



Association Cultuelle de L'Église Anglicane du Pas de Calais BOULOGNE CONGREGATION

January 2018 Newsletter

Fellowship, Hope and Love

No. 63

Following yonder star...

Quite late on Christmas Eve I was catching up on the local paper, *La Voix du Nord*, and found an article, which was very relevant to the day. Here is a summary of that article.

The three wise men, the magi, followed a star to Bethlehem. Is there any way we could use this fact to establish the exact date of the birth of Christ?

We are brought up to believe that 25 December was the exact date of the birth, and in the 6th century the Catholic Church decreed that year 1 was the "the year of our Lord, Jesus Christ". To be more precise, 1 January, year 1 would be the date of his circumcision. This date was decided upon more than 500 years after the actual events, largely based on work done by a monk, called Denys le Petit. There is virtually no historic documentation to substantiate this 'date'.

At present historians use the same texts to place the actual date of birth in the last years of the reign of King Herod, who died in the year 4 BC. The birth in Bethlehem and the enforced journey from Nazareth by Joseph and Mary can be linked, but that gives no definite date for the events. A stellar incident is ideal to help establish an exact date and historians and astronomers often collaborate in this way. Both shepherds and wise men saw what we could call 'the Christmas Star', but is there a recorded astral event, which could be linked to this story?

An occurrence that merits attention is the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the Pisces constellation, which took place in the year 7 BC. But it could also be the result of a supernova, a massive star exploding at the end of its life. Such an event was recorded in year 5 BC in the constellation of Capricorn. Some experts have suggested a comet named Eagle that appeared in 4 BC, and there are other occurrences around this time, which could help to link a celestial event to the birth in Bethlehem.

To come up with a definite answer, based on the tenuous facts to which we have access is not easy, but it remains an intriguing puzzle. If you know anyone willing to study for a combined degree in astrophysics and theology, they may well have the groundwork for their Ph.D. thesis.

(Paul G.)

*Three Kings from Persian lands afar
To Jordan follow the pointing star:
And this the quest of the travelers three,
Where the new-born King of the Jews may be.
Full royal gifts they bear for the King;
Gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.*

(Free translation of 'Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern' (1597) by Philipp Nicolai (1556 – 1608))





Forthcoming services at the chapel of the Monastère du Carmel, rue du Denacre, Saint-Martin-Boulogne

■ **Sunday 7th January 2018 / First Sunday after the Epiphany** - Simple service of Morning Worship with hymns and readings for Epiphany led by Malcolm Gale

■ **Sunday 21st January 2018 10h30 / Third Sunday after the Epiphany** - Eucharist service led by Rev Gordon Warren. Readings: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:6-14; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20

■ **Sunday 4th February 2018 10h30 / Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany** - Simple service of Morning Worship with hymns and readings

■ **Sunday 18th February 2018 / First Sunday in Lent** - Eucharist service led by Rev David Houghton. Readings: Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15

News and dates for your diary

Next meeting of the Bible Study Group will be Friday 26th January. For further details, please contact Lalage on ☎03 21 81 47 65 or e-mail: lalageglaister@gmail.com

As in other years a Week of Christian Unity will take place in Boulogne in 2018

A summary of dates and times of the January services is as follows:

Thursday 18th: Eglise Baptiste de Boulogne-sur-Mer (15 rue du Bras d'or) -opening service 19h

Friday 19th: Temple de Boulogne-sur-Mer (rue Basse des Tintelleries) 19h

Sunday 21st: Concert at 15h30 in the church of St Michel, by the Group Jeunesse en Mission.

Tuesday 23rd: Centre Chrétien Évangélique, (9 allée de l'Alma) 19h

Thursday 25th: Closing service, Chapelle de la cathédrale de Boulogne-sur-Mer (le Parvis access) 19h.

For further details please contact Pauline on: cecchin@wanadoo.fr or ☎ 03 21 92 14 70

A further idea to support the work of Calais's Maria Skobtsova House – shoebox parcels. Pauline Cecchin has come up with an idea for making parcels of useful gifts, for the refugee hostel, with old shoeboxes - see photo. Boxes can of course contain different items but those illustrated contained: a note book and pencil, face flannel, liquid soap, shower gel, toothpaste and brush, face wipes, paper handkerchiefs, skin cream, packets of biscuits, and a folding shopping bag. Bring to church on any Sunday and they will be delivered to the hostel.



An invitation: On Saturday, 20th January, at 11.00am, we shall be taking part in an Ecumenical Service, planned and organised by our good friends in the Catholic Church. The service was originally intended for the evening, but the priest immediately changed the time when he heard that some of his Anglican friends were involved in a local pantomime! We hope that several of you will be able to join us at the service, which is being held in the church of Neuville sous Montreuil, the village between Estréelles and Montreuil. After the service we invite you to join us at our house in Estréelles for a simple lunch of soup and ploughman's. Please let me know if you can join us. Lalageglaister@gmail.com ☎03 21 81 47 65



Travelogue: Are train sets for the young out of fashion? – not in Budapest it seems!

The Railway Children

Child labour, that pitifully dark and unsavoury world of exploitation which vetoes the right to childhood and brings shame on any decent society, is something we associate with the 19th century or unfortunately, with less developed parts of the world even today. However, Budapest's Children's Railway is far from coming under the usual heading of under-aged employment.

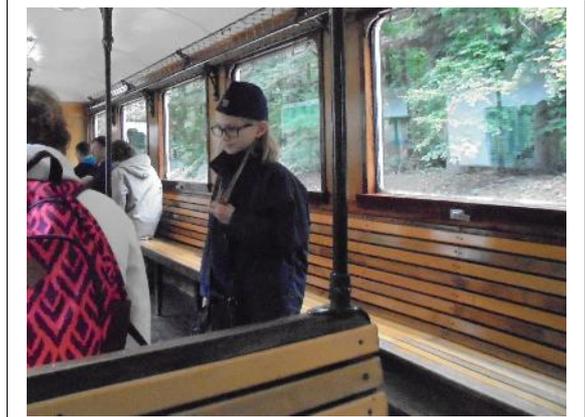
Originally known as the 'Pioneer Railway', the *Gyermekvasút* is an 11.2 kilometre narrow gauge line which snakes its way through the dense oak woodlands of the Buda Hills high above the Hungarian capital, connecting two small communities: Széchenyi-hegy and Hűvösvölgy, but with the exception of the train drivers and supervisors, it is operated entirely by children aged between 10 and 14 years. Back in 1947 the ruling Communist Party of the time decided that the State Railways (MÁV) should build a line that could be operated more or less solely by youngsters. The idea was to provide something that would implant the ethics and discipline of working life required for the years' ahead. After much debate a suitable site was chosen and construction got under way in April 1948.

Knowing that managing a year-round railway is not a kid's game, nothing quiet prepares you for the sight of fragile looking youngsters operating a train service like a well-oiled machine and despite the thickly forested terrain, late running, with excuses such as 'leaves on the line,' are unheard of! But if we had missed the 16.00 out of Széchenyi-hegy we would have only ourselves to blame; we had arrived with seconds to spare to buy a ticket. All the same we need not have worried, the well-groomed young booking clerk had no problem in understanding our mispronounced Hungarian vowels and very quickly issued the correct tickets. No sooner had we scrambled on board, then a green flag was raised, there was a lot of saluting and a whistle blown, by what looked like an eleven-year-old, and we were off on our way! Minutes later we pulled up at a woodland halt and a few more people joined us in the carriage, promptly followed by the ticket inspector. This was a tiny bespectacled girl of about 13, immaculately clad, like the rest of her co-workers, in a smart blue regulation uniform. She carefully examined our tickets, punched them and continued to pass down the carriage collecting fares from the passengers who had boarded at the unstaffed halt.

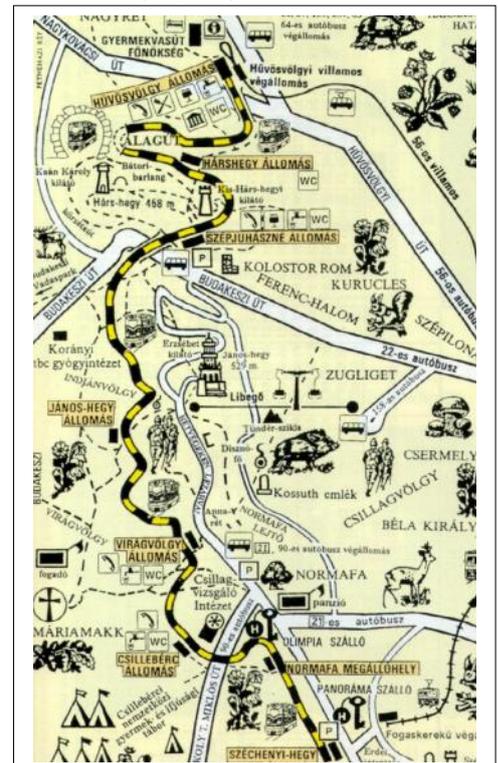
Although the young people do control the traffic and commercial services, it is all done strictly in accordance with the regulations applied to any other part of the State Railways. Demand to work on the line is high but would-be participants are first required to attend a four-month training course before taking up any duties, nevertheless there is a long waiting list for the courses and only those who have successfully completed training and passed the exams will gain admittance. Various types of jobs are allocated at any of the seven stations or on the trains themselves and on each day of duty the young staff members cover a different job to learn as many tasks as possible.

All the posts are unpaid and there is a rota of duty every fifteenth day on average, currently there are 500 young workers signed on. Absence from school, on weekdays, is excused by head teachers, providing that working on the railway does not impede a pupil's progress, but the activity is seen as an interesting form of teaching responsibility

and teamwork and has proved its worth for the last 70 years – fun for everyone, passengers and the teenage workers alike. At one time there were scores of these educational railways, especially in the former Soviet Union, where the idea originated, but of the few that remain now worldwide this is by far the longest, so much so as a result, it now has an official Guinness World Record certificate to prove it! (Malcolm G.)



Tickets please!



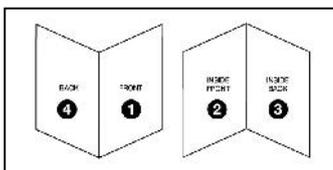


Other services in the Chaplaincy: Calais's regular services: Services are held on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month at 10h30. The normal place of worship is now the Oratoire Notre Dame de la Misericorde, rue Gaillard, Calais – (near St Pierre's church). Church Warden: Pat Page ☎ 03 21 35 07 65 or e-mail: pat.page@wanadoo.fr

Hesdin's regular services: Services are held as follows: 1st Sunday monthly – Morning Prayer 10h30; 3rd Sunday monthly – 17h00 Eucharist. Services are held in Salle de l'Arsenal, Rue de l'Arsenal, Hesdin - Church Warden: Michael Spriggs ☎ 03 21 81 61 79

If anyone needs any form of help or assistance or if you are aware of someone who is ill, either in hospital or at home and would appreciate a visit, or alternatively if you know of anyone who you feel may benefit from prayer, please contact the church warden: George Murray ☎ 03 21 36 53 87, e-mail: -georgemurray@sfr.fr.

This newsletter can be found, together with other information about the Chaplaincy, on our website at: <http://www.anglicanspdc.com>



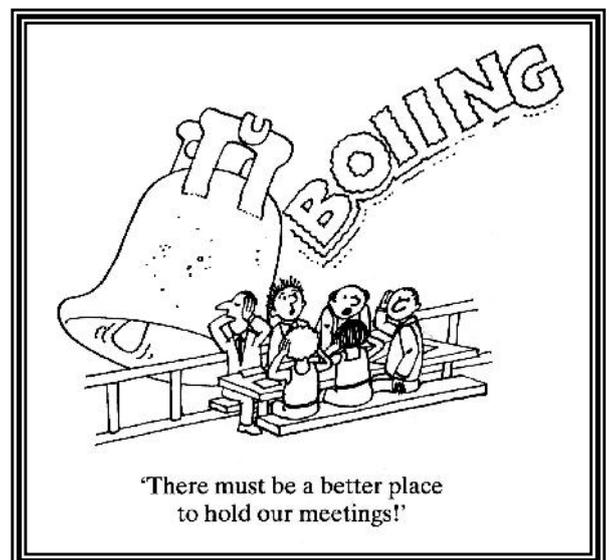
If you have any news, short articles, adverts or any form of announcement for inclusion, please send them to: Malcolm Gale:

malcolm.gale@dbmail.com - ☎ 03 21 31 83 57 Port: 06 99 09 60 44

Deadline for February issue: 18th January 2018

Printing your newsletter: This newsletter is designed to be printed at A5 size - select the 'livret' or 'booklet' printing format on the print management page of Adobe PDF Reader, this turns it into a handy A5 size four-page leaflet – of course remember to pass the paper through your printer twice (i.e. both sides).

Happy New Year



New Year resolutions: to do better, eat better, eat less, read more, watch less TV, drink less, sleep more, and exercise more... Wow! Sounds like a Happy New Year...

*Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.*

- from Tennyson's 'In Memoriam A.H.H.' (CVI) 1849