

Vicar's Notes

The magazine is late this month. I normally prepare it during my holiday, but this year I decided to have as complete a rest from desk work as possible, even if it meant that the September issue would be a week or a fortnight late. I also wanted to include news of the Flower Show, and there is indeed news, but not the sort we had hoped for. After last year's encouraging venture, we confidently expected that the success this year would be greater, but the reverse was the case. There was the same careful organisation and planning. Miss Bassett and her helpers worked indefatigably—but there just wasn't the support; and there were not enough people at the Dance in the evening to pay for the band, the members of which must have found it disheartening to play to an almost empty hall, but who sportingly gave of their best. Still, the Show has been kept going; the sequence has not been broken; next year others may rally round. Thanks to all who did their bit. Names of prize-winners are given on the next page.

Complaints

Whenever the magazine is late, for whatever reason, there are always many complaints, and some have already started as I write. Well, I alone am responsible for it this time, and therefore I hope that people will complain direct to me, and not to the distributors as though they were to blame. But it isn't an easy job at the best of times, getting this magazine ready, and on many occasions it is close on midnight when the copy is slipped through the printer's door in Teddington. And when, about a week later, I cycle back with my ruc-sack filled with the finished product, I realise that after all, Hampton Hill is not an entire misnomer!

But seriously, do we not sometimes complain too readily and perhaps thoughtlessly? Yes, I catch myself doing it. And people come to me, sometimes in tears,

because they have done their best, spent time and pains on a job, and instead of being appreciated, it has met with bitter complaint because perhaps it wasn't done in a different way. I have known people leave the Church, or at least any active work for it, because of this, and we can understand how they feel. I have known Sunday School teachers harshly criticised, by people who think the Sunday School should be perfect, but who never offer to help themselves. I hear there have been complaints about the flowers in church—have the people who complained offered to provide and arrange them themselves? Yes, in the course of the year there are complaints about pretty well everything.

At this season we get a great number about the condition of the churchyard. I am told that I ought to be thoroughly ashamed, and that for my own pride I ought to get something done. I can understand how people feel—and, of course, we are not alone in receiving such complaints. Most churchyards and even borough cemeteries are sources of indignation to many who visit them every summer—and cemeteries usually have a large staff of full-time gardeners, paid out of the rates and working hard—but they tell me that, despite their efforts, they can't keep the grass down, and how annoyed people get, and how disheartening it all is. Here, we have two good gardeners who do wonders on one day a week—and the money does not come from the rates, but is found mainly by members of the congregation: very little comes from the critics. One angry letter which I received did go on to say that the writer would willingly give a subscription, but six weeks have gone by, and I have written twice, and nothing further so far has happened . . . perhaps because I also suggested that the writer might manage a donation to the Renovation Fund as well, because it is even more important to preserve the church itself than the churchyard, though we try our best to do both. (£30 has recently been paid out for the repair of one of

the churchyard fences. Critics and complainers—come in and help!)

Another and rather puzzling thing is that some people who take the magazine and don't like its being late seem to miss much that it contains. Several people have said that they didn't know anything about the Flower Show, but as well as being announced and advertised in the usual ways, it was mentioned in the July magazine and in detail in the August one—and still it was overlooked. This has happened again and again about other events—"I never heard anything about it." "Why wasn't I told?"—and it was there all the time in the magazine.

To sum up: Let us welcome constructive criticism, and complaints that keep us from resting content with anything less than the best—but let us watch ourselves, lest we dishearten others by criticisms that are not really constructive, and by complaining too readily in ways that do more harm than good, and cause unnecessary pain.

Meeting Together

One advantage of the magazine's being late is that I have been able to read "The Window" before publication. This month the Bishop of Stepney stresses the importance of doing something we have often spoken about but not yet put into practice—meeting together as a Church not only to pray together but also to plan and work together. I spoke about this at the Annual Church Meeting, and it has been discussed on the Commissions. But the time has not seemed ripe to go ahead. After reading this article, some might feel that a start should be attempted in the near future. There are, of course, many snags and difficulties, but a real Parish Meeting does provide a setting in which the complaints and criticisms referred to earlier can be brought fully into the open, in the right kind of atmosphere, though this of course is not its main purpose, and it can do many other things as well.

Healing Prayer

There are multitudes of well-authenticated cases where prayer has, humanly speaking, made all the difference between life and death. Emergencies from time to time arise—people are rushed into hospital at a moment's notice for a serious operation, stricken with polio, injured in an accident—and the need for prayer is urgent. The Street Wardens' Prayer-group has been discussing the matter, and a scheme is being developed whereby a number of people can be informed of the need in a short time, and faith and prayer immediately offered to God for Him to use—for in His healing work God asks for our human co-operation. Already this scheme has been in action in the case of one emergency. At the moment, please 'phone in the first instance the Vicar (Mol 2069) or Miss Western (Mol 3358) and they will put the chain in motion. More (preferably on the telephone) are needed—please let the Vicar or Miss Western know if you are willing to be added to the list. (N.B. A recently published book with this title: "Healing Prayer", which is referred to at some length in "The Window", should prove of great help to many of us in our prayers for the sick, and also to those who are ill themselves).

Our Bishop

Everyone will know that Dr. Wand is shortly retiring from the See of London after 10 years of outstanding leadership and service. In a diocese of this size the Bishop is of necessity a rather remote figure for most of us, and few have the opportunity of any personal contact with him. But all of us can appreciate his worth, and all of us benefit in one way or another from his wisdom and his guidance of the diocese as a whole. All parish priests are willing to receive subscriptions towards a presentation to be made to the Bishop at a farewell meeting to be held in Guildhall at 6.30 p.m. on October 18th, and I should be glad to acknowledge any, however small, sent to me.

AROUND THE SPIRE

being notes and news about
people, activities & organisations

MOTHERS UNION

In 1956 the M.U. will be celebrating its 80th anniversary and to mark this event Mrs. Roberts, our Central President, asks us to plan for special prayers this Autumn onwards that God may be able to use the Mothers Union as a channel through which the Church's teaching on marriage and family life may be straightened and upheld. She asks that each member may pray to be made more usable by God so that words and actions may have a right influence and this can be done only if we strive to be completely humble and realise our utter dependence on God and leave ourselves as tools in His hands.

Two months ago when your Committee was planning this session's programme and before we had had Mrs. Robert's message I did ask the committee to pray in this way for our own branch. We meet month by month year after year, but it must be difficult for any of the rest of the Church members to realise that we are a body, 86 members strong, of worshipping church women. At the last Corporate Communion when the work of the Branch was offered there were, in fact, four members present.

Now we have started this session with a special dedication service. It was a lovely afternoon and apart from members still on holiday the service was well attended. In his address the Vicar reminded us that it was an illusion to think that our lives were our own or that we could live to ourselves. Our only true and satisfactory response was to recognise this and live for the service of God and His glory.

After the Service we joined together for an hour of sunshine and tea in the garden at Wayside, so pleasant that we look forward to many more in the years ahead.

Next month the Branch meeting is a visit to the partly built Guildford Cathedral. The coach will leave School Road at 2.0 p.m. and the fare will be 3/-. Anyone who missed the September meeting but

would like to go to this should tell Mrs. Wiggins, Myrtle Road, as soon as possible. For those who are not able to go to Guildford there will be short service in Church at 3.0 p.m.

This is the only opportunity we have of letting you know about the mass meeting at Westminster Guildhall on Tuesday, October 18th when, if we have been lucky enough to get tickets, a coach will leave School Road at 1.30 p.m. The cost will be 3/4 inclusive of ticket and tea. Please let Mrs. Wiggins know if you want a place.

THE FLOWER SHOW

Here are the names of the prize-winners:—

Class 2 (Three vegetables)—1st Mrs. Coxon; 2nd Mrs. Orton. Class 4 (Tomatoes)—1st Mr. Rooney. Class 5 (Marrows)—1st Mr. Burrows. Class 6 (Apple)—1st Mr. H. Lewis. Class 7 (3 kinds of Flowers)—1st Mrs. Western. Class 9 (Dahlias)—1st Mrs. Sildey. Class 11 (Rose)—1st Mrs. Ward; 2nd Mrs. Head. Class 12 (Posy)—1st Alan Bruce. Class 13 (Flower arrangement)—1st Mrs. Lloyd; 2nd Mrs. Head. Class 14 (Flower arrangement)—1st Mrs. Rockcliffe. Class 15 (Jam)—1st Mrs. Woodward; 2nd Mrs. Orton. Class 16 (Jelly)—1st Mrs. Ward; 2nd Mrs. Gordon. Class 17 (Bottled Fruit)—1st Miss Wintle; 2nd Miss Lush; 3rd Mrs. Orton. Class 18 (Victoria Sandwich Cake)—1st Mrs. B. Harper; 2nd Miss B. Rockcliffe. Class 19 (Queen Cakes)—1st Miss Bassett; 2nd Mrs. Ward; 3rd Mrs. Bassett.

Box of Fruit raffle was won by Miss D. Rowlingson of Sunbury.

The Correct Weight of Tomatoes was guessed by Mrs. Rooney.

The Programme Lucky Number is 115—prize to be claimed from Miss Bassett.

It seems that, after all, expenses may just have been covered, and that there may be a small profit of about £1 to add to the Renovation Fund.

The Committee are grateful to all who supported the Show in any way, and in particular to Mr. Geer for all his help at the Hall.

Organist and Choirmaster

Mr. R. E. Bougourd, 214 Stanley Road, Teddington. Tel. Mol. 3342.

Secretary of Wayside Committee

Mrs. Bird, 37 Uxbridge Road, Tel.: Mol. 3667. All applications for use of Rooms at Wayside should be made to her.

SOME DATES TO NOTE

Sept. 20-21—Hall open 10.0 a.m.—1.0 p.m. & 2.0 p.m.—5.0 p.m. for receipt of gifts of clothing, etc. for refugees.

Sept. 28—7.45 p.m. Young Wives' Group (Hall or Wayside—Members will be informed).

Sept. 29—St. Michael, Holy Communion 7.15 and 10.30 a.m.

Oct. 4—8.0 p.m. Street Wardens' Meeting (Vestry).

Oct. 5—2.0 p.m. Mothers' Union: Visit to Guildford.

Oct. 6—No Service at 10.30 a.m. Harvest Thanksgiving 7.15 p.m. Preacher: The Vicar of Twickenham.

8.40 p.m. Harvest Supper and Entertainment (Hall).

Oct. 7—7.30 p.m. Magazine Distributors (Vicarage).

Oct. 9—Continuation of Harvest Festival.

Oct. 12—8.0 p.m. Sunday School Teachers' Social Evening (St. Mary's Hall, Twickenham).

Oct. 13—8.0 p.m. Men's Society (Vicarage).

Oct. 28—7.0 p.m. Sunday School Teachers' Diocesan Rally (Church House, Westminster).

Nov. 19—3.0 p.m. Autumn Fair (Hall).

BAPTISMS

Aug. 14.—Brian Wallin, 13 King's Road.

„ 14.—Robert William Overell, 37, Wellington Road.

„ 28.—Pamela Karen Davis, 40 Princes Road.

Sept. 4.—Pauline Zenia Penny West, 79 Longford Close, (at Woking).

„ 11.—Linda Margaret Mack-Habes, Meadowside, Albert Road.

„ 11.—Helen Mary Cornish, 95 Park Road.

MARRIAGES

Aug. 27.—John Edward Stinton, to Janet Evelyn Varney.

Sept. 3.—David John Thompson to Joy Rosemary Cusworth.

FROM BEYOND THE SPIRE

CHRISTIAN VILLAGE

A C.M.S. missionary is living in a Christian village in the Thal desert in Pakistan, where many families were resettled in 1949. The Bishop of Lahore recently paid a visit to this village, and has written:

“The Christians in this village have been here for nearly six years, and yet more than half the land is still without water. Many of the people are unable to get any yield from their land, and have to pick up occasional labour in the digging of canals or making roads in the surrounding areas. But there are rays of hope. The Primary School with its four Christian teachers new educates about 150 children, and we are beginning to work towards the ideal of a wholly literate Christian village. As I celebrated the Holy Communion for nearly 200 communicants in the little Church

which they themselves had built I was again impressed with the potentialities of witness for Christ in this far-flung Christian settlement. Remember it in prayer.”

THROUGH THE WITNESS OF ONE

A C.M.S. missionary in Kenya has written about a Christian revival which has begun in a boys' School in Kenya. It began when a boy named Lawrence became seriously ill and was sent to Hospital. During that time he was converted, and when he returned to School his steady witness led to the conversion of another twenty-one boys who were in the first instance influenced by the great change they saw in his life. Many of these boys were able to lead members of their own families to Christ during the School holidays.