CSC Newsletter

Volume 50 No 2 November 2017

CONGRATULATIONS AUSTRALIA

125 years ago in 1892

CSC came to Australia



Sisters Fiona, Linda Mary, Helen - Celebrations in Kempsey NSW

Celebrations have been taking place around Australia as this year has progressed.

Though the number of CSC Sisters in Australia is now small, the enthusiasm of schools and other works founded by the Community, is undimmed and even growing. CSC Associates are still flourishing.

Life lived according to values and ideals laid down 125 years ago, are still speaking to Australians of today.



Sr Helen, reading at the Christ Church St Laurence, Sydney celebration

Follow the celebration trail, which takes us to **Kempsey**, New South Wales, where three of our Sisters (Fiona, Helen and Linda Mary) live today - to **Sydney** (NSW) where St. Gabriel's School used to be, and two Sisters (Frances and Rosamund) still live - to **Melbourne** and St. Michael's Grammar School, (Sister Elisa Helen lives in Melbourne) - and to **Hobart**, Tasmania, the landing place for the first Sisters who came to Australia.

CSC Australia has an illustrious past, beginning when Mother Emily, Founder of the Community, responded to a call for Sisters to go to Australia to start and to run schools, principally for girls. (a very neglected species!) 'Our Work', the fore-runner to this Newsletter, was already being distributed and read in many parts of Australia, so the cry went out, "Come over to us!" So CSC did.

Today, the Sisters in Australia are small in number, but with a big heart and love and, whatever the numbers there are thousands of Children learning today in CSC foundations, vibrantly alive with the spirit of Mother Emily and those noble pioneers.









CSC goes South to Australia

Images of our past - Apologies for the picture quality. They are very old photographs!



RMS Coptic on which CSC's first 'settlers' travelled to Australia. The Quarterly Chronicle issued from Kilburn says that the Sisters 'whose high privilege it is to be the pioneers of this important branch of our work', were Lucy, Hannah, Phyllis, Irene, Rose and Bridget, who had volunteered for the venture, none of them

expecting they would ever return to the UK. Sister May accompanied them, but returned to England when they were settled. Miss Lang also went, obviously also funding much of the enterprise, and Miss Roche, an Associate. Five orphans were selected from those who had offered to go (no coercion there!): Linette, Mary, Beata, Jean and Netty, would help in teaching and household work and were known as 'good, trustworthy girls'.



The School in Melbourne, 1906



Sisters Bridget and Adele (Adele later became Mother Superior)

Sister Susan
Unfortunately we do not know if Susan
and the girls were in Adelaide or Hobart
Does anyone know?



In 1892, when those first Sisters, helpers and orphans set sail to begin their ground-breaking work, the Quarterly Review said:

'Our natural sorrow at parting with such very dear Sisters was softened by witnessing the zeal and holy joy with which they started on their long voyage, and said farewell (probably for ever) to the Home and fellow-workers endeared to them by so many happy associations. We cannot but believe that they will receive supernatural help in all their labours and troubles, and supernatural guidance in every difficulty and perplexity.'

It is noticeable that they went out to Australia with no unrealistic views of the work ahead of them. There would be 'labours and troubles' and 'difficulty and perplexity'. History has shown they experienced all those, but the life and work of the Sisters in Australia flourished and thousands of children were educated and have given back to society and the Church not a little of the gifts and example of the Sisters through the years.

In **Sister Linda Mary's** homily at Christ Church St. Laurence, Sydney she gave some of the details of the beginnings of CSC Australia:

They (those on the Coptic) experienced heavy seas after the Cape, with Sr Bridget being knocked down by a huge wave and being rescued by one of the men and Sr Phyllis measuring her length on the floor with Sr May picking her up, after which they had a 'hearty laugh'. Then came ice and snow, with the captain needing to negotiate through icebergs day and night. Sr Phyllis wrote about their arrival in Hobart as, 'Here we are safe on dry land again...' which seems to say a lot! The angel or even angels of God, may have been with them but they did not have Moses driving



St. David's, the first school

the sea back giving them a dry passage through the ocean! Nor were they being pursued, rather the opposite – letters coming from Australia all begging Mother Emily to send Sisters to begin Anglican (in those days Church of England) schools were many. Mother Emily shared these letters with the Community.

Linda Mary attended many of the celebrations for 125 years, a week of which was at St. Michael's Collegiate School, Hobart. She says:

'St Michael's Collegiate School in Hobart has as its catch phrase 'Set for life'. It appears in both likely and unlikely places and brings attention to the School. It is not the only advertising: 'creativity for life', and the School values are on the School buses. If I am to sum up my experience of being present in the School for the last week of their 125 year celebrations it would have to be an entering into the 'creativity for life' that this School offers and achieves in the School.'

Some other snapshots of events:

So what did go on amongst the boarders?

'The Old Girls' Reunion weekend began with an Art Exhibition of work of girls in the School who had won the Tremayne prize over the last years. The speaker, an Old Girl, now curator of an art gallery in Hobart, spoke powerfully of her experience at the School and set the scene for the week. I enjoyed meeting so many Old Girls, who all wanted to share with me their memories of the Sisters and some of their experiences. Those who were boarders had some that one would

not record in print, yet know they were all part of the mix of life and in the time they occurred!'

In the afternoon a meeting of Associates was held in the Café 1892 area. It is a real meeting place, versatile, overlooking a garden area and we gathered there on several occasions during the week. It was good to catch up with Associates, though not all were able to be present at this meeting. I spoke with some at the Art Exhibition and then met others during the week at other events. I was also able to visit some Associates who were unable to be present during the week.

A commissioned work

One of the events for their year of celebration was a Concert held on 2 September. It featured a commissioned work, entitled 'Set For Life' by a renowned composer Paul Jarman.

It was sung by the Collegiate Choirs for the first time. This concert featured the winning entries of a fanfare composition competition, orchestral and choir pieces, Old Girls and present girls contributing their expertise and gifts.

In the week there was also a performance by the Junior School entitled 'Ocea Commotion.' Students were dressed as fish or other inhabitants of the ocean. An absolute delight! St Michael's Day began with Eucharist at St David's Cathedral for the Middle and Senior School. The Chaplain presided, the Dean preached an excellent sermon about thrones and other aspects that connected with the girls of living true to themselves in today's world. Linda Mary led the prayers.

The Founders' Day Assembly concluded the events of the week. It included an address from the Principal, Judith Tudball after which she interviewed me. The presentation of awards to Year 11 and 12 girls and the announcement of the Head Prefect for 2018, occurred next. During this Assembly the present School song was sung. It was written by James Scott-Power, a music teacher who contributed to the early musical life of both Hutchins and Collegiate. It features a mix of images from



Judith Tudball (Principal) and Sr Linda Mary, with the 2017 Head girl, Chaplain Kate Boughton and Richard Humphrey, Dean of Hobart Cathedral.

daughters, to red and white, to battle and stress to life after School with a chorus: 'May e'er thy path be strewn with flowers, O Alma Mater, school of ours.'

And so to Sydney

Sister Helen gives us a snapshot of the 125th Celebration in Sydney:

The 125th anniversary of our Sisters arriving in Australia was celebrated in Sydney at High Mass in Christ Church St Laurence, on Sunday September 17. Christ Church St Laurence was the church I attended for about three years before I joined the Community, so I am always happy to return there. It was also the Church attended by the Sisters and Boarders from St Gabriel's School, Sydney, for many years.

Old Scholars from St Gabriel's School, Associates of the Community and Sisters were invited by the Rector, Father Daniel Dries, to worship with the regular members of the congregation for this service. A special service booklet was prepared by the Rector which explained the importance of the day and some connections between the church and the Community.

I read the Old Testament lesson, set for the day, from Exodus, about the angel of God protecting the Israelites as they escaped from Egypt, and Sister Linda preached the Sermon. Just before the Peace, we three Sisters (Linda, Rosamund, and Helen) and Associates stood to renew their commitment to one another. This was followed by Mother Emily's Hymn, written by Sister Judith, "Praise to you, our God most glorious". During this hymn Sister Linda joined the procession which moved to the south aisle for the rededication of the restored Lady Chapel and the altar from St Gabriel's School.

A glimpse of God's Glory!

The whole service was reverently and beautifully offered to God by all present, including the musicians whose offering was greatly appreciated. I felt in the service that I had a glimpse of God's glory and holiness in a way that is different from what is experienced in our local parish church. I give thanks for both expressions of God.

After the service, Linda, Rosamund and I mingled with and talked to others who had gathered in the parish hall where food, drink and a special cake were provided. It was good to hear the stories of those we had not met for many years.

We have quoted, on page 3, part of **Linda Mary's** homily at the service in Christ Church St. Laurence.

The homily continues:

'Mother Emily, founded our Community to pray and work to the honour and glory of God, for the coming of God's reign on

earth. Our motto, Pro Ecclesia Dei (For the Church of God) gives expression to our task, and indeed the task of all Christians, to proclaim the primacy and sovereignty of God in our lives, living in love as Christ did, for the world's healing and reconciliation with God. To give the Sisters an example, Mother Emily placed the Community under the patronage of Michael and the angels, whose being points to a life of worship and active ministry, of mingled adoration and action. This life of prayer and of active ministry was initially shown in meeting the perceived needs of the time in England: children needing to be fed and given the opportunity of education; for others, a place to live and be cared for as well as be educated: food for wharf workers in a time of strike, for homeless men, and opening depots, the forerunner of Charity or Op Shops as we know them today. Mother Emily's zeal was to relate to people in a way that would give them dignity and respect, and also to give them the opportunity to obtain skills that would enable them to find a way in life.

Those who originally wrote to Mother Emily, inviting her to send Sisters to Australia saw a need for education, that was readily available for children in Catholic Schools, but not in Church of England Schools. The attitude at the time supported this desire as being a necessary way forward in education and faith.

The Schools that opened in those early days did not always have an easy path,

yet their stories show the incredible tenacity of the Sisters and those who were supporting them to enable this vision of Church of England education to be realised.

Reconciliation

The Sisters in Australia continued to be involved in School education until the 1970's. St Gabriel's School at Waverley, was closed in 1966, with others in Perth, Melbourne, Adelaide

and Hobart being relinquished by the Community later, to various governing bodies that have enabled these Schools to continue and grow into very viable and excellent education facilities. For some time the Community sought a new path to follow including education in different ways and pastoral work. Then we recognised the Community needed to return to a founding principal in The Rule, given to us by Mother Emily, from 2 Corinthians 5.18 'You, O God, were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself and have entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation.

I do not need to highlight the deep necessity for reconciliation between people and within our Australian society: with Aboriginal people of this land; between people of different races and customs. Different attitudes, priorities, gender and faith can incite fear and hatred. Paul, in his letter to the Romans. was addressing some areas of conflict causing division and pain. He was not willing to take sides over meat offered to idols, nor about values of certain days. He asks both sides not to pass judgement on others and to remember that it was to God that he and all people were accountable. Differences needed to be accepted so others could be treated with dignity and respect. For Paul, this was the way to bring people into a strong and creative community in Jesus Christ, who is the One who offers to all, through his death on the cross, the radical gift of God's grace, peace and unity.

Today's Gospel reading (Matt 18:21-35) begins with Jesus' response to Peter's question, '...how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus answers, 'Not seven times, but I tell you, seventyseven times', and then tells the parable of the unforgiving servant. The servant had a very large debt - one that was way beyond any real possibility of the day. Jesus uses it to reveal the truth and extent of God's forgiveness - it, too, is beyond any real possibility in that day and also today. The servant was unable to allow the forgiveness given to him to flow on to others so that they, too, could experience the freedom forgiveness can brina.

Forgiveness in the Gospel sense is not so much forgiveness of sin, but rather it is the challenge to open the way for people to be made whole. Forgiveness, receiving it and giving it to others, leads to lifegiving reconciliation. It is costly for the one who forgives, and it is also costly for the one forgiven to accept forgiveness. We receive the gift of forgiveness from Jesus who forgives us and empowers us to give to others the generous gift of God's mercy, forgiveness and grace.

As I have endeavoured to enter into a ministry of forgiveness and reconciliation, I have come to understand more fully the life God is calling me to live in the Community. The giving of myself to God through the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience has changed, and is changing how I relate, respond and engage with God, myself, others, and life situations. It has led me towards a greater dependence on God, a willingness to love others as God loves me and an obedience to God's call and particularly the responsibility that comes from being in leadership.

Today we are celebrating 125 years of the Sisters of our Community in Australia. Throughout all these years the Sisters have lived lives of worship and active ministry. At different times, the changing needs of society have demanded different responses, yet we are always called to be people through whom God's work of reconciliation can take place in the world.

The Altar from St. Gabriel's School, now in Christ Church St. Laurence

CSC Foundations in Australia

St. Michael's Collegiate School, Hobart opened on 3 October 1892

St Gabriel's School, Waverley begun May 1893 (known as St Gabriel's from 1912)

St Peter's Girls School, Adelaide 8 October 1894

Burwood Boys' Home in 1895

St Michael's Grammar School, Melbourne 22 April 1895

Perth College 1902 and

Parkerville Children's Home 1903

St Gabriel's, Canberra (now CGGS and renamed in 1933 when sold by Sisters) June 10, 1926

HARVESTING HOPE

Richard Bentley is a priest and Associate in the UK. Since his retirement from parish ministry he was diagnosed with a rare form of Motor Neurone Disease.

Richard writes:

A friend asked if I thought I might one day write down my feelings about having a degenerative illness. I think she partly meant: do I sometimes feel hopeless? This is what Richard wrote:

'Our granddaughter Manuela, 9 (at time of writing), has now returned to the USA, with her brother, Sebastian, and her parents, Sam and Pam. When they arrived (in the USA), they went first to visit Pam's mother in Arizona. I should explain that our grandchildren have a particular name for me: they call me "Goddy." This has nothing to do with any previous occupation. It was invented by our eldest granddaughter, Esther, before she had learned to speak clearly enough to say "Grandpa."

During the Arizona visit, Manuela was overheard in the back of the car, talking to her American Grandma:

"Goddy can't walk any more."

"Well, I'm sure he's getting a bit better every day."

"No, he's getting worse."

"Well, we'll pray for him."

(Indignantly) "He's not DEAD!"

Delighted by her defiant devotion, and since I am still among the living, I began to ask myself, can this kind of existence still be called "real" life? I suppose it depends what you mean by "real." And that, in turn, depends on how you look at things. It means directing our attention. One contemporary thinker has described this kind of attention as a "just and loving gaze directed upon an individual reality," and in these words: "We cease to be, in order to attend to the existence of something else, a natural object, a person in need."

(Iris Murdoch in 'The Sovereignty of Good').

Funnily enough, Manuela and I once had a conversation about what is "real." On a sunny autumn afternoon in northern Virginia, where the family then lived, Manuela (then 5) and I were in the garden at the back of the house.

Why do things have to be real?

I'm sitting on the deck; Manuela is engaged in essential maintenance work. It involves sticking pieces of tape on the garden gate, each piece holding a small

flower.

She comes and sits down next to me. Pause. "Isn't it lovely out here," I say in my tedious grown-up way, "with the sun, and the beautiful leaves on the trees." Long pause. Then she asks, "Why do things have to be real?"

I wonder whether I should just leave it at that; maybe she was simply lamenting the gap between fairy stories and her own experience of life so far. Instead, I say brightly: "Well, you're real; I'm real. And the sun's real. I suppose that's the way Pause. Then she says, "I things are." think God is silly." That's what I heard. Actually, as some people have pointed out, she probably said: "I think Goddy's silly." There was no doubt, though, about her question: "Why do things have to be real?" And this came from a child who was abandoned by her birth mother at two weeks old.

We know that the world contains both good and evil. When we encounter bad things, it doesn't help if we cast ourselves as victims. To help us in difficult times, we are blessed with the ability to use our attention to see the world more clearly, the bad and the good. The bad does not remove, or cancel, the sovereignty of good.

Incidentally, I've found that directing my attention firmly outwards is a good way to avoid getting over-sentimental about the children. Sam emailed me the other day

and told me that, during lunch, Manuela had said: "I really miss Goddy."

I miss her too and I sent her a hug.

Other people's love can certainly boost our confidence. But developing "just and loving" attention can help us to clarify our own view of ourselves and the value of our lives. Without sentimentality or self-delusion, we can subvert the power of suffering and realise what is real. And that can help us harvest hope.'



The Velveteen Rabbit

Richard's account brings 'The Velveteen Rabbit' to mind. Maybe only a child - and a child's toys - and one who has suffered, know what is really Real.

An extract from 'The Velveteen Rabbit', by Margery Williams:

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

'Real isn't how you are made,' said the Skin Horse. 'It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.'

'Does it hurt?' asked the Rabbit.

'Sometimes,' said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. 'When you are Real you don't mind being hurt.'

'Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,' he asked, 'or bit by bit?'

'It doesn't happen all at once,' said the Skin Horse. 'You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

Another New Provincial and Assistant

On September 29th, Michaelmas Day, the Liturgy at St. Michael's Convent in the UK had an extra significance. It was the day Sisters Susan and Catherine came to the end of their term of office as UK Provincial and Assistant, and Sister Aileen became the new Provincial and Sister Anita the Assistant Provincial.

Bishop Christopher Chessun, UK Bishop Visitor and Visitor General to CSC, presided and preached. In the midst of the Eucharist he gave thanks for the leadership of Susan and Catherine over the last nine years, and blessed Aileen and Anita into their new roles.

'May we, like the Angels, who neither fret nor fear... rest in the joy of the Lord'. (*Jim Cotter*)



(left to right)
Sisters Anita and Aileen
Bishop Christopher and Sisters
Catherine and Susan

CSC has Transformed lives and Brought Hope

In a Sunday service Homily in Kempsey, this year, Sister Helen mentioned two people whose lives CSC has touched and helped transform. She writes:

'When I worked for two or three years in our children's home at Broadstairs, England. I cared for one boy, about nine yrs old, who was particularly disturbed. He regularly ran away from school, and had violent destructive temper tantrums. Over the years he has kept in contact with me. He became a lawyer and once visited us at Dondingalong—even joining in singing an item with us here in All Saints Church.'

'We also inherit relationships of earlier Sisters, like that with Maisie Cornelius. We had a school in Burma, now Myanmar. Maisie's mother died and her father married again to a woman who did not want Maisie. Maisie was a boarder at our school, so she stayed on living with the Sisters. They became like a mother to her and she left them only on her Wedding Day. I met her for the first time in Kempsey. She hugged me like a child who had found her lost mother. It was very moving. Peter Cornelius. her son, felt a bit like our grandson!

Changing Ministries over the years

When I joined the Community, I trained for three years in Perth, then travelled to England, where I was professed. I was sent to our children's home in Broadstairs before returning to Sydney and a new venture. Our school in Sydney was sold and a new work, living and working among poorer people began. I sorted dirty clothes in a laundry. With fewer Sisters trained to teach, and two dying young, from cancer, our schools in other cities were taken over by others. They are flourishing today and we still have some contact with them. In the 1970s I went for six months to our house in Belfast where Fiona lived during the "troubles". In 1978, we opened a House of Prayer at Dondingalong where groups and individuals came for retreats or rest. Days for children took place in school holidays, and a free residential program, 'An Exploration in Living' was held each year for women. Sisters from the Solomon Islands also came to share our life and learn English etc. In South Kempsey, we are today engaged in prayer, pastoral work and producing educational leaflets etc.

Our life is different from yours, but all of us are called to give our lives to God to worship God and serve others. As members of Christ's body, the church, we are to support and encourage each other in what we do. When we Sisters responded to God's call, it was not always what we would have chosen for ourselves! But God has a way of insisting, as you may have discovered in your life. I personally do not regret my vocation to be a Sister.

All Christians are called to follow Jesus by living in the world and also living under the reign of God's love. We Sisters express it in a particularly way, witnessing outwardly to its importance. You express it in your various ways. All of us, with our weaknesses and strengths, experience suffering, but also new life, as God's love challenges us, develops and grows in us. Although we sometimes fail, we are strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit to keep going, (we are 'touched by God's breath', as I read recently,) often through others. As members of Christ's

body in Kempsey, with our different gifts and dual citizenship, we together follow Jesus, who for us is "the Christ, the Son of the Living God".

> Sister Helen Kempsey NSW



Newly Professed / Newly Accepted

Emily, Assistant Provincial in the Solomon Islands writes:

On the 11th and 12th of November the sisters in the Solomon's celebrated the Acceptance of Sister Joana Gerea as a Junior Sister and the Life Profession of Sister Kristy Arofa. Joana is from Malaita Diocese. Her father is a priest, but he was not able to come for her Acceptance because he was aged and not able to travel. Her mother has already died.

Kristy is from Tikopia Island in Temotu Diocese that is the Eastern part of the Solomon Islands. She joined the Community in 2008 and made Junior Sister in 2012. Her parents are still alive and they came for her Life Profession.

The day was highlighted by people coming to witness the Acceptance of Joana and Life Profession of Kristy. Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Melanesia, the Most Reverend George Takeli, was the chief celebrant. Sister Veronica preached. She shared with us a moving and wonderful message on calling. Relatives and friends of Joana and Kristy and representatives of religious orders came and took part in the service. All Sisters from other houses came, Associates and youths came to witness the event. there were lots of activities in the night and during the day, as has been always a custom here.

Joana and Kristy have responded to God's call with humble hearts, to serve God faithfully in the Community and to spread the Gospel of God's kingdom on earth.

We wish both God's blessing.



Some of the Kindergarte n at TnK in their new uniforms



Sister Kristy at her Life Profession, with Sr Veronica (Provincial) and ArchBishop George Takeli



Sister Kristy with Sr Joana, newly accepted as a Junior Sister



Sr. Phyllis has celebrated her 25th Anniversary of Life Profession.

A new wing has

been built at the

Christian Care

Centre .The

well supported.

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT



Linda Mary writes:

Christmas is a time when some send cards to family and friends or write a letter to share the news of the family from the last twelve months.

Our choice of card, the picture or words printed on it, or the words we write in it or in a letter will express something of our experience and understanding of this significant event. Cards often refer to God's love and the gift of love given to us in the birth of Jesus. Other cards will have the words 'peace, joy, blessings' and I note the word 'justice' is now appearing. They are reflecting the gifts that Jesus, in his life, revealed and can draw us into the mystery being celebrated.

Before the angel Gabriel came to Mary and before Jesus was born as a human being, was there a decision made by God to witness and reveal to human persons the depth and extent of God's love for all God's creation – human and non-human? We do not know. What we do know is Jesus in his birth, life, ministry, teaching and ultimate giving of himself to death on the cross, revealed and continues to reveal today, a different way of being in the world.

In Philippians 2, we read of Jesus, in obedience to God, relinquished his equality with God and in humility entered fully into the earthly world. He was totally dependent on God and in relating with people, through his actions and attitudes, learnt the way of living in the world open to God's way of love, forgiveness, peace and justice.

Jesus was often in conflict with the people of his time. In these situations and encounters he revealed love rather than the prescribed laws; justice based on forgiveness not retribution:

empowerment rather than power over and a recognition that to bring peace there needed to be an acceptance of difference.

As we come to this celebration of the birth of Jesus into God's world – the whole world with its wars, violence, pain, injustice, inequality, and our personal world, which only you and I know of – may it be an entering more deeply into our call to be people who, like Jesus, depend on God and reveal our God-given gifts in our relationships with family, friends and those whom our lives touch in daily life.



From left to right:
Sisters Michael, Margaret, Heather,
Catherine and Marguerite Mae.

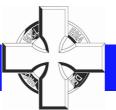
Catherine spent some time in the Fall with the Sisters in Canada. She was too early for the colours this year, but appreciated the unseasonably warm weather; a result of global warming?

Staying with Heather in Hamilton Catherine explored the city on foot. She especially enjoyed being at the harbour and water front. However, seeing people searching through garbage reminded her that the cities of our world are often where the poorest in society are drawn.

There was also time to meet with friends close to the Community and of course to be with the Sisters. This Photo was taken after a meal together to celebrate Heather's 20th Profession Anniversary.

Sister Catherine

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~ and Who is Where

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Printed by PDC Copyprint, Kingston UK