

BETTER NEWS ABOUT THE SOUTHERN SUDAN

(Many of us have come to know Miss Louise Pirouet, who came from Uganda in May, and immediately entered fully into our parish life and worship. She is leaving us shortly to take up a teaching appointment in North London, but we hope that she will come back to speak to us in the autumn, as she is an authority on many aspects of African life, and in particular on the history of the Church in that Continent. For a long time she has been deeply concerned about the plight and sufferings of the Southern Sudanese, and actively involved in projects of help and relief. Our Whitsun gifts have just been dispatched through her, and she sends this letter of thanks:)

I am writing to thank you for the gift of £40.00 which you have made through your Whitsun offering for medical relief in South Sudan. It has been sent to the Right Reverend Oliver Allison, the Bishop in the Sudan, who returns to his diocese on July 10.

When I wrote to thank you for a similar gift last year I had to ask that my name should be suppressed, as we were helping people whom the Sudan government then thought of as rebels and outlaws. Since then, by what one can only describe as a miracle, an Agreement has been signed which ends 17 years of civil war in which up to a million people have died, about one quarter of the population. The coming of peace has seen the mounting of a large relief operation under U.N. auspices, which you may have heard about on the radio recently. Food and medicine are having to be air-lifted to the South, where problems of malnutrition, already serious, were aggravated by prolonged drought last year. Where there is malnutrition disease spreads swiftly. Your gift will help to bring courage to people who last year were on the verge of despair, feeling themselves forgotten by the world.

In spite of appalling destitution — said to be worse than that in Bangladesh in many places — there is great hope and rejoicing now. Relief workers describe destitute people who were so overjoyed at being able to go home again that they danced the whole night through. A Sudanese priest who has visited his home for the first time since 1964 speaks of people coming out on the roads in the countryside to greet passing cars — last year these roads were deserted except for army patrols, and were often landmined. It was in a landmine accident that one of Hannah Stanton's wards was killed and his mother so badly injured that she has had to have a leg amputated.

The Sudanese ask for our prayers as they try to rebuild their devastated country and re-establish schools, hospitals and churches. They also need our prayers in the task of reconciliation which faces them. The Sudan has never hit the headlines as have many other disaster-areas, so it is particularly necessary that those of us who do know something about them and their needs should remember to pray for them.

PERSONALIA

We welcome our neighbour, Father John Cotgrove, as the new Rural Dean of Hampton (which comprises, of course, the Hampton-Teddington-Twickenham portion of the London borough of Richmond upon Thames. Ours is now the only deanery in the London diocese which does not cover the whole geographical area of its borough, and the difficulty here is that Richmond is in another diocese). Father John has done several years of donkey-work in this and his previous deanery as chapter clerk, and thus (to use another metaphor) having proved his worth as the bridesmaid was eminently suitable to become in due course the bride!

The sudden death of his predecessor, Father Francis Bale, at the end of his second five-year term of office, came as a shock to us all, though we knew he had been courageously fighting bodily weakness since his stroke two years ago, and we immediately assured Mrs. Bale of our sympathy and prayers.

Astute readers would have noted that the 'twenty parochial representatives' of the PCC listed in last month's magazine came to only nineteen! But there are in fact twenty of these, divided by long-standing custom into an equal number of ladies and gentlemen. The name omitted as a result of a typing-error was that of Mr. Hal Severn, our hard-working assistant treasurer, who has a happy knack of presenting accounts in a distinctive and ornate script that are not only works of art but also so clearly set out that the simplest and least mathematical can understand them.

After reading the items under this head in last month's issue, Mr. Frank Sargeant wrote this appreciation of his old friend: "As one of the 'Old Guards' Geoff. Stuart was one of those solid churchmen who battled on whatever the changes and difficulties. He was rooted in the principles of the Catechism, and found a sphere of responsible service in the Church Lads' Brigade. The St. James's contingent provided a band whose music was much appreciated at the funeral of the vicar, Mr. Coad-Pryor, in January 1923.

"Geoff. was old enough to fight in the first World War, but like many another conscientious churchman rarely spoke of the ghastly horror of four years in the mud of Flanders.

"Both he as a tenor and old Mr. Simmons — the railway foreman-carpenter from Twickenham — as a bass were not powerful, but one knew that they were there, and both were reliable and accurate. That generation spoke of the school in Church Road, Teddington, as 'the Public School', and in those days few went on to secondary school education, because this of course was not 'free' until 1944. Many Teddington folk came to St. James's at this time because they disliked the Anglo-Catholic tendencies of their own parishes, and also because (until 1932) our own evensong was at 7.00 p.m. It was a real privilege to have known G.F.S."

BRIGHTON OUTING

Devils Dyke is a place I have never before visited. The scenery from this spot is certainly spectacular with the English countryside away on one side and the sea and Brighton away on the other. This was where the Parish outing to Brighton on June 3 stopped for a splendid picnic-lunch. It was dry and not too windy but more than that cannot be said! We arrived at Brighton just after one o' clock and everyone split up to enjoy themselves in their own way.

Some visited the aquarium and went to see the Dolphins being put through their paces, others to walk on the pier and front, or ride on the Volks Electric Railway. Brighton has so many attractions that it is not difficult to fill a few hours most enjoyably.

At five o'clock we all boarded the coach home, by now in the pouring rain which continued all the way home. A brief stop was made near Horsham for those who wanted some liquid refreshment, but even this did not help the singing which was lamentably poor. However everyone agreed that they had enjoyed their day despite the weather and I know the singers certainly did! Many thanks are due to the Social Committee for organising this event so successfully and especially for producing a picnic lunch under such trying conditions.

H.T.

MASS ATTACK

The annual Spring onslaught on the churchyard took place from 10 to 17 June. Mechanised units delivered the initial softening up attack and consolidation quickly followed by a shears and sickle company of infantry. Mopping up was the responsibility of a brush-and-rake pioneer troop reinforced by a wheel-barrow transport platoon.

Auxiliaries of the honorary women's catering corps arrived with much needed relief supplies giving a great boost to morale and enabling the campaign to be pursued with renewed vigour. The ensuing operations during weekday evenings gave rise to anxiety as numbers dwindled and the enemy mocked our efforts by their obvious superiority in blades with strong roots. However the second Saturday assured success when the area of attack was extended and: apart from a small pocket of guerilla resistance which time alone prevented from being flushed out, the field of operations was finally cleared.

We were nevertheless alerted the following morning by Padre's announcement acting on intelligence received that the opposition were regrouping and showing signs of regrowth.

So the endless task goes on. I sometimes wonder if it wouldn't be easier to recruit a couple of goats

(Written during a military bank concert. R.J.C.D.)

THE HAMPTON HILL OLD PEOPLE'S WELFARE COMMITTEE & FORGET-ME-NOT CLUB

It is some time since we had a report in the magazine, but we still have our monthly party at St. James's Hall, the first Saturday in every month at 3 p.m. and the Forget-me-not Club meets in the Congregational Church Hall every Thursday at 2.30 p.m. Everyone over 60 who lives in Hampton Hill is welcome.

On Saturday May 13 we turned out in force to enter a Float for the Whitton Carnival. Our theme was "Alice in Wonderland". I'm afraid our morale was very low by the time Mr. Bonfield's lorry arrived at 11.00 hrs. We had to be at Whitton at 13.00 hrs. and it was so cold and inclined to rain. Anyhow, we worked very hard to get our arch and the lorry decorated. The members, 17 in all, looked wonderful! Mrs. Polly made a lovely Alice, Mrs. Trotter was the dormouse—we let her stay upright in the teapot! After such a rushed preparation I didn't think they had much chance, but, surprisingly, they came home with a plaque—they were 1st in the visitors' class. In a way I'm not sorry I couldn't stay on the float with them because one of the "gardeners" who ought to have been painting the roses got enthusiastic and painted a policeman's hat red as he was going by on his motor-cycle!

The same evening the club took them to the Festival Hall where the Kneller Hall Band were playing. Guest artists were Roy Castle and Vera Lynn. They arrived home soon after 23.00 hrs., tired, but very pleased with themselves, having had a very enjoyable day.

Many thanks to our friends who supplied us with tickets to take 50 O.A.P.s to Wisley Gardens on Tuesday May 16. The weather was not very good, but no-one complained. The gardens were lovely. The azelias and rhododendrons were glorious, I feel that Wisley is always worth a visit, but this time of the year is best.

CHRISTIAN AID

The amount raised in Christian Aid Week from the whole Hampton area, of which we are of course a part, came to £645, about £16 less than last year. We are asked to pass on the grateful thanks of the organisers to all who took part. We and the other churches also, of course, send gifts to Christian Aid at Christmas and other times in the year. The final figure for the whole country will not be available until the autumn, but reports already in indicate that last year's record for the Week of £1,400,000 will be passed comfortably.

While ordinary Christians and men of good-will are showing themselves increasingly anxious and eager to help the poor of the world, the governments of the rich nations still remain grudging and unenthusiastic. For years Christians have been urging our own government to be more just and generous, but it has all fallen on

deaf ears, or so it seems — and this year it has provoked many outbursts such as this (I quote from a letter to the Church press) from a Christian Aid worker in Hoxton:

“For a country containing so many people prepared to make such strenuous efforts in Christian Aid Week to relieve world poverty, Great Britain gave a disgraceful performance at UNCTAD in Santiago. She was the only rich nation that refused to accept a target of 0.7 per cent of the national wealth for Government aid, and showed no sense of the urgency of trade concessions essential to let the under-developed countries get on their feet. Christian Aiders, wake up and take notice what our representatives in the councils of the world are doing to the poor. While we are busy filling the bath, they are pulling the plug out!”

It was a famous French writer, Charles Péguy, I think, who said that “Christianity begins in mysticism and ends in politics’.

HAMPTON HILL NURSING ASSOCIATION COMFORTS' FUND

This charitable trust comprises the monies made available when the voluntary District Nursing Association came to an end and the local authorities took over. It is administered by a small body of trustees, who include the Vicar and the Minister of the Congregational Church. The trustees have recently made a grant to the Friends of the Maddison Clinic, which does so much to promote the health of the elderly in the parish, and they have also purchased a modern invalid chair to replace the worn-out and old-fashioned ones that used to be available. This is not intended for long-term use — some of our old church-chairs were let out to chronic patients and never came back— because people who need one for a lengthy period can now have one provided for them by the Welfare Services. But there is a need for such chairs for a short period after an accident or operation, and people are invited to contact the Vicar or the Minister.

THE MOTHERS' UNION DEANERY SERVICE

This year, when our organ is out of action, and our temporary one, though adequate, is much limited in range and power, happens to be one when it is our turn to be the host-church for a number of deanery occasions. On the Monday in Whitsun Week, all the branches of the Mothers' Union in the deanery came for their annual Festival Service — the last such occasion was, I think, as long ago as 1959. The church was beautifully decorated, and our branch provided a choir to lead the singing — an innovation which was much appreciated. (Indeed, at all services, the choir is coming fully into its own, because of the low volume of the organ, and

congregational singing is vastly improved — so there are gains as well as losses in the absence of a high-powered organ!) The Vicar preached on the work and power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. After the service our branch provided an excellent tea in the house and gardens of Wayside. It was indeed a very happy occasion, and several letters of thanks and appreciation have been received.

THE CHOIR SUMMER PARTY

As the cold Midsummer Eve winds swept across Bushy Park, four cars packed with 28 choir members and their friends drew into the Diana Fountain car-park just after 7.30 p.m. Anoraks flung aside, a race to the swings — and even if it was thirty years too late to fit the “under fourteen” byelaw, the maypoles sang with flying bodies warming up for rounders.

Two teams were picked, one captain not knowing the rules, the other with a convincing manner and a vivid imagination. An epic match. Fearsome hitting, furious running, dazzling catching. Score probably 3-2 (rounders, goals and tries included).

Down came the rain, we rushed to shelters and up came the wonderful picnic-supper which the ladies had made for us. Who had seven glasses of orangeade? What married lady, mouth full of biscuits, screamed to be swung higher on the swingboat? Who ate the last doughnut? A gentleman's lips are sealed

Thank you Mr. Dafforne for a splendid idea, and everyone else who assisted in this most successful choir summer party. R.W.W.

PARISH WEEK-END — BOOKING FORM

The Parish Weekend is to be held at Hildenborough Hall on November 10, 11 and 12. The fees for the weekend are as below, on top of which there is also a 10 per cent Service Charge. Details of the various types of rooms etc. are on display on the Notice boards at the back of the Church and in Wayside.

A Rooms £10.30

B Rooms £8.75

C Rooms £6.80

D Rooms £6.00

Single Rooms are £1.50 extra.

Please return completed Booking Forms to Mrs. Helen Taylor, 68 Park Road or the Vicar together with a deposit of £1. Early booking is advisable as the accommodation is limited.