



THE KING'S NEW CLOTHES

The story of the king's new clothes is well known. It took the mind of a child to be open enough to state the obvious: the king was naked. And the moral is plain: sometimes we are hoodwinked by a form of false sophistication. It sucks us in because we don't want to appear to be stupid or different.

Sometimes the opposite is also true. Adults can be blind to what is staring them in the face while children find it obvious. One of the gifts that children have, and which adults have often lost sight of, is delight. Children retain the ability to be enthralled, while adults are much more impervious to wonder and marvel. And we bring this same mind-set to Christmas. We can be like St John, full of theology and philosophy. We can speak of the eternal Word dwelling before time began with God, as God. We can speak not of creation but generation in time. We can wax eloquent on the role of the Word when God made the universe etc.

Or we can join St Luke and tell it just as it is. It's the story of a young man and woman who had a baby that was the Son of God and was sent to set people free and save them for the life they were intended to have on both sides of the grave.

A wit once said: "In the beginning was the Word, but in the end was the dictionary!" We complicate our faith unnecessarily. Christmas recalls and celebrates the fact that God did not abandon us to our own devices but sent his only Son to share our weakness, our yearnings and our temptations. From now on we can see God in the faces of those who share his life. And we can remember that when God came among us, it was not with the oratory of a great thinker, but with the smile of a little baby.

SCRIPTURE

The Word was made flesh,
he lived among us,
and we saw his glory, the glory that is his
as the only Son of the Father,
full of grace and truth.

(John 1:14)

PARISH NEWS

January 2nd, 1999

SEDLESCOMBE WITH WHATLINGTON

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The Second Sunday of Christmas

10p

We hope that everyone had a very happy Christmas and that 1999 will be a healthy, happy and prosperous year for everybody.

Things to remember to do in 1999:

- * continue to support all the good causes in your usual generous way

- * give those organising Millennium celebrations every backing. People by and large are wonderfully helpful but sometimes not until the eleventh hour, which is grim for the organisers

- * remember when planning your event to consult the diary in the Post Office to prevent duplication of effort.

THEATRE CLUB - remember your coach leaves the Green at 4.45 pm on **Wednesday, 6 January** for the outing to "Beauty & the Beast". Some seats on coach still available - ring Shirley on 870517.

SEDLESCOMBE SENIORS

It's AGM time again - on **Thursday, 7 January**. A full house would be appreciated and all comments welcome as we plan the schedule for 1999.

TED CORNFORD would like to thank everybody who helped make his 70th birthday celebrations so memorable.

Those who read the Sedlescombe column in the Village Voice section of the Rye & Battle Observer will

The Theme: No one has ever seen God - but we have seen his Son!
The Readings:
Ecclesiasticus 24:1-12 The people of God are privileged to receive his wisdom
Ephesians 1:3-14 In Jesus, God's blessings are poured on us.
John 1:1-18 God's good news for all men and women.

Services and Meetings this week
The Second Sunday of Christmas January 3rd, 1999

SEDLSCOMBE

Christmas 2 [3]
 8.00am Holy Communion

10.00am Parish Communion
 Junior and Youth Church

Weekday Eucharists in the Rectory

Monday [4]
School Term begins
 7.30pm Holy Communion

Tuesday [5]
 10.00am Holy Communion- *Roselands*

Wednesday [6] Epiphany of the Lord
 10.00am Holy Communion

The Baptism of the Lord [10]
 10.00am Parish Communion
 Junior and Youth Church
 3.00pm Christingle Service

WHATLINGTON

Christmas 2 [3]
 9.00am Holy Communion

Thursday [7] Epiphany of the Lord
 8.00am Holy Communion

The Baptism of the Lord [10]
 8.00am Holy Communion

The Chapel Hill Church {United Reformed}
 Morning worship and Junior Church 10.30 am, followed by Holy Communion.
 Leader Mike Freeman, Preacher Geoff Powell.

7pm Praise & Prayer in the church

Weekly meetings: Tuesday 5 January 7.30 pm - Prayer at the Manse

be aware that Mrs Pamela Corbett has written a book called "Crime & Criminals in Battle in the middle of the 19th Century". The book is available from Sedlescombe Post Office, Battle Bookshop and various Hastings bookshops, priced £4.99. Many of you may know Mrs Corbett who tells me she has lived in the same house in Sedlescombe for over 60 years. She has not only produced a book but 5 sons, too, in the course of her life. She also has 9 grandchildren. Her book is highly recommended by Mrs Beryl Lucey, herself the author of a celebrated book on Sedlescombe.

Having spent Christmas in Scotland where all power disappeared on Boxing Night, just a suggestion from the Editor to have your candles, Tilley lamps, alternative heat sources, camping gear and packet soups ready in case the forecast high winds rob us of our creature comforts. It's quite fun at first but the novelty soon wears off, so do be ready and look after yourselves and each other.

Our thanks go to all those who helped decorate our churches for the festival. The Parish Church at Sedlescombe is grateful to Carpenter's barn for the generous gift of the Christmas tree.

The delightful Christingle Service takes place in the Parish Church on **Sunday, 10 January** at 3 pm.

THE REAL 1999?

When does the real 1999 start?
 If we were ancient Romans then it would be beginning on March 1st.
 If we were living in 1751 in England then our New Year would have begun on March 25th, Lady Day (Feast of the Annunciation). It was only changed to January 1st in 1752 when the Gregorian Calendar took over from the Julian Calendar in England.
 In various parts of the world under the Old Calendar of Pope Julius 1(337-352) New Year began sometimes at Christmas and other times at Easter.
 So if you haven't made your New Year resolution yet, just pick another starting date!