

Can you imagine Christmas without the familiar trappings? Without the Christmas Trees and decorations and presents, extra special food and sweets, without Carols and parties and music? Without even a picture of Jesus and Mary and Joseph and the animals in the Manger at Bethlehem, let alone the Three Kings bringing their gifts? It is astonishing how much we take these things as being necessary to our enjoyment and understanding of Christmas. And yet it has not always been so. Christmas has been absorbed in Northern Europe into a much older pagan festival associated with the time of year when the days begin to lengthen again and people can hope afresh that the Spring days are not far away. Of course Christmas *does* bring hope to many of those who are downcast and oppressed, to the lonely and the hungry and the cold. Because it is at this time of year that many people show unusual concern for the unfortunate whether they live in this country or elsewhere. People support many, many charities by buying cards whose proceeds help good causes. I expect most of you who read this do exactly that and maybe more. Well done! And please help all you can.

But why should Easter be more important than Christmas? Why have we forgotten Whitsunday? Why change the name of Whitsun to Pentecost anyway? What is the centre of Christian Belief and Faith? How should we behave? Are there standards which cannot be compromised or altered? Does it matter if we belong to one Christian tradition rather than another? What are the differences between . . . . . ? So we could go on enumerating lists and lists of questions which we should like to talk over with others. And how do we help those whom we meet who would like to find out more about Jesus, the Church, Prayer, the Bible, Worship? Can we direct all these people to the Vicar (or someone else who has all the answers!)? Would they want to visit the specialist anyway? Perhaps they feel that they would rather start in a smaller way.

It is to meet this kind of demand that we are hoping to start up some more groups in the Parish, which have not yet got a name. We have had successful group meetings in Lent several times in the last few years. And we have even discussed Stewardship in Groups, as I hope you may have noticed. Since the autumn some of those interested in this development have been meeting with a view to forming and leading Home Groups or House Groups as they may be called. The purpose will not only be learning, although much of this will take place, but also fellowship and worship, even fun!

**SUNDAY EVENING SERVICES**

**Please note altered times until further notice:**

**EVENSONG, or on the first Sunday in the month,**

**PARISH COMMUNION** 16.30 h

**PRAYER AND PRAISE** 18.30 h

We shall be having Lent Groups again on an inter-church Ecumenical basis and these will be organised by the Hampton Council of Churches. After Easter I hope that we shall be able to launch our new pattern of parish activity which will not involve just 'the Old Gang', if there is one in the parish, but many people who are feeling new to the faith or new to the district. Do join in and watch this space and read the Church Notices.

Happy Christmas

*Nicholas Chubb*

## **The Week of Prayer for World Peace**

The Hampton Council of Churches held one of their United Services at the beginning of the annual Week of Prayer for World Peace at St. James's Church on Sunday, 18th October.

We were happy that Dr Edward Carpenter KCVO, who has lately retired from being Dean of Westminster Abbey, was able to with us. This was not devoid of excitement as owing to an early evening booking in Saffron Walden, Dr Carpenter had to be rushed round the M25 at high speed, thanks to Alan Taylor. Happily he managed both engagements though the address at St. James's had perforce to be the prelude to the service. His address on the United Nations and its positive thrust towards world peace was masterly.

Our service continued with hymns and prayers for peace, the loved passage from Micah bringing in beating swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks, and a fascinating dance for peace with Eila and her Liturgical Dance Group, and once again we felt that the Week of Prayer for World Peace had been lovingly launched.

Many people will have followed the prayer leaflet through the week of prayer: starting with thanksgiving, continuing on with penitence, breaking the barriers, not to return evil for evil, peace within, disarmament, peace-making - this on United Nations Day -, and fulness of life for all. The leaflet is now circulated world-wide.

*Hannah Stanton*

## **Interfaith Meeting**

On Monday 19th October as part of the celebration for One World Week the Richmond Interfaith Group held a gathering at York House, with contributions from many faiths.

Paul and Margaret Revis and their children David and Julia together with Rachel Lloyd and Sally Sazegar from our Prayer 'n' Praise, were invited to represent the Christian faith and I went along as a spectator.

The Deputy Mayor of Richmond, Councillor Helena Lang was able to be there for some of the time and Margaret Rayner of the Richmond Branch of the United Nations Association spoke about the aims of the UN and its agencies with particular reference to the plight of the refugees in Mozambique, for which a collection was made.

The evening started with our group singing and playing some of the music we use in our church at the Prayer 'n' Praise service, with the central point of our service, the exchanging a sign of peace which demonstrates our love for all our neighbours in the world.

Then followed contributions from the Buddhist faith, a Muslim Recitation, Sikh Preachers and Musicians and two beautiful Hindu dances performed by a 13 year old girl, with expressive hand and arm movements. All the contributors demonstrated their belief in the brotherhood of man and our everlasting wish for World Peace.

Afterwards refreshments were served, contributed by the various faiths. It was a most enjoyable and moving occasion and one which I felt glad to have been a part of. I am sure everyone there enjoyed the contributions of other faiths and the message that we all pray to God to bind *all* people together in peace, irrespective of race, colour or creed, was one which came over very strongly.

*David Lloyd*

## **A Review of the P.C.C. Meetings**

From time to time we have given a short account of matters that have taken up much of the P.C.C.'s time, thinking and effort. We do not do it every month. So here is short account of things which we hope will interest or concern you.

Every meeting we receive reports from the various committees which carry out so much of the P.C.C.'s work. Much of the practical work is done by the Properties Committee. This autumn it has been much concerned with the elimination of Dry Rot in the Vestry and keeping a constant watch on those unglamorous but necessary things drains and gutters, not to speak of the Churchyard. We have debated whether or not to remove the Yew tree outside the south Porch. There are many arguments for removing it and some for retaining it or at the very least lopping it. Constructive comments on this would be welcome before we take the final decision as to how to proceed for the best advantage of the parish not only now but in the future. We have discussed money (how much or how little we have got) and whether we have been able to pay our bills. We have spent quite a long time discussing whether we have got the pattern of our services on Sunday right. We are still discussing this and hope to involve the wider parish when some definite proposals are formulated. We have also discussed how much music we want in the Church (do we really want a choir and if so should it be robed or not?) and what should we expect of our organist (*any* organist we may employ)? We have discussed what the Hampton Council of Churches has planned and supported its initiatives for 'Faith in Print', the United Services and the Lent Course 'Who on Earth are You?' We have welcomed the plans made by the Social Committee for everybody's entertainment and enjoyment. We have given the go-ahead for considering the formation of some new Home Groups or House Groups and had a special meeting on the subject. We have decided to discuss the Church Urban Fund and Faith in the City in some detail. So meetings have been full and sometimes lengthy.

*Nicholas Chubb*

## Harvest Festival in the Shetlands

In October, I was fortunate to have a lovely holiday in the Shetland Isles, staying at the Whiteness Manse (rather a grand name for the flat above the chapel). The time I was there coincided with harvest festival and its celebration at the four Methodist chapels of which Malcolm, my son-in-law, is the Minister.

The first Saturday afternoon was spent in the meeting room of Whiteness chapel, with about twenty youngsters from the Sunday school aged 7-11. They prepared some very colourful collages on large lengths of paper depicting all manner of foods and its growth. These pictures were placed on the chapel walls with due ceremony and excitement, followed by orange drinks and biscuits all round. During the evening, ladies turned up in force to decorate the chapel, and were there for several hours.

The chapels are all very small with about ten pews either side each seating five or so people and quite simple in style. But on the Sunday morning the first sight of Whiteness chapel was quite breathtaking in its blazing colours. There were swags of corn hanging across the ceiling with many single heads of marigolds threaded through them. Flowers were everywhere in simple colourful arrangements and garlands of greenery were twisted around pillars and rails. From the walls hung all manner of vegetables and fruit, with boxes of more produce using up every conceivable surface.

The harvest service was very simple with several items performed and sung by the youngsters of the Sunday School. Participation of the congregation was needed for the sermon which was based on the word "Harvest" and the different words that could come from it like starve, share, vast and save. Several rousing hymns were sung, after which we all gathered in the meeting room for coffee and a chat. I saw this pattern of decoration and service repeated at the other three chapels of North Roe, Vidlin and Girlsta.

During the week the chapels were used again for the harvest suppers which started with a short introduction and prayer, then came the entertainment. This was provided by a barbers' shop quartet, piano accordionist, guitarist, solo singers, pianists and a gospel singing group, all of whom were local people and exceedingly talented. After the entertainment, the congregation stayed in the pews and cups were distributed, followed by ladies bearing huge steaming pots of tea. Then came the 'home bakes' as they are called, trays and trays piled high with all sorts of sandwiches, bannocks, biscuits and cakes. When we had eaten all we could manage, the next part of the evening began. This was "The Auction" where all the flowers, fruit and vegetables that had decorated the chapel were sold off. I was amazed at the prices the goods fetched and the money that came pouring in: a gentleman near me spent over £50 for just a handful of goodies. Several hundred pounds was raised at each chapel that week with similar auctions. This seemed to solve the problem of distributing the produce whilst still in good condition and also was a unique way of raising money for the church. Could this be "Food for Thought" for St. James's?

The warmth I received from everyone I met and the simplicity of life are memories to cherish of a lovely holiday on the Shetland Island.

*Marion Nevill*

## **The Great Storm of 16th October**

It is cause for praise that in spite of the damage to houses and many cars, and broken and uprooted trees all around, no-one was killed in the parish - even though a tree fell on a bus in Uxbridge Road. The storm struck in the early hours and for most of us the main problems were the consequent power failure for some hours and the dislocation of traffic.

Many roads were severely hit by trees damaging houses and every road showed signs of the tempest. The main thoroughfare of Park Road was closed from Friday until Sunday by the great chestnut tree on the corner opposite the church being entirely uprooted (revealing signs of brickwork deep in the resulting hole) and St. James's Road was entirely blocked when the giant chestnut tree which stood just inside Wayside's gate was also uprooted. The unfortunate tenants were deprived of gas, electricity and water and Peter Lockyer next door had to climb out of his garden which was completely blocked. The fact that by Friday afternoon traffic could squeeze by was due solely to the gigantic efforts of a team of men, neighbours and friends of St. James's, who laboured non-stop.

Indeed non-stop work went on for three days. Jack Gostling produced a power saw and had the willingness and expertise to use it. Great branches as large as trees themselves were sawn up, piles of huge logs and debris mounted up. The physical effort was tremendous and there was no small danger involved. Some motorists were very selfish in ignoring signs and mounting pavements and pushing past the men at work, so adding to the difficulties. Debris still piled the pavements in the parish weeks later and everywhere sounds of power saws can be heard and will be, I expect for some time.

In the gardens at the back of St. James's and Cranmer Roads, very tall poplar trees tumbled - those in St. James's Road occupying five gardens by their length. Had the wind not been from south to north the damage to houses would have been severe.

A question arises. Some of the uprooted and broken trees had preservation orders on them and in spite of representations to the Council by the householders in whose grounds these trees stood to be allowed to have them lopped and pruned for safety and convenience, the council was adamant in refusing permission. I understand that the unfortunate owners are liable for all expenses incurred by clearance and damage caused: the council although having refused to have these trees properly vetted, accept no responsibility. **IF THIS IS TRUE IT IS GROSSLY UNFAIR AND IS A SITUATION TO BE INVESTIGATED AND RIGHTED.** A tree to be preserved, should at least be healthy and not potentially dangerous and it should be the responsibility of those imposing the order and restricting the rights of owners to touch their own property to determine this.

One good thing to come out of the storm was, as happened after air raids during the war, the camaraderie and kindness shown by neighbour to neighbour. Offers of warm drinks, shelter and food apart from physical efforts were much in evidence and this was very cheering and strengthening.

*Margery Orton*

## Mothers' Union

On 7th October we celebrated the 50th anniversary of Vera Rockliffe's membership of St. James's M.U. Mrs. Helena Lambert was invited to come as she and Vera had worked together some years ago on overseas work of the M.U. During the afternoon Vera was given a card signed by Rosemary Johnson (the London Diocesan President) and a basket of flowers. Mrs. Gloyns made an anniversary cake and this with sandwiches and biscuits made quite a spread. There was plenty of chatter and memories were revived.

The A.G.M. was on 4th November and when the usual business was over (no elections this year) we had a "fun" afternoon. Members had been asked to bring photos of themselves "when young" and a guessing competition followed.

We are fortunate to have another occasion to celebrate on 2nd December. This will be the 90th anniversary of St. James's M.U. There will be a service in church at 11.30am followed by a buffet lunch, also in church. Invitations have been sent to Mr. and Mrs. Brunt, Mr. and Mrs. Oliver and Mrs. Milns. This will be another very happy occasion and it is hoped that all M.U. members will be able to come.

Members of five branches of the Hampton Deanery with their banners gathered at All Saints' Church, Hampton on Friday 13th November for their annual get-together. The Rev. David Vanstone conducted the service and gave us an inspiring address, and then enrolled two new members to his branch, after which we celebrated Holy Communion together.

We then adjourned to the Parish Hall to partake of hot soup (very welcome on a chilly morning) and ate our sandwiches. In the afternoon we were regaled by the Rev. Wilson from Isleworth (the husband of Jan who is our Overseas Chairman) in a delightful style of hymn singing to new settings and words of old familiar hymns brought up to date. A really excellent day, many thanks to All Saints' Church for arranging it all.

*Hettie Burgess and Dorothy Edmonds*

## Which Bible is Yours?

My owner put me down a year ago.  
You should see me now.  
I'm a DUSTY Bible.

Sometimes I feel I'm not loved.  
I'm lonely, I've been put out of  
sight. It's a hard life when you  
are a FORGOTTEN Bible.

Ouch! I'm a MISUSED Bible. My  
owner will stand heavy things on me  
and my cover is very dirty.

I get a lot of exercise.  
Yes, I keep in good shape.  
I am a USED EVERY DAY Bible.

My owner really uses me and loves  
to memorise God's promises and to  
Obey His Word.  
I am an OBEYED Bible.

I am the happiest Bible. My owner  
really loves Jesus and tells others about  
what is written. I am a BELIEVED  
Bible.

*Violet Clark*

## Yvonne and Michael Childs

As many will know, Yvonne and Michael are moving to the West Country. They have had such a long association with St. James's and have been involved in so many aspects of its life, that it is very hard to know where to begin when trying to write about them. Their main interest throughout their years here has been in working with the Cubs and Scouts.

Michael and his family moved to Hampton Hill in 1950. He soon joined the Choir and later became a Server. Both he and Yvonne have been on the Readers' Rota for many years and have organised various items over the years for the boys to present in church. During the 1950's the Drama Group was very active and Michael appeared in several of their productions. More recently he has taken part in the "Born to be King" readings which we have had, usually at Easter. Yvonne, not to be outshone, has also taken part in many productions and a notable performance as Mrs. Fitzwygram springs to mind.

Yvonne and Michael first met when Yvonne was working in a hospital. They were married in 1964 at Holy Trinity, Hounslow, and lived for several years in Whitton. Michael had been helping his father and Mr. Casey for a long time with the lads, and so it was inevitable that Yvonne would get involved with them too. Even when three children came along, Sarah, Stephen and Robert, their enthusiasm continued, Cub sports, swimming, football, as well as the annual camp and the usual weekly activities, keeping them busy.

As the children grew older, Yvonne decided she would like to train as a teacher and so she took a four-year course as a mature student, one of her special subjects being music. She has always loved music and was indeed a member of the Gemini Opera for many years. After she qualified, she took a post at her own old school (although in new buildings) in Feltham and has been very happy there ever since. About seven or eight years ago she started another Cub pack (Gold) of her own and she very much hopes this will continue.

Yvonne and Michael have been on several Church Committees, Michael as a long-serving member of the P.C.C. and Hall Management Committee and Yvonne on the Social Committee. Yvonne was also a keen member of the Catechumenate after Guisepe's visit and has continued to be ever since. She will be much missed by them.

Sarah now works with mentally-handicapped young people and loves her work. Stephen works for a freight company soon to be moving to Dudley in the Midlands and Robert is taking a Business Studies Course at Kingston Polytechnic.

I feel sure that there are many aspects of Michael and Yvonne's life here in Hampton Hill that I have not covered, but there is so much to say. Certainly they will be very much missed, especially among the Cubs and Scouts but by our own congregation as well. We wish them every success and happiness in their new home in Devon and no doubt many people will be calling on them over the next few years. They have bought a large ex-Vicarage next to the church at Witheridge, near Tiverton and I feel sure that they will soon be as big an asset to the local community there as they have been here.

*Helen Taylor*

## **Prayer and Praise**

The happening in the church on Sunday evenings has now been going on for just over a year, and despite the gloom about Sunday evening church-going, it is alive and kicking (or at least, waving its arms!)

We have had a varied diet of contributions from the home grown to the imported; about missionary work in South America and amongst Jews in Israel, and why it makes sense to believe and trust in Jesus; to accept the authority of scripture; etc.

December promises equally varied and inspiring evenings about Leprosy Missionary Work and exploring why it makes sense to believe in Eternal Life and to be a Christian.

The singing and music is a great part of the worship and really does "bind us together" and to all those who are involved week by week, your efforts and faithful support are greatly appreciated.

Do come; whatever age, you will enjoy your worship and find it refreshing and inspiring. The devil certainly does not have the best tunes!

P.S. Please note the new time - 6.30pm

*Alan Taylor*

## **Sponsored Knit**

On Monday 5th October twelve ladies knitted for two hours to raise funds to provide Christmas gifts for the children in the care of the Church of England's Children's Society.

Thanks to the dedication of "The Rockliffe Knitters" (as we called ourselves) and to the very generous support of all those who sponsored us, I was able to hand over a cheque for £227 - two hundred and twenty seven pounds - when I visited Edward Rudolf House, the Society's Headquarters, on 2nd November. In addition, the strips we had knitted will go towards the making of blankets and shawls.

Incidentally, we had a very pleasant and sociable afternoon together. Thank you very much all who helped in any way to raise such a large sum.

*Vera Rockliffe*

## **Dates for Your Diary**

On Saturday 9th January a Parish Children's Party will be held in the Church Hall. Please look out for the notice in Church and bring your children along.

For our annual Christmas/New Year theatre trip we are going to HOLIDAY ON ICE '88 at Wembley Arena on Saturday 30th January. A coach will leave St. James's at about 12.30 in time for the 2.00 pm performance. We should be back at 6.00 pm approximately. The all-in price is expected to be £7.50 per person. Seats are limited so book early. Details are on the notice board.

*David Lloyd*

## Ruth

After morning service one Sunday, I heard Olive playing some lively music on the piano. I was intrigued and, looking over her shoulder, saw the musical score entitled "Ruth". I noticed that the Revis family arrived for the rehearsal with instrumental backing and it sounded interesting.

On Sunday evening 25th October the work was performed in church. Janet was going on a day's visit to see friends in Portsmouth and it caused surprise when I told her I was "going to see Ruth" while she was away! We were treated to a few hymns in the rock style led by Margaret and Paul after which the main work was performed. This was a choral work based on an Old Testament story concerning Ruth, daughter-in-law of Naomi, who went to glean in the fields of a wealthy landowner called Boaz whom she eventually marries. The singing was excellently performed by an augmented choir and sounded most professional. Olive Wright read passages from "The Book of Ruth" in her own inimitable style which I thought gave it a touch of class.

Congratulations to Olive Hayward for producing such a professional performance which was worthy of a much larger audience; only a handful of people were in the congregation. I felt this fine performance could have been given wider publicity which might have attracted some people who do not attend church. Have we no PRO in St. James's?

*David Nunn*

## Carol Singing

We shall be going carol singing on Tuesday 22nd December. We will meet at 7.00pm outside the Church and after the carol singing will return to Wayside for refreshments. Everybody is welcome to come and take the Christmas message out into the parish.

*Paul Revis*

## Fair's Fair

Contrary to what was stated below the front-page picture of Roy Castle in a recent issue of the "Teddington and Hampton Times", our church has not had a Christmas Fair this year or for a great many years at least. We rely for our income almost entirely on giving under the Christian Stewardship scheme and plate giving.

For those who were puzzled by an item in the last issue of "The Spire", the total amounts of pledged giving in the first three quarters of this year, compared with those in the first three quarters of last year, were:-

	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>
January - March	£4332	£4229
April - June	£3558	£4042
July - September	£3424	£4722

We can now see how the recent Spring Programme is affecting our income.

## Around the Spire

We were sad to hear the news that Merlin Brown had died on 3rd November, after a short illness, in the Nursing Home where she lived with her two sisters after leaving Hampton Hill. She was cremated at Southampton on 11th November, the day before her 92nd birthday. Merlin will be very much missed by Coral and Laurie, both older than her, and we send them our love and remembrances.

Margaret Bramall has been in hospital recently for an operation on her knee. It is slowly improving and we hope to see her back among us very soon.

## Christmas Services

Sunday 20th Dec.	6.30 pm	Carol Service
Tuesday 22nd Dec.	7.00 pm	Carol Singing round the Parish
Christmas Eve	4.00 pm 11.45 pm	Carols at the Crib for Parents & Young Children Midnight Eucharist
Christmas Day	8.00 am 9.30 am	Holy Communion Parish Communion
Sunday 27th Dec.	9.30 am 4.30 pm	Parish Communion Evensong with Carols
Sunday 3rd Jan.	8.00 am 9.30 am 4.30 pm	Holy Communion Parish Communion Christingle Service

## From the Registers

### Baptisms

October 18	Mark John Joseph Perry	21 Byron Close
November 15	Christopher Jerome	102 Rectory Grove
	Tristan Guy Williams	1 Upper Lodge, Bushy Park
	Danielle Nicola Day	54 Pigeon Lane
	Luke Ronald Woodland	18 Staines Road, Bedford

### Wedding

November 28     Matthew John Dolan and Tanya Anne Castle

### Funerals

November 17	James William Ives	34 Hanworth Road	aged 63
19	Cyril Sparling Larter	25 Fairlight	aged 79
25	Albert Henry William Winford	1 Roy Grove	aged 70