

Christmas Past in Worle

On a recent visit to the Parish Office Paul Elliott and I discussed the next article for the magazine, and Paul suggested Christmas in Worle. I was shocked to realise that our archives contained very few pictures and little information. I have decided to share what we have and plead for any memories and pictures you may have at home.

Luckily, the Kingsbury family evidently had a tradition of dressing in their Sunday best for Christmas, and they took this picture of Wilfred and Fred in 1914. That Christmas must have been a time of anxiety and prayer. Many young men would have been away at the front, and some of them would not return. Christmas spent with children, family and friends would be very precious in wartime.

Several young men did come home for the festive season and were photographed with mistletoe and bikes in the High Street. I wonder who took this treasured picture?



At the outset of World War 2 the people of Worle knew just how difficult life would be 'for the duration'. In **1939** the Cricket Club decided to hold some celebrations to cheer folk up. The minutes tell us *"That a dance be held in the Church Hall on Friday, Dec. 10th & called Christmas Carnival Dance"*. Pictures of this event would be wonderful to have in our archive.

Of course the Church bells were silenced across the nation, but they had some warning, so on Saturday 16th December the bells at St. Martin's Church rang for several hours when the bellringers had a special meeting.

There was also a whist drive at the Village Club in Mendip Avenue with generous Christmas fare as prizes.

The Mercury reported the Christmas festivities in Worle in some detail, which I think will take us back to those times:

"Christmas seems to have been a 'happy although quiet' festival in Worle. The children, including the numerous evacuees were well catered for, and this week many of the gifts the young people received were on view in the streets. An unusually large number of Cowboy and Red Indian outfits are to be seen....."

There were large congregations at the services in both the Parish and Methodist Churches. At the former place of worship a Christmas Crib was installed for the Festival and a special service, blessing it, was held before the early morning communion service. The crib, an electrically illuminated structure, with figures representing the stable at Bethlehem on the first Christmas morning, was made in Worle and the cost of the figures was defrayed by the Sunday School. The interior of the church was tastefully decorated with flowers and evergreens by a number of the ladies. The usual carol service was not held, but will take place on Sunday. The Methodist carol party raised a very satisfactory sum for church funds during their tour of the parish last week."

The local papers also tell us that a Monster Christmas Party for the children was held at the Church Hall during the following week, with all the evacuee children invited as well as the children of Worle.

Raye Green, Worle History Society

www.worlehistorysociety.net

Come and join us at Worle Community Centre on the 1st Thursday of the month at 7.00 p.m. and have a look at our website.



Patients pictured on Christmas day 1917.



Dinner is served in the ward for these patients, 1917.



Worle Senior School panto. Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. 1953



St Martins in the winter of 1962/63



Scouts' Christmas Party. Church Hall 1950s



Skidmore's Christmas window 2014, I think



Worle History Society Christmas Quiz 2017