bible, especially the New Testament and you will find Jesus, and his followers, dealing with the same kind of problems and situations as we face - and giving the answers! Some of the details of materialistic life have changed, e.g. modes of dwelling place and transport, but human nature is very much the same - there is the same range of personalities and characters. It is in this area of life that most difficulties (and most happiness) lie in human relationships and Jesus gives more guidance on this than we will ever need!

Christmas is coming! Joy to the World! Let us rejoice in our Friend and Saviour's Birth as we have never done before. Let us help Him to transform this world, by getting involved in His worship and the knowledge of His ways so that we can be more able to work to establish His Kingdom of Righteousness (right living) and Truth. It will take time to reverse the last few decades, but as the Chinese say, "The longest journey has to start with the first step". The first step is to offer ourselves to Jesus, only then can we begin to ask others to follow in the same way of commitment to God. The alternative course is to prolong and encourage the reign of evil. God does not want wishy-washy, nominal Christians. He is asking for your wholehearted loyalty and at this time calling on you to respond to the eternal message of His Son, declared so clearly during Advent and Christmas. The call to think about the purpose of life and the means to fulfil that purpose.

Will Christmas be for you a sentimental time? Such a nice time for the children?

Everyone so generous and so friendly? Or will it be a time of



Thanksgiving that "God so loved the world that He gave his only son, that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life". Once we get the heart of Christmas right then the rest of the enjoyment will flow naturally and fully.

May Jesus come right into your life this Christmas; He will if you invite Him! May this be the beginning of new life for each of us and for our village. He needs individuals, you and me, for His work.

"Who is on the Lord's side?"

Will you commit yourself with Jesus to fulfil the hopes of the Christian message -

"Peace on earth.....goodwill among men".

May God bless you with the wisdom to see,

Your friend for Jesus' sake,

R L WELSH

Vicar

#### Christmas Crackers?

School Leader: What's that you're drawing Christopher?

Christopher: It's a picture of God.

School Leader: But we don't know what God looks like.

Christopher: You will when I'm finished.

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Does your wife attend church regularly?"

"Very much so. She hasn't missed an Easter Sunday since we were married!"

#### SCHOOL REPORT

by J Wiseman

Our Harvest Festival proved to be a very successful event, not simply because of the words and music performed by the children, but also because of the generous offerings of fruit, vegetables and flowers received from parents and friends of the school. Many parents may not realise that we always have a second Harvest Festival when the senior citizens of our community are invited. This event is eagerly looked forward to by both children and guests and on this occasion, to round off the visit, home made broth was served to all those who had braved a blustery wind in order to attend.

Next day we set out to distribute the gifts to all the senior citizens in our village. As well as being a highlight of the year for all of us at school, I know that many of the people we visit eagerly await the spectacle of the young children coming along the street in a lively chattering 'crocodile'. It is also a small step, but a very important one, in nurturing a community spirit in our younger children.

Our next event will be held in December when we shall be performing the story of Babaushka, a Russian folk-tale set to words and music. We shall also be getting together a group of children to sing carols at the combined Church and Chapel carol service.

All in all, this makes for a very busy half term, but we hope it will be worth it for performer and listener alike!

J WISEMAN

EAST RAINTON PRIMARY SCHOOL



Over 130 years ago the village presented a somewhat different picture from today, yet some buildings remain and the names of a few of today's residents still bear a familiar ring. Unfortunately some of the ancient buildings of historic interest have been demolished during the present century.

In 1851 the present St. Cuthbert's Church had not yet been built (it was erected in 1866), the village population was 1,695 and most of the menfolk were employed in coal mines owned by the Marquis of Londonderry. Coal mining was a particularly hazardous occupation at this time and in 1817 and 1823 explosions of fire damp killed 80 employees of the Plains Pit with many of their fellow workers receiving severe incapacitating burns. The North Hetton Coal Company, which later in the century was to operate coal mines both in East Rainton and in Moorsley had not yet commenced production and we hope to deal with the activities of this company in future issues of the Parish News. Middle Rainton, which now no longer exists as a community, was a separate village in 1851 although forming part of the township of East Rainton. Indeed Middle Rainton had a comparatively short history. It was established only in 1820 when a local land owner, a Mr R Heaviside, sold a large field in small building allotments. Thirty years later, Middle Rainton was a thriving community with a Primitive Methodist Chapel, its own public houses, the usual tradesmen and a private 'dame' school owned and conducted by a Dorothy Lee. 'Dame' schools which flourished through the 18th and part of the 19th centuries were small private schools generally intended for very young scholars. At the lower end of the spectrum they were often

little more than baby-sitting institutions although some taught the rudiments of reading, writing and simple arithmetic.

By 1851 East Rainton's population was provided with no less than six public houses although the 'victuallers', as the licenses of that era were known, occasionally followed other occupations besides attending to their duties at the hostel. The public houses existing at that time were:

Board	-	George Bell
Fox & Hound	-	Jeremiah Barris
Rose & Crown	-	William Walker
Smith's Arms	-	Barbara Horn
Travellers Rest	-	Thomas Swinburn (also contractor)
Village Tavern	-	John Bailey (also farmer)

It is most co-incidental that Mr William Walker, a retired grocer and general dealer, still residing in the village, married the daughter of a previous landlord of the Rose & Crown!

At this time William Coulson was the village blacksmith, Messrs Proud and Henderson were the boot and shoe makers, Margaret Pallister the tailor, draper and hatter, William the joiner, Thomas Wood the grocer and tea dealer and John Miller the butcher. Farmers included Robert Coleman and Thomas Johnson and the two village schoolmasters were Michael Ang and Joseph Sola.

In 1851 schools in the village were privately owned and it was not until 1868 that the National School was built catering for 136 children. National schools were provided and administered by the Church of England and together with schools



other religious denominations and private establishments provided most of the basic education. It was not until 1870 when an Education Act establishing School Boards became law, that any form of 'statutory' education was introduced. However, School Boards were formed only in those parishes and boroughs where there was a 'deficiency of elementary school accommodation'. In the case of East Rainton a School Board was never necessary as the school accommodation provided by the National School was deemed to be sufficient for the needs of the village.

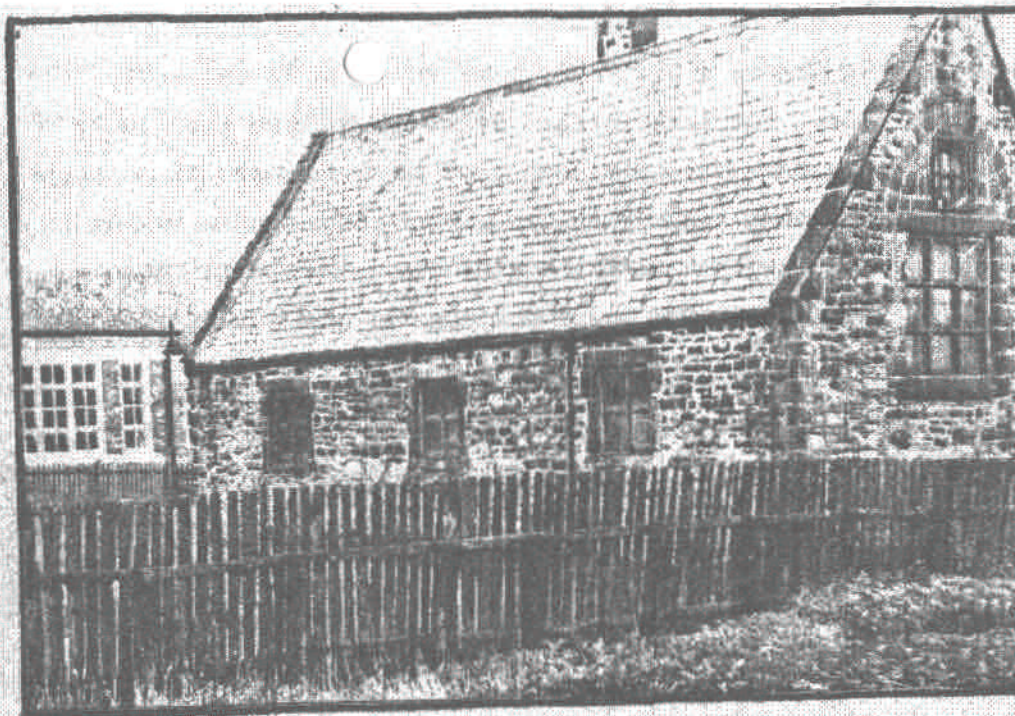
As many existing residents are aware the National School ceased to exist as a school in 1933 when the present school was built on an adjacent site. Eventually the National School was demolished and the land on which it stood was used to build two detached bungalows in 1966.

We hope to include further information in future issues of the earlier life of East Rainton and the editor will be pleased to receive documents or information especially relating to life in the last quarter of the 19th century or the first quarter of the 20th century.

W M MORLEY

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 If you enjoy reading this magazine, please tell your friends AND PLACE YOUR ORDER FOR 1985 with any member of the Parochial Church Council. If you DON'T enjoy it - or can suggest improvements -  
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PLEASE TELL THE EDITOR



The National School or Church School, referred to in the article 'East Rainton in 1851'. This school was built in 1868 and replaced by the present school (seen in the background) in 1933. A bungalow known as 'Portree', owned by Mr and Mrs Frank Platt, now stands on the school site shown here.

#### COLLECTIONS

When the family returned home from Sunday morning service, father criticised the sermon, daughter thought the choir's singing was atrocious and mother found fault with the organist. 'But it wasn't a bad show for a penny was it Daddy?'

Mother: 'Were you a good little girl at church today Marilyn?'

Marilyn: 'Yes mother. A tall gentleman offered me a big plate of money and I said "No thank you".'



## FINANCIAL FOCUS!

and raising can be a difficult task in these industrially troubled times, but here in East Rainton, we have been lucky with our efforts. Not only have they been a financial success but everyone seems to have enjoyed the social events making the hard work involved really worthwhile. We always need money for Cubs, Brownies and the Playgroup and would appreciate any new ideas you may have.

My activities were to pay for the re-furbishing of the Church Hall, new heaters, new lights and a new floor which cost £1,000 - quite a big bill! - but everyone joined in. With their support Sponsored Walks, a Sponsored Slim (1st 10lbs lost), Grocery Haul and the Summer Fayre, we were able to raise the money (congratulations - Editor)

My grateful thanks for their generous donations and encouragement are extended to Bellway (Builders) of Newcastle and the John Priestman Charity Trust; their faith in the future of the Cubs, Brownies, Girl Guides and the Playgroup - indeed in all our organisations and people of East Rainton - helped to finance the 'new look' hall.

The next event is the Christmas Fayre to be held in the Church Hall on Saturday, 1st December commencing at 2.00 p.m. This event always provides a good afternoon out for everyone so do come along and join in the fun. There are various stalls for Football, Cakes, Tins and Grocery, Bric-a-Brac, Sweets and Games and one with Santa Claus. In addition the Cubs, Brownies and Playgroup will have their own separate stalls.

Please come along and make this our best event ever because this year VAUX BREWERIES have promised to give us 50%

of whatever we raise at the Christmas Fayre. This is a most generous offer so come along, be as generous as you can and have a smashing day!

This year's CHRISTMAS DRAW has 20 prizes and to whet your appetites we can tell you that they include turkeys, bottles of whisky, gin, sherry and wine, a food hamper, Christmas cake, confectionery, fruit and many mystery prizes besides.

All prizes are donated and we do appreciate all your help and support. Please be generous and help your local church. We look forward to seeing you.

MAUREEN GUYLL - Secretary, East Rainton Church Hall Committee

## DO YOU REMEMBER?

It's hard to imagine walking through the Raintons today, that it was once heavily involved with coal mining. Coal is first mentioned as being worked in the 12th Century and a receipt for coal bought in the Rainton area is in Durham Cathedral.

From about the early 1800's up until a few years ago there were 11 collieries in the Raintons area. I wonder if anyone, particularly our senior citizens, can identify some of the sites of the following collieries:-

Dunwell, Hazard, Moorsley and the North Pit - all these collieries belonged to the Hetton Coal Company.

Other pits in operation were:-

Adventure, Alexandria, Hutton House, Meadows, Nicholsons,

Plains Pit and Resolution

We will have a look at the history of these pits on our next issue.

MAUREEN GUYLL