

AROUND THE SPIRE

being notes and news about
people, activities & organisation

FIRST ANNUAL REVIEW OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

This function took place at the Church Hall, on the evening of Thursday, 8th November, and was a success beyond even the most sanguine hopes. The Hall was soon packed and still more people poured in—about two hundred of them. There was a buzz of conversation as the guests were greeted by Mr. Brunt, met their friends and helped themselves to the delectable refreshments provided. The Young People's Fellowship did stalwart service as waiters and added to the family atmosphere. Opinion round the village next morning was that it had all been a most exhilarating and encouraging experience. As our Vicar put it, "St. James' is breaking through to better times."

When the business part of the evening started, Mr. L. Melville, as Chairman of the Stewardship Committee, welcomed the assembled company and introduced the speakers, first of whom was Mr. G. I. Robinson, who gave a clear and business-like account of what had already been achieved and what was about to be achieved in the near future. He alluded to the brochure which was issued at the outset of the campaign and explained why the original programme had had to be modified. The first brochure was hardly off the press when an unforeseen calamity was reported. Sections of the church floor were found to be in danger of collapsing due to dry rot. The necessary work had now been carried out with a guarantee that the effects should be long lasting, but it meant that £1000 over and above the original budget had had to be found. The normal running expenses of the church were about £1,800 per year, and with the balance of the campaign expenses to be met, the income for the first twelve months was more or less absorbed. The problem was—how to meet the original programme in the light of such an enormous unexpected charge.

Professional advice was next sought about the roof, the lighting and the organ. Blow had followed blow! It had been assumed that the neces-

sary work on the roof would cost about £2000 but the damage was found to be more widespread than suspected and the experts put the figure at £4,000. The work could be tackled in two halves, the southern part being the most in need of attention. The first half of the work would cost £2,500, enabling other things to be tackled at the same time.

When the professional report came in re the lighting, another bombshell exploded. The wiring was found to be so defective that the fire risk was acute to danger point. It was "action stations." Now the wiring had to become first priority. It was found that the church could be re-wired—cost £250—in such a manner that the new lighting scheme could be incorporated at a later date.

Mr. Robinson said that in view of the colossal amount of work to be done and the calls on the time of the Vicar and his team of workers, it had been decided that a curate had become essential and the Vicar had been urged by the Church Council to make his enquiries in this field a matter of urgency.

In view of the healthy state of the Church's income the Bank was prepared to allow an overdraft so that the work referred to could be put in hand. "We have now reached a phase," said Mr. Robinson, "where, after many discussions and much correspondence with the architect and lighting engineer, by the turn of the year we hope to place a contract."

Due to all the setbacks progress had not been as swift as hoped for, but this time next year should show a very different picture.

Mr. Robinson went on to speak of the work of the very active Social Committee. There had so far been seven functions this year and another was being arranged, making an average of one every six weeks over the year. None of these functions had been a charge on Church expenses and had been entirely self-supporting.

Reference was made to the numbers of committees which were actively dealing with church affairs and to the comparatively small number of people

who were now finding they had to serve on six or more committees. The work was a great pleasure, carrying its own reward, but it was now very obvious that more enthusiastic and active people were urgently needed if the good work was to continue.

Mr. Jack Gostling was the next to speak, to present the picture of the last year as seen by one drawn into the circle of the Church by participation in Christian Stewardship. He spoke up in praise of the efficiency of the Wells Organisation. "I don't think," he said, "It would have been possible to find a more average bunch of half-hearted husbands who had reluctantly left the fire-side and the 'telly' than we were—and yet, within hours, minutes almost, we were chairman of this, captain of that, team number so and so—all given jobs and every minute of spare time accounted for." Well, the target had been reached and a year had passed. "If I now try to tell you how I see the effects of the Campaign," Mr. Gostling went on, "I must qualify it by saying the effects upon us. 'Us,' meaning firstly my family, because Christian Stewardship is essentially a family affair, and secondly meaning families who, a year ago, stood either like ours, entirely outside parish life; or else just on the fringe. As a result of the campaign we have been drawn into the life of the parish; making more new friends in these few months than we did in the previous five years since we first moved here. We have found many new interests also; and speaking for myself I have been astounded at the amount of really hard work quietly going on beneath the surface, in making the wheels of the parish go round.

"At the end of this first year I have the feeling that we can begin a steady expansion of our parish life. There are many more families standing where mine stood a year ago—in the parish in name only. They can be brought right in, as we were, but it will mean more help from those of us inside than is being given at present.

"I started by saying that to me, the campaign had been interesting and informative. One final thing I have learned as a result of Christian Stewardship—as with life, so with the

parish—you only get out as much as you put in. With a little more put in—and I am not speaking of money—we can get a lot more out."

Mr. Rockliffe, who was described by Mr. Melville as having "worked like a Trojan" in his capacity as Recorder, explained how the Stewardship Scheme worked. Every family has its own confidential pledge card and on it Mr. Rockliffe records all payments which are paid weekly or monthly by envelope, or quarterly, half-yearly or yearly by banker's order. Pledges are promised for a period of three years. There are also some direct donations, either given yearly or in a lump sum covering the three years.

Every Sunday the envelopes are opened by Mr. Rockliffe, Mr. Wadlow and Mr. Robinson and the amount noted on the envelope. These amounts are then transferred by Mr. Rockliffe to the family record card which shows the amount paid, the progressive total to date and the balance due. Every quarter a complete statement has to be made to the Wells Organisations who thus check that everything is in order. Some families are in advance with their payments, some up to date, some a little behind and a few considerably in arrears. A few who had promised had so far paid nothing.

If a family has not put in an envelope for five weeks they are usually visited, not in any way to collect arrears but it is often found that illness causes the non-attendance in church and the non-handing in of the envelope. The Vicar thus finds out when any of his parishioners are ill and can visit them, and all parishioners are asked to let the Vicar know of illness amongst their fellows.

If people have fallen behind with their payments and are in difficulty they are at liberty to start again as from now, or to reduce their pledge if they really feel it is necessary to do so. Anyone wishing to increase their pledge should just drop Mr. Rockliffe a line.

The general level of giving had not fallen and by August 12th, last, the receipts from the scheme were £2,500 and including direct giving amounted to £2,760.

At the end of the canvass the total pledged stood at £10,050 but in the last nine months this had dropped by £300 due to death or to people leaving the district. The income from covenanted money—money promised for a period of seven years—was £450.

Mr. Rockliffe explained that to covenant a pledge meant a large increase to the church on the original pledge by virtue of rebate on income tax allowed by the authorities in cases of seven year pledges to charities.

The Wells Organisation's only mistake was in supplying too many envelopes. To save money these have been re-numbered and re-dated for next year. Unfortunately, whilst they were at the printers they were damaged by rain! Apologies were tendered, and if any envelopes were found to be quite unusable efforts would be made to replace them.

Mr. Rockliffe ended his very clear address by welcoming new-comers to the parish and to the scheme and said that visits would be made to them very shortly.

M.O.

(The conclusion of this report—a column and a half—has had to be held over until the January issue — Ed.)

THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S FELLOWSHIP

The Annual General Meeting of the Fellowship was held at Wayside, on the 19th October, at which a new Committee was elected. As Alan Swindale was resigning from his post as Secretary, Barbara Giles was elected in his place.

After many suggestions for the Fellowship's new magazine it was decided to call it "Peradventure." In order to gain publicity the first edition will be free to all those wanting it.

After the long and gallant efforts of Dawn and Seymour the Fellowship has now the newly-painted front room at Wayside, as its centre of operations. The Sunday evening meetings can now be held without inconveniencing the many parents who have let us use their homes during the past years. The room is now very comfortable with carpet, chairs and settee.

THE MOTHERS' UNION

We were fortunate in the choice of the speakers for our last two meetings and in the subjects chosen.

On October the 25th, Mrs. Naylor spoke about "Faith," a most difficult subject, something one cannot see or touch, but can only experience through trust, guidance and constant prayer, and communion with God.

I am sure those of us who listened to Mrs. Naylor must have come away with a lot to think about and to strive to attain.

On November the 7th, Mrs. Brown was unable to be with us, but Mrs. Scott Joynt, took her place and spoke to us on "Temperance."

I quite thought she was going to tell us that we should all sign the pledge, but actually her talk was most interesting and enlightening. She pointed out that one should be temperate in all things, not only in drinking but in eating, in the time we devote to sport, pleasure, amusement, television. In fact to be temperate in all things.

So often people outside the Church seem to think that those in the Church are somehow peculiar, that we are spoil sports, miserable, no sense of humour, etc. This of course is nonsense.

Our next meeting will be on December the 5th at Wayside at 2.30 p.m., the speaker is Mrs. Hanchet and her subject "Kindness." Anyone, whether a member of M.U. or not will be most welcome.

I am afraid I cannot be with you that day, owing to another engagement, so I would like to take this opportunity of wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and hope to see you all and your friends at our Carol Service in the small Hall on, January the 2nd at 2.30 p.m.

V.P.

THE YOUNG WIVES' GROUP

On October 31st, we had a film show by courtesy of Unilever Ltd. We saw three films, firstly "The Surf Boats of Accra," a location much in the news at the moment. where surf-boats are used to unload merchant ships which have to anchor well off-shore, there being no harbour or docks at Accra. The second film was about kitchens, with the late Gilbert Harding commenting on good

and bad planning in kitchen design. I am sure most of us cast a critical eye around our own kitchens when we arrived home. The programme ended with "An Outline of Detergency," showing, by cartoons and through microscopes, the effects of detergents added to water, enabling the water to soak into fabrics to release dirt and grease which would, otherwise, remain in the fibres. The film showed how the spots were removed from our laundry, but left us with technicolour spots before our eyes!

On November 14th, we have our Annual General Meeting preceded by a Toy and Clothing Exchange, whilst on the 28th, we meet at Wayside to bring along our favourite gadget (if portable); to ask for any recipe we are seeking; or to acquire information about household "labour-saving" equipment we would like to know more about. Also, tickets will be on sale for the Children's Party, to be held on Friday, 4th January, members of the committee until 12th 1963. They will be available from December, 1962, if you are unable to come to this meeting. M.S.

BONFIRE PARTY

For my children the thoughts of a Bonfire and fireworks made Saturday, 3rd November, a day of mounting excitement; they and all those other children, both young and old, who were lucky enough to get tickets were not disappointed. The programme started with the lighting of an enormous bonfire—how they managed to keep it dry remains a mystery. This was followed by a display of fireworks of the kind which quite clearly cost more than 6d. a piece, each lit most professionally by a gentleman complete with cap, gumboots and lamplighter's pole. No description can do justice to a firework display, but why is it instinctive to say "Ooh" when they go up and "Aah" when they come down?

During the interval, with the help of numerous ladies, one wing of Laurel Dene was turned into a kind of open-air stall serving soup, toffee apples and baked potatoes in their jackets; (anybody going away saying they were cold and hungry should be denied a ticket next year).

It appears there was just one case of burnt fingers—one of the potatoes was hotter than expected.

As one who just went, watched and ate, I would like to thank all those who made the enjoyment possible.
N.C.L.

SOCIAL EVENTS

There will be a showing of coloured slides by Major Wilcox, at Wayside at 8 o'clock, on Friday, 7th December. Major Wilcox has a large collection of films and slides gathered from his periods of service in many different parts of the globe and the evening should be an interesting one. Cheese, biscuits and coffee will be served at a small cost.

The first function in the New Year will be a PARTY in the Church Hall, on January 19th, 1963. More news of this will appear in the January issue.

MASS ATTACKS

The two attempts made in November to get the churchyard in good order before the winter were grossly interfered with by the weather, and it was possible only to clear some of the leaves. Much overgrown vegetation still needs dealing with, so we will try again on December 8th, if fine, and if not, on the following Saturday. It seems best to make a concerted effort in the afternoon, when most people can come, rather than spread it out over the whole day, so let us put in as much time and energy we can spare between 1.00 and 4.15 p.m.

SOME OTHER DATES TO NOTE

- Dec. 13.—8.0 p.m. Church Council (W).
- Dec. 21.—St. Thomas' 7.15 a.m., Holy Communion.
- Dec. 24-25.—Christmas Day. Holy Communion at 11.45 p.m. (Midnight Eucharist); 8.0 a.m., 9.45 a.m. (Family Communion) and 12.15 p.m.; Matins at 11.0 a.m.
- Dec. 26-28.—Holy Communion daily at 10.30 a.m.
- Dec. 30.—Sunday After Christmas. 8.0 a.m. Holy Communion; 9.45 a.m. Sunday Schools; 11.0 a.m. Matins; 6.30 p.m. Service of Lessons and Carols.

Owing to pressure on space we regret that we have again to omit the concluding portion of Dr. Rodney Bishop's "Letter from India," and other items, including Baptisms, have also had to be held over and in addition as you will have previously noticed, we could not get the whole of the report on the Annual Review in either !