

SOME EVENTS OF NOTE

The **Newcomers' Party** on November 2 — about our twentieth? — was a great success, a much higher proportion of people invited coming than usual (perhaps at last people are really convinced that there is no catch in it and there are indeed no strings attached), amongst them a large number of young married couples who had recently set up their first home in our parish.

The **Fireworks Party** on November 4 was again a 'sell-out' — many more tickets could have been sold, but unfortunately we have to limit them to the number the garden at Laurel Dene can accommodate — 250 — so it is always a question of 'first come, first served', and there are always a large number of disappointed folk. A great deal of hard work was put in by the members of the Social Committee and their friends during the hours of daylight, so that we could enjoy the spectacular and colourful display in the evening and relish the piping-hot food and drink.

A summary report of the **Hildenborough Hall Parish Weekend** will shortly be available for all who attended and others interested who could not be with us. In the meantime we include some personal impressions of one of the younger age-group who was present at such weekend for the first time, a footnote by an older participant, and also a poem our chairman was inspired to write in the course of the hilarious Saturday evening fun and games. Many seeds were sown at the conference, and we hope that some of them will take firm root and in due course come to flower and fruit.

The **United Service** on October 22 was not so well supported by St. James's as usual, as about 25 of us went to St. Stephen's, East Twickenham, where Seymour Harris was one of a group of three men and three women admitted by the Bishop of Kensington to the **Office of Reader**. Since then, Seymour, as well as giving his usual assistance at the Parish Communion, has occupied the stall opposite that of the Vicar at Evensong, and taken full part in leading the service. He will also be preaching at Evensong once every 6 weeks or so, though once a month he will be away from the parish for most of a weekend, attending a residential training-session in connection with his ordination course. By the way, we shall not be having so many united services next year — three instead of four — as some churches felt that the break with their normal routine was too frequent. The first of the two so far arranged is on January 21 (during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity) at the United Reformed Church (though there is a question now about whether this church will be large enough to hold the large numbers expected), when for the first time a Roman Catholic priest will preach; the second will be at our own church on June 3.

Stewardship Sunday made a bigger impact than for some years, because instead of the usual Annual Review on the Thursday before, we made the evening service both an act of worship and also an

effective substitute for the traditional weeknight meeting. Earlier in the year the Vicar had suggested that there should be a dramatic presentation instead of a sermon on this occasion, but the Stewardship Committee soon realised that if we were to have this we would have to start from scratch and devise our own, as nothing along these lines appeared to have been published. Fortunately, the talent was to hand: Mrs. Orton set to and in next to no time produced a script that was exactly what we wanted, depicting a visitor on an evening's routine campaign door-knocking, and the varied reception he got at different homes. She also produced it: first-rate technical help backed her up — microphones and spotlights were installed and recordings used at appropriate points — and those taking part — some quite new to this sort of thing — rose to the occasion, and the message and the challenge came through. Afterwards about a hundred people stayed for coffee and a chat in church — but Oh, how we longed for Brother Jim's screwdriver!

At a recent meeting of the **London Diocesan Synod**, the main topic for discussion was the Report '**Marriage, Divorce and the Church**'. It was pointed out that Jesus declared God's purpose in this regard for all people, not just Christians; this might be called a 'first-order rule'. But very early on the Church began to recognise 'second-order rules' for those who could not rise to the first-order standard. But later ecclesiastical attitudes began to harden, and by the thirteenth century the original principle that marriage ought not to be dissolved had been changed by the Church to mean that marriage was indissoluble per se — i.e. cannot be dissolved. Our representative, Alan Taylor, was impressed by the fact that a surprisingly large number of the clergy who took part in the discussion no longer believed in the indissolubility of marriage in this latter sense. When the matter was raised at our PCC it immediately sparked off a lively discussion; a number of copies of the report were ordered, and it was felt that we ought to give an opportunity for fuller discussion by more people at a later date.

About 20 of us accepted the invitation from our friends at the **Hampton Methodist Church** to join them for an informal social gathering on November 30. Our hosts gave us a typically warm reception in their newly-decorated small hall, and after a time of pleasant conversation over coffee, the Minister and Stewards of the local 'Society' (the name Methodists prefer to 'Church') explained their 'set-up' and present-day administration at all levels from Conference to Circuit and individual chapel, and we asked questions, and also spoke of our own ideals, traditions, problems and ways of going about things. It was an evening of mutual advantage and encouragement to us all, and we came away feeling that, despite the disappointment of the recent set-back to unity, fellowship and understanding were going full-steam ahead at grassroots level.

PARISH WEEKEND 1972

On November 10-12, 28 people from the Parish spent a weekend in retreat at Hildenborough Hall. This number was extremely disappointing as this was one of the few opportunities we have of getting together in communion with God. Oh what a shame, so few came! The theme of the weekend was relevant to everyone, whatever age — “Caring, Sharing and Daring”. Oh what a shame, so few came! The discussions were of great value and everyone participated in them. On Saturday, we had a “house” communion (mentioned by the Vicar in a recent magazine article), at which several people were very near to tears during the intercessions, as a result of the tremendous atmosphere created. Oh what a shame, so few came! Entertainment on Saturday was left in the capable hands of Ruth Mills and she admirably rose to the occasion, causing the Vicar to spring into the air, Brother Jim to be left with a rhinoceros and a hippopotamus at the same time, and everyone jumping up and down from their seats. Oh what a shame, so few came! Sunday started with Parish Communion in the Chapel and ended with a Question Panel of four eminent people. Oh what a shame, so few came! This weekend would not have been possible without the sterling work put in by Janet Robinson, Helen Taylor, Alan Taylor and Brother Jim. My thanks to them all, but it would not have been any sort of success without the presence of the Holy Spirit, and that was noticeable throughout the weekend. Not a harsh word spoken, no malice seen; only love in abundance glorying in God’s presence. Oh what a shame, so few came! I had no idea what I had let myself in for as I drove down on Friday evening, but by Sunday evening, I had been spiritually uplifted far more than at any other time in my life, after having spent the best weekend of my life. Oh what a shame, so few came!

M. C. E.

Having been to Hildenborough Hall before, I was thoroughly looking forward to our Parish Weekend but, on arriving on Friday evening, I at once felt that the atmosphere had changed completely; it had lost the cosy familiar feeling. The buildings having been extended — they now housed many more people and somehow seemed more like an ordinary hotel in an extremely beautiful part of Kent.

Perhaps this first impression set me off on the wrong foot, but I’m afraid it was Saturday evening before I really knew I was glad I had come. There was too much on the religious side that seemed way above my head—for example, I really felt, although pleased to have had the opportunity to experience it, that house communion was not for me.

However, I did enjoy the weekend — it has given me and others I know, a certain something that can never be taken away; we all got to know each other in a way that doesn’t seem possible in our daily parish life. I cannot explain this, but it was the same on the previous occasion. So, thank you organisers for all your hard work, and I will

certainly go again should the opportunity arise (if you will have me!).

E. V. S.

We all have come to Hildenborough Hall,
Rupert, Brother Jim and us and all,
And what have we come so far to do
In the dark November night?
We've come to share the Lord together
On a weekend of fine, cold weather
To live and laugh and have fun together
And to pray with all our might.

We all have come to Hildenborough Hall
Rupert, Brother Jim and us and all,
We found our rooms and took off our coats,
And ate our supper so fine.
We sat in the lounge and drank our coffee
Till Brother Jim got us thinking and off'e
got us talking so well —
We talked to the late night bell.

We all have come to Hildenborough Hall
Rupert, Brother Jim and us and all
On Saturday morning we prayed and ate,
And talked of church and life,
We prayed again and broke the bread,
We prayed with our hearts and thought with our heads,
Such discussion and thought tends to leave one half-dead
But grace and our lunch brought new life.

We all have come to Hildenborough Hall
Rupert, Brother Jim and us and all,
And what of Saturday afternoon you ask?
No hot summer sun in which to bask.
So we pleyed ping-pong with joints a-creaking
Walked thro' the leaves with boots a-leaking
Up to their beds were some seen sneaking
To renew themselves for the task.

On Saturday evening "they all went mad"
A fly on the wall, he said,
"They sat in the lounge on the chairs and the floor
And carefully, secretly shut the door,
And let their hair down with the best".
The Vicar — he leapt in the air and sang songs
And Eila — she sat on a gate;
And Olive recited with great expertise
And Ron was the jabberwock's bait.
"They all knew each other sufficiently well
To let themselves go with a will.

So if they can do it in that pleasant way
Their church must be very happy and gay,
And they'll learn to love God and readily say
To all; He's the joy of their lives." J.R.

ORGAN REBUILDING

By the time this report is read the organ should be back in regular use at Sunday Services.

The work of assembly has been proceeding rapidly and the final jobs of refitting all the pipes, tuning and revoicing them is about to commence, followed by a clean-up of the North Aisle of the Church.

Installation of the complicated electrical action and air-supply pipes is nearly complete and the provision of bellows occupying far less room than the original ones has enabled working space to be provided for maintenance.

The organ loft has been fitted with permanent lighting and the dust and dirt collected over many years has been cleared away.

Whilst it is unfortunate that completion was not possible for the planned recital on December 8, it would have been unwise to have tried to rush the work just to achieve that date.

Plans are now being made for the recital by Mr. Stanley Westcott to be given on February 9, 1973, the delay having the advantage that any faults which may occur can be rectified beforehand.

Programmes will be available in the New Year. R. J. C. D.

THE MOTHERS' UNION

By the time that these notes appear our 75th Anniversary will be a matter of history. Now we look forward, and I hope that some of St. James's members may celebrate the Branch's Centenary in 1997!

On Wednesday, February 7, 1973 Mrs. Dorothy Morris, Kensington Area Vice-President, is coming to explain to us in detail the proposals set out in "New Dimensions". Please make a special note of this important date.

We shall be delighted to welcome all members and friends to a Carol Service in Wayside on Wednesday, January 3, 1973.

For our part in the Wave of Prayer we have been allocated the quarter hour from 9.30 a.m. on Saturday January 13.

Mrs. Streathfield (Overseas Chairman) will give an illustrated talk on her visit to India at the Overseas meeting in Mary Sumner House on Monday January 22.

At a recent Deanery meeting Mrs. Edmonds made her debut as Deanery Overseas Representative, while Mrs. Childs undertook to replace Mrs. Minall as Deanery Secretary; congratulations to both ladies.

May you all have a very happy time at Christmas and embark on the New Year with high hopes.

SOME DATES TO NOTE

December

- 20 7.30 p.m. onwards Parish Carol-Singing.
- 21 SAINT THOMAS'S DAY: 7.30 a.m. Holy Communion; 8.00 p.m. YPF House Communion (68, Park Road).
- 24 Morning Services as usual (as for Advent 4).
- 24 CHRISTMAS EVE: 3.00 p.m. Crib and Carol Service; 3.00 p.m. Carol Concert and Tea for Older Citizens (Hall); 5.15 p.m. Carol Service at Laurel Dene; 6.30 p.m. Evensong (said); 11.45 p.m. Midnight Eucharist.
- 25 CHRISTMAS DAY: 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion with Christmas Hymns; 9.30 a.m. Parish and Family Communion; 12.10 p.m. Holy Communion.
- 26 SAINT STEPHEN'S DAY: 10.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 27 SAINT JOHN'S DAY: (provisional arrangement) 10.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 28 THE INNOCENTS' DAY: (provisional arrangement) 7.30 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 30 2.00 p.m. Infants Sunday School: Outing to Pantomime.
- 31 6.30 p.m. Instead of Evensong, Festival Service of Lessons and Carols.

January

- 1 THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST: 7.30 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 3 2.30 p.m. Mothers' Union: Carol Service (W).
- 6 THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD: 10.00 a.m. Holy Communion; 3.00 p.m. Old People's Christmas Party (Hall).
- 9 7.00 p.m. Tuesday Club: Theatre Outing.
- 13 9.30 a.m. Mothers' Union: Wave of Prayer; 7.30 p.m. Parish Christmas Party (Hall).
- 16 8.00 p.m. Tuesday Club: Social Evening (W).
- 18 to 25: WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY.
- 21 6.45 p.m. United Service at the United Reformed Church. (No Evening Service here, but cars available to offer lifts at 6.25 p.m.)
- 25 CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL: 7.30 a.m. Holy Communion.

The parish carol singers will leave the church on December 20 at 7.30 p.m. and any money collected will be given to the Mayor's Christmas Appeal for the Elderly. Do come and sing with us.

Don't forget the Parish Party on January 13 — tickets are now available. There is no theme for the fancy dress this year — just be bright and colourful — if you've got it — wear it!

BAPTISMS

November

- 26 James Nicholas Milman, 73, Blandford Road.
Alexander Mark Siegle, 10, Grenville Mews.