

HOW TO BE DULL

It's not that we have cloth ears. It's not that we don't care. It's not that we don't listen. It's not even that God has given up with us. It's simply that we have learnt not to expect very much from our worship, and certainly not to expect miracles. What we have done is to turn Christian worship into a celebration of past events. We listen to God's word but see it as an account of the stages of Jesus's life years ago. So our celebration of Christmas becomes nothing more than remembering that Jesus was born. We come to church at Easter and simply recall that Jesus died and rose from the dead. Our worship has become nothing more than a commemoration of the past. We listen to the miracle stories and think how nice they were, but we don't expect them to have an effect on our lives today. This is because we have seen our feasts as discrete, isolated, unconnected events from the life of Jesus. And so we have celebrated our liturgy as if it were a mere recalling of important moments in the life of a dead God. Yet this is far from the truth. Take, for instance, the marriage feast at Cana. Jesus changed the water into wine and everyone had a good time. But that's not the point of our worship. The Cana miracle was a transforming moment and should be so for us today in our worship. That same powerful presence of Christ is actuated, made real for us, when the Holy Spirit is invoked in our worship. So we do not gather to admire the past. We gather to join ourselves in that powerful and grace-giving action of Christ which has endured through all the centuries of the Church's existence. We recall the past only so that it can become a present reality in our lives. When St John's account of the wedding is proclaimed, we are witnesses not to an act of nostalgia but to a promise. We only recall the past in order that it may become real to us today. So as we sing and pray about Jesus changing water into wine, we are really praying that this moment will be for us a meeting with that powerful grace-filled presence of God. We are asking God to let Jesus change the water of our lives into the wine of real living. Our liturgy promises to make really present to us the miracle of Cana. It does not mean that we no longer have to buy our own bottles of wine. What it does mean is that Jesus can work through our liturgy and does promise us that same miraculous presence. Jesus can change our timidity into courage, our lukewarmness into red hot heat, our faltering steps into strides of faith, the water of our weaknesses into the wine of our strength. Through the miracle at Cana God's glory was shown. When we come to church we can simply listen to the story and leave, feeling slightly cheated that we were not present at the wedding, or we can enter the feast - looking for and expecting God's transforming power to be ours as Jesus promised. Either way we'll get what we expected!

People generally serve the best wine first, and keep the cheaper sort till the guests have had plenty to drink; but you have kept the best wine until now. (John 2: 10)



PARISH NEWS

January 30th, 1999

SEDLESCOMBE WITH WHATLINGTON

Vol.32 No. 5

Epiphany 4

10p

TODAY in Battle Guide Hut, the **FRIENDS OF BATTLE DISTRICT GUIDES & BROWNIES** are having a jumble sale, 2 pm.

SEDLESCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL FOOTPATH WALKS

The next walk will take place tomorrow, **Sunday 31 January**, leaving the village green at 2.30 pm. This will be a short, but probably muddy, walk around Oaklands Park. Everyone welcome to join in.

The next **COUNCIL MEETING** is to be held next **Tuesday, 2 February**, in the village hall. The Open Forum starts at 7 pm.

SEDLESCOMBE SENIORS

Descriptions of the intricacies of running the old pharmacy in Battle by Mr Robert Emeleus held the attention of members of the Sedlescombe District Seniors at their fortnightly meeting. Mr Emeleus said that he was the descendant of a Finnish grandfather who studied and worked in America before opening business in Battle. Mr Emeleus, third generation of Battle pharmacists,

produced 19th century prescription records and a few dispensing tools of yesteryear. This was a popular choice of speaker who dipped into a very wide set of experiences covering changing times.

Members of SDS deliberated on a published suggestion that women should be eligible for membership. They are still deliberating ...

The speaker for next Thursday is Mr George Coleman who, last year, gave the history of the local Powdermill Reservoir (thousands of tons of clay were moved by a huge gang of workers). On **Thursday** he will speak on the History of Hastings' Waterworks.

SEDLESCOMBE PLAYERS Sales of tickets for the three performances of our Old Tyme Music Hall and melodramas are going well but there are still some left for the Wednesday evening (3 Feb) and the Saturday matinee (6th).

BONUS BALL Last week's winner Mrs E Cameron, number 2.

The Theme: The God who reveals himself through kindness and generosity

The Readings:

1 Kings 17:8-16 Elijah's complete obedience to God is rewarded
1 Corinthians 1:18-31 Only God's grace makes us acceptable
John 2:1-11 The wedding at Cana

Services and Meetings this week

Epiphany 4

January 31st, 1999

SEDLSCOMBE

WHATLINGTON

Epiphany 4 [31]

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10.00am Parish Communion
Junior and Youth Church
midweek eucharists in the Rectory

8.00am Holy Communion

Monday [1]

7.30pm Holy Communion -
of the Presentation

Tuesday [2] Presentation of the Lord

10.00am Holy Communion -*Roselands*

Wednesday [3]

10.00am Holy Communion

Thursday [4]

8.00am Holy Communion

Second before Lent [7]

8.00am Holy Communion

Second before Lent [7]

9.00am Holy Communion

10.00am Parish Communion, J&YCh

The Chapel Hill Church {United Reformed}

Morning worship and Junior Church 10.30 am. Leader Mike Freeman,
Preacher Revd Brian Johanson.

6.30 pm Combined villages worship at Ashburnham Chapel

Weekly meetings: Men's Fellowship, Monday 7.30 pm
Prayer in the Manse, Tuesday 7.30 pm

DAVID FRITH - former Church-warden at Whatlington - is recovering from an operation. He is doing well, and is expected home next week.

CORRECTION The Friends Garden Walkabout will take place on **8 and 9 May**, not 9 and 10 as stated last week.

SEDLSCOMBE RANGERS

JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB

The junior teams were back in action last weekend with all the teams victorious. Our youngest team, the Under 8's, played some delightful football to beat Hastings 2000 1-6. D Newton scored a hat-trick and there were goals for J Smith, O Jeffs and A Morgan. G Boreham was Man of the Match. The Under 10's side had a convincing 5-2 victory over Hastings Athletic. Goalscorers were F Sullivan, M Lee, J C Hanagarth, D Saunders and Man of the Match S Elliott. The Under 11's were also in fine form, beating Ratton Rangers 4-2 on a very heavy pitch at Sedlescombe. J Townsley scored twice and there were goals for J Craddock and B Weekes who shared the Man of the Match trophy with S Richardson. The Under 12's completed the successful day. They came back from a goal down to overcome Bexhill Town 1-2. H Sullivan scored Rangers first and D Smith scrambled home a last minute

winner. Man of the Match was A Suret.

1ST SEDLESKOMBE SCOUT

GROUP will be having a **BINGO** evening on **Saturday 20 February** in the Scout Hut. Eyes down 7 pm and everyone welcome, but children must be accompanied by an adult please.

RYE & BATTLE OBSERVER

I write the column about Sedlescombe in the local paper. If you would like any of your events mentioned in the article please let me know. Copy date for the Friday Observer is midday on Tuesday which means I can't use the Parish News notices for the copy as I don't receive these until then. If you want any publicity for your group please let me know by the Sunday so that I can include it. I would also be very happy to receive for publication any interesting news or information about our various organisations.

Sylvia Cook. 870628