

brief

Investigation
to happiness

CANTERBURY: Children in three primary schools found out last week how to investigate what makes them happy as part of a University of Kent project. The project, called How To Make A Happy School, was run by Dr. Peter Cameron, of the University's School of Psychology. Dr. Cameron, a child development psychologist, said: "I think it's important that we find out more about what makes young people happy."

Marathon team

CANTERBURY: A children's charity is inviting runners to join their 10K Marathon team. The Children's Trust, which has a office in St Peter's Street, has 30 places available in the 2014 marathon to mark its 30th anniversary.

There is a registration fee of £25 and a suggested sponsorship. Find out more by visiting thechildrenstrust.org.uk/10kmarathon or call Emma on 01737 365019.

Trees planted

CANTERBURY: Eight new sweet gum trees were planted in St Lawrence Road last week by the Oaten Hill District Council. The trees were replacements for old chestnuts which had to be removed because of safety concerns. OHDS contributed £160 to the project to help plant the trees.

How city took
teen Inuit Kalli
into our hearts

Way we were



David Lewis
Canterbury
Historical and
Archaeological
Society

ONE-HUNDRED-AND-SIXTY years ago this month the first baptism of an Inuit (Eskimo) in Britain took place at St Martin's Church Canterbury, and was widely reported in the British press.

The origins for this odd event lie in the fateful expedition led by John Franklin in 1845, who left to explore the North West Passage in the Canadian Arctic and failed to return. Follow-up expeditions, hoping to find traces of Franklin and his 133 men, included HMS Assistance under its captain Erasmus Ommanney, which left in early 1850.

By August 1851, Erasmus had reached Cape York in Greenland. Here he took on board a 16-year-old Inuit named Kallihirau to help with navigation and dealing with



CAPTAIN: Erasmus Ommanney, skipper of HMS Assistance

local people. Kallihirau, soon shortened by the assistance crew to Kalli, had been living with his mother, brothers and sisters, in a small isolated community of just three families – his father had died earlier.

The group lived closer to the North Pole than any other settlement on the planet, at 76

degrees three minutes north, surviving in a yurt snow house and subsisting on seal and walrus meat.

Kalli, after a good wash (possibly the first in his life) and a change into western clothing, learned the rudiments of English from the Sergeant of Marines and proved popular with the crew.

By autumn 1851, when Captain Ommanney planned the return of the expedition to England, Cape York had iced up, making it impossible to return Kalli to his family.

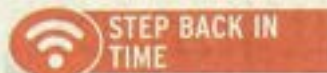
The young Inuit had no option but to return with the crew to England. They arrived in November 1851, with no clear view on what should become of Kalli.

Under a scheme devised by the Admiralty and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), Kalli was offered training at the Canterbury St Augustine's College to become a missionary who could bring the Greenland Inuits to Christ. Here he spent the next four years.

The SPG assessment was very positive: "Looks very intelligent, speaks a little English, is clean in person and free from tendencies to drink."



FAR FROM HOME: Kalli aged about 18 years



cerns.
The OHDS contributed £160 to Kent Highways to help plant the new trees.

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positive." Looks very intelligent, speaks a little English, is clean in person and free from tendencies to drink."

Despite poor treatment from a few who poked fun at his striking Inuit looks (short in stature, slanting eyes, jet black hair etc), Kalli charmed fellow students, staff and city folk with his courteous manner and gentle, polite demeanour.

He learned more English, studied scripture, prayed regularly, engaged in games with local children, learned carpentry and sewing boots, and relaxed by creating simple pencil drawings of Inuit hunting scenes - examples survive in the cathedral archives.

His carpentry lessons resulted in models of sledges used by his family back in Greenland and a rustic chair which stood in the college gardens.

In London he enjoyed visits to the British Museum, Horse Guards and Crystal Palace. Locally he got to know the cathedral - asking "Can I cough in here?" just to be certain.

All this culminated with his



HISTORIC: The font at St Martin's church where Kalli was baptised

baptism on November 27, 1853, in St Martin's Church as Erasmus Augustine Kallihirua.

Those attending included Captain Erasmus Ommanney, his wife, and the daughter of John Franklin.

Health problems surfaced from



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canterburytimes.co.uk/nostalgia

time to time. When asked what food might assist his coughing he replied: "A little walrus."

His Canterbury stay ended in autumn 1855 when the Admiralty granted him £25 pa to move to Queen's College in St John's, Newfoundland, to complete his studies.

A year later, aged just 21, still hundreds of miles from the family he had left five years earlier, Kalli swam in the cold Labrador sea off St John's with a friend, contracted inflammation of the lung and died.

The surgeon's report concluded melanosis - the "whole substance of his lungs was black."

Despite a massive deprivation of family, diet, routine and scenery, Kalli had maintained his amiable exterior and gentle manners. How many of us could do the same?

