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EAST RAINTON



PARISH NEWS

CHRISTMAS 1986

In the last issue of 'Parish News', published in the stable, we reported that the Rev. George Ward was the inn for Mary up duty in the parish and that procedures had be foundings has initiated to appoint a new incumbent. Since then, years and developments culminating in the inducti of the Rev. David Guest from Middleham, Yorkshire on 11th July.

This appointment would have appeared in the pages of our Harvest Festival edition but, owing to various problems, this issue was not published; extend apologies to readers for the omission. More importantly however David Guest has quickly and effectively settled into his new parishes and during his relatively short time here has become increasingly involved with community life. Everyone will wish him well in his appointment to the Raintons and we express the hope that he will have a long and satisfying ministry in the two parishes.

It will be recalled that the first issue of 'Parish News' was published at Christmas 1984 as an attempt, not only to report on the affairs of St. Cuthbert's Church, but also to dispense news and interest of a secular nature, which we thought may be of interest to the community.

Besides publicising church services and functions associated with the festivals of Easter, Harvest and Christmas, we have attempted to trace the history of the village over the past

100 years or so, have reported on school and village organisation affairs and have had specialist articles written by Mr. Norman Suggett on the meaning and relevance of some of the customs related to our main church festivals.

Unfortunately this will be our last issue but much of what we have been attempting will now be included in 'The Raintons Church Newsletter' which will be issued by the vicar each month. This will have the added advantage of being much more up-to-date especially on church affairs. Regularity of news and information is important and we wish all possible success to the efforts of David Guest in this new venture.

It seems an appropriate time to thank sincerely all who have been involved, in any capacity whatsoever, with the 'Parish News'. It may be invidious to mention individuals but Mr. Norman Suggett's articles have been both enjoyable and stimulating, the indefatigable Mr. John Wiseman has regularly contributed his 'school reports' and the ubiquitous Mrs. Joan Welghill and her helpers have been responsible for distribution. However to all past and present contributors we extend our gratitude.

In our last issue we concentrate on village life today. Since 1851 when we commenced our 'potted history', there have been great changes in the life of the village. Many have been of communal advantage yet better technology has also brought problems in its wake. Can we really be satisfied with society today, and if not, what are we doing about it?

Peace and good will towards all men!

This is the message of Christmas which began in a stable, cold and dark, because there was no room at the inn for Mary and Joseph. The child born in such unusual surroundings has left a message which has encouraged man for 1986 years and spread throughout the world.

We have no conception of man's former inhumanity to his fellows and his indifference to the suffering of others less fortunate than himself. The Roman and his wife travelling in luxury aboard a galley, rowed by slaves chained to the oars, who kept time with a rhythm beaten out on a metal shield and whose biggest dread was that the captain would give the order, "Raise the beat!"

The black slaves taken by stinking ships to America to be sold by auction to work, under the overseer's lash, on the cotton plantations, dreaded the day when they failed to give satisfaction and could be sold "down the river" to the infamous sugar-cane plantations.

Where the average life of a slave was from three to five years, the young children in England who were employed for fourteen hours per day in the "dark Satanic mills" of Lancashire or underground in the coal mines or, when they were small enough, were sent up the chimneys to brush down the soot, all lived a life of virtual slavery.

In recent years we have seen Hitler's concentration camps, his gas ovens, mass executions and burials to eliminate all Jews and produce the master race. In spite of his efforts

to suppress Christianity the church still survived even when secret services had to be held, sometimes almost under the noses of the Gestapo.

The desire of man to improve the quality of life on earth is based on the belief that all men are born equal. Look around this county and note the huge number of churches and chapels varying from our own beautiful Cathedral in Durham, "half church of God, half castle gainst the Scot", to the smallest, most humble place of worship in the Dales where people journeyed for miles on foot or on horseback to the service. The most ornate and beautiful stonework in the world is found in our churches and our national life centres on places like St. Paul's Cathedral.

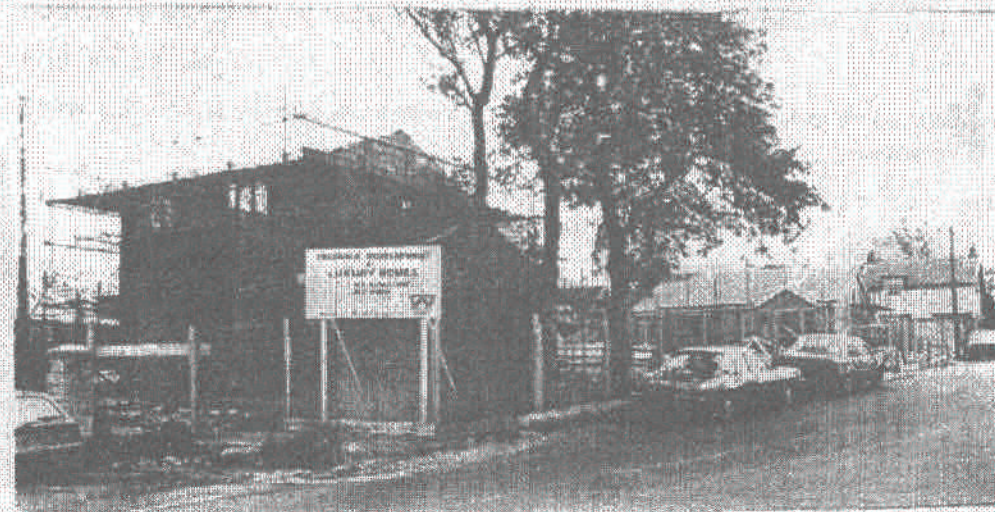
In many cases the meaning of Christmas as the birthday of Jesus has been superseded by the desire to make it a time of enjoyment and the satisfaction of the more physical appetites. Sales of turkeys, food of all kinds, and drink of varying degrees of potency reach astronomical figures. We all expect the exchange of presents and Christmas cards, the Christmas spirit of universal friendliness and some of us even feel the desire to worship in our local church.

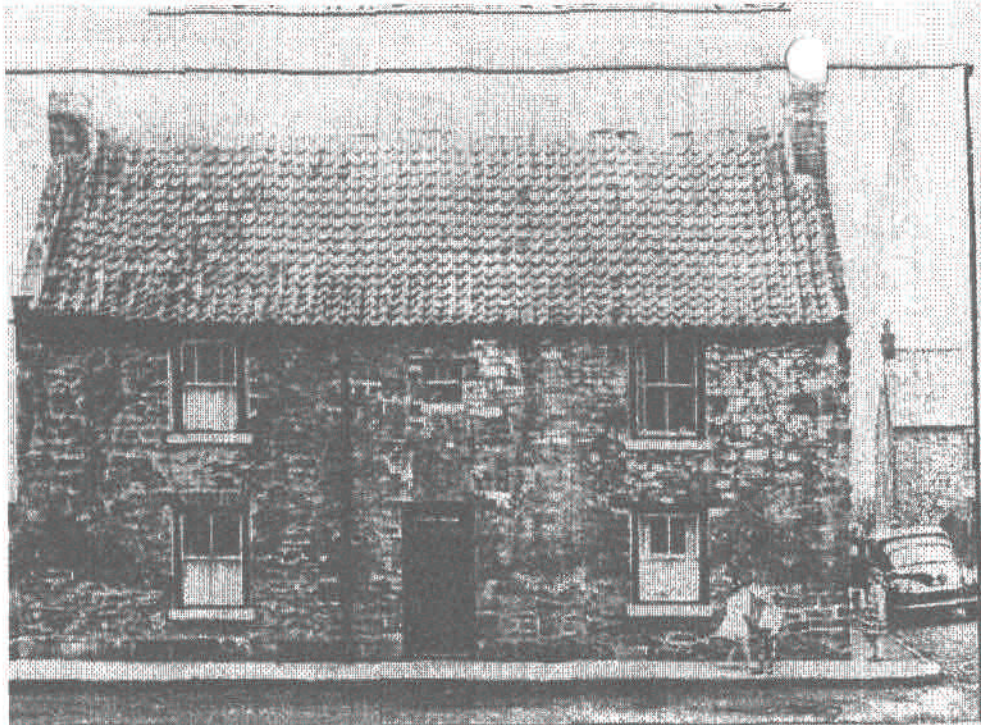
We are conscious of the influence of people who, in the past, came to our country as uninvited guests. The Norsemen, and others from colder Northern lands, decided to stay here to enjoy our pleasant climate. They brought the idea of the Christmas tree around which presents were placed on Christmas Eve, the popularity of greenery and holly for decoration, giving a promise of hope and of new growth in Spring. Our Christmas cards usually depict

PAST AND PRESENT (1)

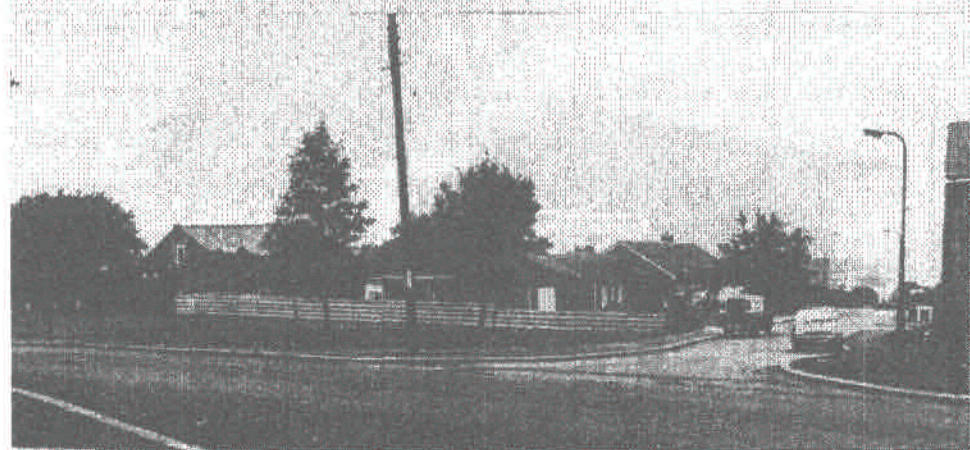


RAINTON HOUSE (above), originally built about the middle of the 19th Century was the home of Mr Hugh Wood, who established the mining engineering company of HUWOOD LTD. on the Team Valley Trading Estate. It was eventually occupied by Mr. Fred Hutchinson, a director of HUWOOD LTD. A few years ago it was demolished to make way for the housing development, shown below, which is nearing completion.





HERD'S HOUSE, shown above, was a 17th Century dwelling situated on the original village green. When it was demolished in 1963, it was the oldest building remaining in the village. Although of some historic interest it was demolished to allow for the development photographed below.



scenes in the snow; the shy little robin, small animals or country activities - all emphasising the idea of peace. Christmas cards depicting tanks, guns or other appurtenances of war would not have a very great appeal.

The children excitedly await the coming of Santa Claus with his red cloak, long white whiskers and his sledge drawn by reindeer and loaded with presents. They expect him to come down the chimney - although he must be rather puzzled by modern centrally-heated houses where chimneys are not required.

All is normal on the actual day and everyone smilingly wishes all and sundry "A Merry Christmas" and we are nearer to universal peace than at any other time of the year.

NORMAN SUGGETT

IN SOMEONE'S PRAYERS

It's only in the Winter we appreciate the glow
Of blazing logs and coal. It's only then we know
The comfort and blessings of a warm and cosy room
Beside the firelit hearth we can forget the outside gloom.
And so it is in life.

It's not till trouble comes along you realise what friendship
means

It's not till things go wrong you know how good it is to feel
you're in someone's prayers

In time of sorrow and distress, to know somebody cares.

You take it for granted when a sunlit way you tread

But when it's Winter in the heart you thank God for a friend.

(ANON)

Submitted by Mrs. J. Johnson

SCHOOL REPORT

What price a child's life?

The children of East Rainton Primary School have saved the lives of many children.

Harvest time is a time for giving thanks to God for His many gifts. It is a time when we welcome the opportunity to say thank you. Many of our parents fervently believe so, judging by the huge and generous response each year to our appeal for produce for our Harvest Festival. Even parents who can ill afford it, contribute generously. The display is wonderful - because it shows that people care and that they want to share some of the gifts from God with others - and also, although many would not realise it, the children are being taught to care and share what they have with others.

At our Harvest Festival this year, the message of caring for others was emphasised more strongly than ever. The children of Class 2 showed how an empty basket can soon be filled if we all contribute just a little. The basket represented the poor of the world who have nothing at all. The small gifts represented God's gifts being shared with them.

Which brings me to the question I began with and the dramatic statement following it. Class 5 held their, by now traditional fund raising week recently, for the Young Save the Children Fund. £52.40 was raised and duly sent off. Last week we received a thank you letter from Mary Balshaw, Northern Regional Secretary. Apart from expressing her gratitude for the amount sent, Mary says "This large sum of

money enables us not only to keep alive many children who would otherwise die of hunger or disease, but will ensure that they are all restored to full health". "Large sum of money" and "many children". This really emphasises to me the huge gap which exists between the rich countries on the one hand and the poor nations on the other. For us £52.40 would go nowhere - many children will have much more than this spent on them this Christmas - yet in poor countries so little is needed to save the life of a child. How necessary it is to share God's gifts with others.

I am pleased, although never sufficiently to be complacent, that our children at East Rainton are at least beginning to learn the meaning of caring for others. The simple act of distributing harvest gifts around the village is the first step in helping them to develop a caring attitude.

The children of East Rainton Primary School have saved the lives of many children. What greater gift can man give than life itself? And what greater joy than that the sharing of God's gifts should save the lives of so many children?

Incidentally the Harvest Festival service for the senior citizens was exceptionally well attended. We thank everyone who made it such an enjoyable occasion. Watch out for news of our Christmas concert. The main item is a musical play called "Gone with the Wiz". It is an absolute cracker! I'm sure you'll enjoy it.

JOHN WISEMAN

Deputy Head

Dear Friends,

May I begin by saying how pleased I am to be able to speak through this magazine - and how sad I am that it will be the last time I can do so. I am sure you will all join with me in thanking Mr. Bill Morley for his production of the East Rainton Parish News over the past years. I hope that the articles which have appeared will eventually be published in a more permanent form for a wider readership to enjoy.

Amazingly it is only four months since I came to live and work among you, but I already feel at home and look forward to many years of ministry both at East Rainton and at West Rainton. Although I was born in Yorkshire and spent the whole of my working life until now in that county, I am no stranger to these parts as I was a student at Durham University (St. John's College) twenty five years ago and regularly travelled along the old road to Sunderland on my way to visit friends in West Boldon. Even then I expressed the hope that one day I would return to County Durham. When I eventually did so, little did I think that I would so soon be laid low with pneumonia (which is why this article is much shorter than intended); but I can hardly blame County Durham for that!

Elsewhere you will find details of Christmas services and events. Let me simply say here that I hope the joy of Christmas - the miracle of God coming into our lives where we are and in everyday events - will be evident in our relationships together. A parish which lives out the Incarnation day by day and week by week can be a powerful instrument for the spreading of God's Kingdom throughout the world.

May God bless you all,

Your sincere friend and Vicar,

DAVID GUEST

(On behalf of all parishioners we wish Mr. Guest a speedy return to good health - EDITOR)

QUOTABLE QUOTES

If I spent as much time doing the things I worry about getting done as I do worrying about them, I wouldn't have anything to worry about - Beryl Pfizer

I have never met a man who has given me as much trouble as myself - Dwight L. Moody

What do people mean by sending you a dozen Christmas cards during the festive season, and not deigning to send you three lines by way of letter during the rest of the year?

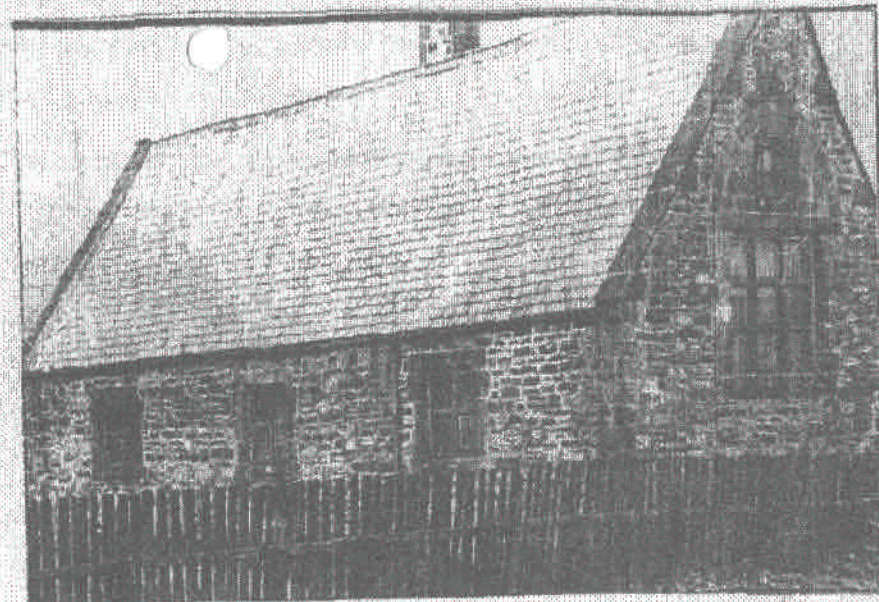
- J. Ashby-Sterry

In previous editions of 'East Rainton News', we have dealt, rather briefly, with village life from 1851 to 1938. In this, our last issue, we attempt to trace some of the post-war developments which have altered the face, and perhaps some of the character of the village.

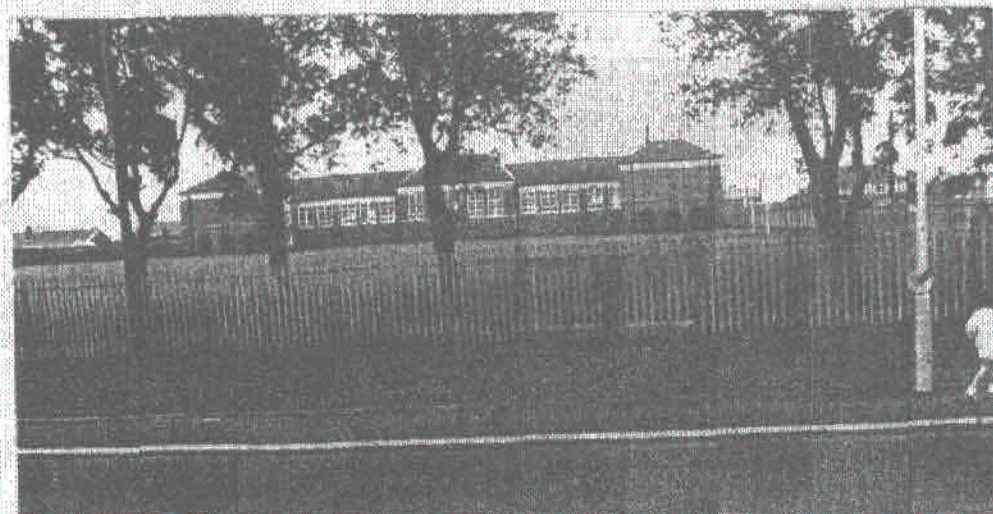
One significant post-war scheme was the re-routing of the A.690, the main Sunderland to Durham road, which previously carried all traffic between these two major centres. The new A.690 has an increased traffic load relegating the old road to local cars and public passenger transport. Paradoxically this may have improved the village's residential attraction as there have been many new housing developments since the war.

Much of the older property encircling the original village green has been demolished and replaced by modern housing. New estates have been built at Summerhouse Farm and more recently on the north side of Robin Lane. New housing is now confined to 'infill' sites which have been built, or are at present in course of construction, at Markle Grove, on the site of the demolished Rainton House and in the paddocks between the church and the former vicarage.

Old property opposite the school has also been demolished since the war to make way for a sizeable open recreational space which is possibly the modern equivalent of the old village green. It is a valuable leisure area for village residents, especially the younger generation, if it is used with care and consideration. Unfortunately there appear to be antisocial elements in the village who have



The National School, or Church School as it was more popularly known, was built in 1858 to cater for the expected influx of pupils prompted by the 1870 Education Act. The school remained in service until replaced by the present school, built by the Durham County Education Committee in 1933. This school, pictured below, is now a Sunderland Education Authority primary school providing education for about 112 pupils in the 5-11 age range.





THE FOLDS. The house shown on the left of the above photograph was originally a farmhouse and the remaining houses in the street were reputedly original farm buildings later converted into dwelling houses. The whole street was eventually demolished and replaced by the modern local authority development photographed below. The Methodist Chapel can be seen on both photographs enabling readers to orientate the two pictures.



used the area for illegal motorised go-karting or galloped horses furiously across the green causing dangerous hazards for younger children.

The popularity of modern supermarkets has also had its affect on village life. Only one general dealer's shop remains, together with the sub-post office and one public house 'The Travellers Rest'. Consider the change from 1851 when the village boasted six public houses, a blacksmith, a boot and shoemaker, a tailor and draper, a grocer and a butcher!

Middle Rainton, established in 1980, as part of the township of East Rainton, has been completely demolished and a whole community which once had its own public houses, its Primitive Methodist Chapel, various tradesmen's shops and its own private 'Dame' school, no longer exists.

Industrially East Rainton was based on coal mining and once there were no less than eleven collieries operating in the Raintons area; the Dunwell, Hazard, Moorsley and North pits owned by the Hetton Coal Company and the Adventure, Alexandria, Hutton House, Meadows, Nicholsons, Plains and Resolution pits operated by other interests. Today there are few signs to show that the industrial life of the village was based on coal, and although agriculture still exists, there is no real industry in East Rainton and residents must travel for employment opportunities.

The church hall, recently renovated and improved, continues as the main centre for social and community functions and all the village youth organisations meet there. The village hall, originally built as a Miners' Welfare Centre, and 'gifted' to the village in 1948, is now used mainly for

Bingo sessions and the occasional social function.

As a result of the declining birth rate many small villages have lost their schools. Fortunately East Rainton has retained its school for primary age pupils although, at the age of 11 years, all must transfer to a secondary school which entails travelling from the village. School buildings are used for out-of-school activities voluntarily supervised by the staff and are also the meeting place for the East Rainton Women's Institute.

The East Rainton Cricket Club continues to prosper and has recently made considerable improvements to its grounds and facilities. Previously known as the Hazard Cricket Club, being named after the local colliery, the ground is reputed to be one of the oldest cricket grounds in the county. The Club has recently had a great deal of playing success and holds a cricketing record of having some years ago dismissed an opposing team for three runs!

The strength of any community depends of course more on its people than its facilities. It is true that with modern transport, there may be some residents who use their homes as a 'dormitory' and take little part, or indeed interest, in village affairs. However the popularity and enthusiasm of village youth groups suggest that there is a deep involvement in village affairs, not only by the young people but by many of their parents.

It is perhaps difficult for a village, on the boundary of a metropolitan area to preserve its original identity. The incorporation of East Rainton, previously in the local government areas of Hetton U.D.C. and Durham County

Council, in the Sunderland Metropolitan District, in 1974, produced a number of changes. One was an influx of residents from other parts of the Borough into local authority housing within the village. Some have found the change from town living to a semi-rural environment created certain problems. Certainly it seems that housing officers should give greater cognisance to the views of the tenants - and of local residents - when allocating housing.

Since the war there has been something of a social revolution. The greater freedom we all expected has manifested itself in differing ways. Some post-war social attitudes have resulted in less respect for both persons and property. East Rainton has not escaped from its share of vandalism damage. Public buildings, such as the school and the church hall seem particularly vulnerable but private dwellings have also incurred damage. Burglary is on the increase and one wonders how long it will be before effective measures are taken to eradicate these two evils. Litter, which is often related to vandalism, is also increasing and examples of this were shown in our last issue.

The police, the local authority, the church, the school, the voluntary organisations - indeed all of us - have our parts to play in combating these problems and involving ourselves in a society which has respect for others. Only if we are prepared to work together can we hope to improve our community life.

THE FOUR JUST MEN

This is a story about four people named everybody, somebody, anybody and nobody. There was an important job to be done and everybody was sure that somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it but nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that because it was everybody's job. Everybody thought anybody could do it but realised that everybody would not do it. It ended up that everybody blamed somebody when nobody did what anybody could have done.

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