

VICAR'S NOTES

The Magazine: The comments made here last month have aroused a good deal of interest, and suggestions are still coming in by letter and word of mouth. It has been encouraging to find how many people read and enjoy the magazine, and of these the larger proportion would like it to continue in its present form. I am assured that it is read with appreciation and admiration by Roman Catholics and many others who are not members of the Church of England. One writer at the end of a very enthusiastic letter says: "As to finances, I personally feel that this excellent thing should be directly paid for. May I suggest voluntary annual subscriptions? As a start I enclose mine, which can't do any harm anyway, whether the idea is acceptable or not."

The Magazine Committee will be meeting shortly to consider all the opinions expressed and in due course to make recommendations to the Church Council, who will then make a definite decision in the matter.

A Working Conference: From January 3 to 8 I was at the Christian Teamwork and Tavistock Institute Conference at Cheltenham on inter-personal and inter-group relations. I went not really knowing what I was in for, and returned after a very strenuous week with my head full of strange experiences just in time to dress up in some degree of likeness to a pirate and dash through the streets to the parish party. It certainly was a working conference—7½ hours solid a day in sessions of one kind or another, as well as the long informal discussions that went on far into the night in the common-room (and every person at the conference was an interesting personality in his or her own right, and fascinating to talk to). There were only three lectures in the course of the whole week: all the rest was 'learning by doing' or 'learning by participation and observation' (and it is very difficult to take part and observe your taking part—and what is happening in the group—at the same time, as I felt constrained to point out!). What one learnt it was difficult to say, but certainly things happened. The consultants who sat in with us were there to interpret these things, and I frequently found myself questioning their interpretations—but you couldn't win!

To speak of enjoying a conference like this might be to show that one missed the point of it all: and certainly some of the members found it—or parts of it, especially the large group—a painful and distressing experience, where all kinds of sinister and destructive forces were felt to be at work. A prison chaplain felt that he now knew at first-hand what the prisoners he ministered to felt, and he said that he would go back to his job with far greater sympathy for them and their desire to escape! But others, perhaps a minority, felt that though at times they had seemed to be in prison, they had come through to feel a little more confident and a little more free. There were of course moments of light relief, especially in the inter-group exercise, when people of high intelligence and holding positions of great responsibility in ordinary life, got themselves and their groups into the most terrible state of shambles imaginable!

It certainly was unlike any other experience I have ever had, and I still don't know what to make of it all. But people of repute value this kind of learning highly, and firms and institutions pay large sums to send representatives to conferences like this, so there must be something in it!

Lenten Study and Projects: It is expected that the Parish Weekend will be making final decisions and arrangements about these. There are several possibilities—study courses on ‘believe and live,’ ‘prayer is my life,’ ‘The Responsible Church,’ and so on—all of them very worthwhile. Various kinds of practical exercises and surveys are also suggested by the Council for Mission.

Most likely we shall be having two study courses, one on Wednesday afternoons beginning on February 23, and the other on Thursday evenings beginning on the following day. Also on Ash Wednesday, as well as the early morning Communion, there will be an evening one at 7.30 p.m.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S FELLOWSHIP

Looking back over the last two months we can record that the Y.P.F. has taken part in two important activities. The first was the Youth Service held in aid of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign at which a group of us sang special “Campaign” songs, aided and abetted, as usual, by Dick Cox and his guitar. The second occasion, also, made use of our, until-now, dormant singing talent! Along with the Hampton Council of Churches’ Nativity play, the Y.P.F. went to Feltham Borstal to entertain the boys with about half an hour of singing which ranged from folk songs to modern carols. This, I think, turned out to be a great success and we thoroughly enjoyed doing it.

Besides the many activities in the next few months the Y.P.F. hope to hold a party on February 26 at Wayside at 7.45 p.m. to help raise some money to pay for the transport for our holiday at Easter. We extend an invitation to anyone in the parish who would like to come and hope that the “Cake-baking” competition will be well supported.

Sunday evening activities for the next two months at Wayside at 8 p.m. are as follows:

- Feb. 6 Faith I. Hebrews, ch. 11.
- 13 Faith II. Hebrews, ch. 11, 12.
- 20 Guest Speaker.
- 26 Y.P.F. Party, Wayside, 7.45 p.m. (Saturday).
- 27 Bible Study, Luke, ch. 15—The lost sheep.
- Mar. 6 Bible Study, Luke, ch. 15—The lost coin.
- 13 Bible Study, Luke, ch. 15—The lost son.
- 20 Guest Speaker.
- 27 Scripture Union film strip.

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

Just as the members of the P.C.C. were called away from their Christmas preparations to an emergency meeting on Land Covenants the first of the parish carol parties was setting off, their destination the homes of some of the more elderly residents of the parish where various small gifts were distributed. This first party was a contingent of the 1st Hampton Hill Guides who sang the well known carols with might and main to wish all a Happy Christmas.

As usual the Y.P.F. toured the parish on both Wednesday night, December 22, and Christmas Eve, receiving great hospitality from the fortunate—or maybe unfortunate—people on whose doorsteps they chose to sing. Undaunted by the rain on Wednesday evening they eventually finished up at Hampton. On Christmas Eve they set off at 7 o'clock in fine voice, joined by members of the Congregational Church Y.P.F., and towards the end of the evening the party had grown to

thirty-five or more. Thanks are heartily rendered to all those who provided food and drink to sustain the carollers between stops throughout the evening!

The main St. James's Carol party grew steadily from twelve on the first chilly rehearsal at Wayside to about fifty on the night—December 23. Everyone enjoyed the rehearsals under Mr. Dafforne's kindly but firm tuition and all were in good voice for the first "Come all ye Faithful" in St. James's Road. Then off by car and van—the latter bearing a large sign wishing the parish "A Happy Christmas from St. James'"—to the Longford Estate where carols were sung heartily at various points. Back again to Wayside to be regaled with delicious hot coffee and mince pies—many thanks to the two noble ladies who provided this repast! One last "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" outside 52 Park Road where a would-be caroller had succumbed to influenza and so—in the words of Mr. Pepys—to bed!

The 1st Hampton Hill Brownie Pack (now 48 years old and over forty strong) collected toys this Christmas for "The Evening News Spare a Toy for a Sick Child" venture. So successful and generous were the Brownies that it took four of them, a pack leader and Brown Owl to transport all the offerings up to London in four large boxes.

Christmas Eve saw the regular service at Laurel Dene when the Vicar, the choir and various members of the Y.P.F. sang carols to wish our elderly friends a happy and peaceful Yuletide.

Our church was beautifully decorated with flowers and the traditional greenery and enhanced by our crib and the tall gleaming Christmas tree, the generous gift, once again, of Mr. and Mrs. Thompson.

The Midnight Sung Eucharist, in common with the other Christmas services was, as usual, very well attended; and more people than for several years came to the service of the Nine Lessons and Carols. It is always pleasant to listen to the lessons read by friends from the congregation and choir, and this year there was some really notable singing of a selection of carols from different nations by the choir who excelled themselves both solo and severally. Mr. Dafforne has certainly succeeded in injecting a warmth and vitality into our church music which embraces not only the choir but the congregation alike.

December 30 was the date of the Young Wives' Children's Party and, in spite of really arctic conditions in the Hall, forty youngsters, average age four and a half, managed to get warmed up by the party games and good fare until the arrival of Father Christmas. A feature this year was that he brought, instead of toys, a selection of sweets in pretty little red net Christmas stockings (especially made to his order by the Young Wives' Committee).

Sunday, January 2, was a day of movement and drama in our church. In the morning, members of the Sunday School presented a series of tableaux and mimes, depicting in vivid and striking fashion some of the lessons which God taught His people in the old days to prepare them for the coming of Christ, and then the Christmas story itself.

The evening saw the performance of "The First Crib"—a 13th century drama. This play of St. Francis showed us how, in his original religious genius, he taught the truth about the infant Jesus to his Friars—some of them sophisticated men and some rough-speaking and simple-

minded—and how they were inspired by his leadership to bring the poor villagers and the grandee travellers to share a real experience together. The Crib was a 3-D expression of how the Divine personality of Jesus began as a human life in the humblest home and how all men could and should be ready to fulfil and direct their real selves through worship. The acting by members of the Hampton Council of Churches' Drama Group led by Mr. Brunt was beautiful, and aptly suggested the differing personalities of that time and ours. The lighting and costume was simple and dramatically intense—perhaps it can revive in our Church a tradition of drama which has become too rare. Thank you, Mrs. Eustace, for your production, and thanks too, to all our players.

The Mothers' Union had a very enjoyable afternoon on Wednesday, January 5. Proceedings started with prayers led by Mrs. Rockliffe and these were followed by a delightful mother-and-daughter duet (Mrs. Prentice and Mrs. Severn). A few carols were sung with great gusto by all the members and their friends to Mrs. West's accompaniment and then came the highlight of the afternoon—a Nativity play with an unusual twist to it, being the dream of a present-day outcast (convincingly played by Mrs. Rockliffe). Mrs. K. Brooks was a calm and thoughtful angel, Mrs. Pat Young a delightful Mary. Mrs. Oliver, who played the Innkeeper's wife with verve, raised quite a few chuckles and Mrs. Bellingham, Mrs. Casey and Mrs. Edmonds were the three impressive queens who forestalled their husbands in finding the Babe. Afterwards tea and hot mince pies were served to everyone—then the closing prayer and home. Congratulations to all concerned!

Lastly, but by no means least, on January 8 came the New Year Fancy Dress party. At least a week before the event people were busily planning and talking over what they were going to dress up as and most of us were either borrowers or lenders—or both! What can be said to convey adequately the success of the evening? A gorgeous Ringmaster took our tickets; into the colourful hall we went, glasses of warm, spicy punch were put into our hands and we were off! Three splendid M.C.s—Reg. Thorpe, Ron Bridges, and George Brewer worked hard all evening, their one thought our entertainment. What pains they had taken, and how amply repaid they must have been by the visible enjoyment they gave to young (and not-so-young) alike! The food was delicious, thank you Joyce Long and your bevy of mob-capped helpers; thank you Bill Long and Denis Leatherdale in your smocks and straw hats for attending to our thirst. Behind the scenes never has so much washing-up been tackled so expeditiously by a motley assortment of peasant lassies, wicked queens and Babes in the Wood anxious not to miss too much of the fun. Everyone in the Panto World came to our party—over one hundred and forty of them—all enjoying themselves and joining in enthusiastically in the fun, and all sorry when it was "Time to say goodnight."

So that was Christmas 1965—a busy and rewarding one for our friendly church family. May it grow in fellowship and endeavour in 1966!

(From contributions by A.S., R.M.,
A.McI., M.I.M., M.O., and others)

CANDLEMAS AND THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS

We have just been talking of Christmas activities as though they were all over. But traditionally the Christmas season does not end until the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple—often called Candlemas—on February 2. So there are forty days of Christmas, as of Lent and Easter, not just twelve as is often thought: and when people do make them forty, they usually now put them before Christmas Day and not after, which is not quite the same thing!

Last year the Sunday Schools had a special service to mark the day, which had been done before only when Candlemas fell on a Sunday. Tea was served to the Infants before the service and to the Juniors and Seniors afterwards. This arrangement proved very popular: apart from those who were having chickenpox nearly everyone turned up. So we are doing the same this year, when Candlemas is on a Wednesday, except that instead of asking the children to bring most of their tea, all of it will be provided by the church. This will be part of the programme to make up for the Christmas outing which was getting less and less support.

The Candlemas service (and there will indeed be many candles!) will be in church at 4.30 p.m., and anyone who would like to join will be very welcome.

THE SCOUT GROUP

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all those who helped to make our Bazaar such a success. I feel I must make special mention of our Organiser, Mr. Lambert, a new member of our Committee who, by his hard work and enthusiasm, inspired us all to a really great effort. We were also very happy to have Mr. Jack Ford, our late Chairman, with us once again; he came along and very ably opened this function. The amount raised towards our new Headquarters was about £100.

We are all very glad to know that Michael Wren is progressing favourably after a serious accident and we wish him a speedy recovery.
G.S.M.

SOME DATES TO NOTE

- Feb. 2.—Festival of the Presentation — Candlemas: Holy Communion in church at 7.15 and 9.30 a.m., and at Laurel Dene at 10.5 a.m.; Sunday School Services at 4.30 p.m., 8.0 p.m. Stewardship Committee (106, Park Road).
- „ 3.—2.30 p.m. Mothers' Union: Mrs. Bowes-Cavanagh will speak on "Life in Ceylon" (3, The Wilderness); 8.0 p.m. Church Council Organisation Committee (21, St. James's Road).
- „ 4.—8.15 p.m. Church Council (W).
- „ 7.—8.0 p.m. Liturgical Committee (Vestry).
- „ 14.—2.0 p.m. Editorial Committee (52, Park Road); 8.0 p.m. Hampton Council of Churches: Prayer and Discussion Group — "Membership" (St. Mary's); 8.0 p.m. R.D. Conference — "Religious Broadcasting" (St. Mary's Hall, Twickenham).

- „ 19.—8.0 p.m. PARISH ENTERTAINMENT: Items by individuals and groups. Tickets 1/6 from members of the Social Committee (Hall).
- „ 21.—Deanery “No Small Change” Course: V—Today. (St. Mary’s Hall, Twickenham).
- „ 23.—ASH WEDNESDAY: Holy Communion at 7.15 a.m. and 7.30 p.m.; 8.0 p.m. Young Wives’ Group (W). N.B. For Lenten Study Courses beginning today, see below.
- „ 25.—WOMEN’S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER: Services at St. Mary’s, Hampton, at 3.0 and 8.0 p.m.
- „ 26.—11.30 a.m., Adult Confirmation at St. Paul’s Cathedral.
- Mar. 4.—8.15 p.m. Church Council (W).
- „ 23.—ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (Hall). N.B. If your name is not on the Electoral Roll, please fill in a form of application before March 1, and then come to this important meeting.

STOP PRESS: LENTEN STUDY GROUPS.—At the Parish Weekend, provisional arrangements were made for six groups, meeting every evening from Monday to Friday in people’s houses in different parts of the parish, and on Wednesday afternoons at Wayside (beginning at 2.30 p.m., on Ash Wednesday). The subject of the afternoon group will be “Prayer is my life,” and the evening groups will also take this course or “Believe and live” (The Creed applied to daily life). Further details will be announced in church and on church notice-boards, and the vicar will be pleased to put all who are interested in touch with one of the group-leaders.

BAPTISMS

- Dec. 19.—Paul John Michael Colwell, 99, Hampton Road.
- Jan. 16.—Stephanie Louise Brayne, 26, Ringwood Way.
- „ 16.—Julie Ann Clements, 1, Wolsey Road.
- „ 16.—Nicola Geraldine Cox, 12, Ringwood Way.
- „ 16.—Robert Ernest Ramsay, 88, Windmill Road.

BURIALS AND CREMATIONS

- Dec. 21.—Mary Ann Curd, Laurel Dene, aged 84 years (at Isleworth Old Cemetery).
- „ 28.—Elizabeth Agnes Taylor, 34, Seymour Road, aged 90 years.
- „ 30.—George Bolton White, 67, Myrtle Road, aged 53 years.
- „ 31.—Flora Braine, Laurel Dene, aged 80 years (at Teddington Cemetery).
- Jan. 12.—Gladys Edith May Kingsford, 101, Uxbridge Road, aged 56 years (at S.W. Middlesex Crematorium).
- „ 15.—Florence Ann Gardner, 106, Park Road, aged 89 years (at S.W. Middlesex Crematorium).
- „ 21.—Elizabeth Underdown, 55, Fulwell Road, aged 93 years.
- „ 24.—Emily Ada Belby, formerly of 86, Windmill Road, aged 76 years (at Teddington Cemetery).