

Earlier this year I was a member of an ecumenical delegation from Britain to the German Democratic Republic, East Germany. In Berlin, as I stood looking at the Wall, with its fortifications and vast array of armaments, it seemed a terrifying thing, which in its overpowering strength and scale, reduced human values to nothing. It stood as a denial of human warmth and friendship, representing divided families and frustrated hopes. Yet in the past weeks this same dividing wall, the product of a government order, has been breached by people-power. David once again appears, at least in this regard, to have triumphed over Goliath, although nations in both Eastern and Western Europe must consider slowly and carefully what the long term implications will be. Today's euphoria can so easily become tomorrow's threat.

A government order was also at the heart of the Christmas story in the gospels and as we repeat in nativity plays and carol services each year. The order - and the word used in the Greek of the gospels is *dogma* - required that, over a set period, all the inhabitants of the Roman Empire should return to their home town or village to be counted. So Joseph, with Mary about to give birth, obeyed the edict to travel in great inconvenience and discomfort, to be counted in Joseph's family village by a government treating people as numbers .

Luke's gospel indicates vividly the comparison between this way of treating people as objects to be ordered and removed to suit a particular system and the tenderness and humility of God's gift in the birth of a child. Furthermore the birth of Jesus, which we celebrate on Christmas Day, is all too quickly followed by the Massacre of the Innocents, another bitter and violent clash between a threatened ruler and God's compassion.

The birth of Jesus happened in the midst of this tumultuous *Realpolitik*. It wasn't the cosy, sanitised version we have come to imagine, but was hard and bitter, and occurred in a world of turmoil. The Christian hope was born in the night, in darkness, and continues to shine.

That is why we must celebrate! The tinsel, the Christmas pudding and funny hats are important because they are part of celebrating the light in the world. They affirm, as did the flowers handed to those crossing the Berlin Wall so recently, that at the heart of our experience of this world, the light of God's love, our hope, is never exhausted by any life-denying reality, East or West, North or South. They affirm that God is deeply involved in his world and can't be kept, sealed up, like our Christmas decorations, from one year to the next.

In your celebrations make room to give thanks to God for the baby Jesus, for whom there was no room. Come and worship in your parish church. Details of all Christmas services are listed in this magazine. We look forward to welcoming you and celebrating with you the light that has come into the world.

'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to humankind'.



Christmas Arrangements

Sunday 17 December	18.30	Parish Carol Service
Thursday 21 December	19.30	Carols round the parish
Christmas Eve	09.30 16.30 23.45	Parish Communion Crib Service Midnight Eucharist
Christmas Day	08.00 09.30	Holy Communion (Rite B) Parish Communion
Sunday 7 January	09.30	Christingle Service

David Dore

David Dore has slipped away rather unobtrusively; he feels he has been called to assist in another church. All of us miss him, and I would like to say what a great help as a Reader he has been to St. James's Church during the last ten years.

Readers never quite know what is required of them; during the last two interregnums we have all worked hard. We have all done our quota of preaching. David during the last interregnum was responsible for the prior arrangements for marriages, the calling of banns etc., a formidable task. He saw to the rota of readers; kept the notices up to date and registered the numbers attending services. These are all background essentials, and their careful handling insures that the church life is maintained smoothly.

We are grateful to David for his care of St. James's. His contribution was also evident outside the church; he was Treasurer for the Hampton Council of Churches for many years, and was careful and methodical here also. He has taken services in neighbouring churches. He served on the Diocesan Readers' Board and, when in 1986 it became the Kensington Area Readers' Sub-committee, continued as a member and is now its Secretary.

We have enjoyed hearing about his travels abroad, and we hope that these will continue to give him much pleasure.

We hope that his contribution as a Reader will continue to be of important service, and we are sure that All Saints' Church in Twickenham is benefiting. Reliability is very important; David had that and we appreciated it. Thank you, David.

Hannah Stanton

Rupert Brunt - An Appreciation

In the Autumn of 1950 Rupert was unexpectedly invited to meet Mr. Knapp (Vicar of Hampton and Patron of the living of St. James's) to discuss a possible appointment to the vacancy. Rupert travelled down from St. Faith's in Nottingham, where he was Vicar. The interview commenced with Mr. Knapp suggesting that since they both knew very little of each other, they should kneel in silent prayer for a while. The prayer over, Mr. Knapp went to his desk and offered Rupert the job.

The unexpected element arose because someone else had been offered the post but subsequently turned it down. For many in St. James's the principal legacy from Rupert was a new and deeper insight and awareness of prayer. How very appropriate was the manner of his appointment.

Born in Manchester in 1910 to an American mother and a father who was a Water Engineer, they subsequently lived in Rochdale before moving to Chiswick in 1918, and Rupert finished his schooling at St. Paul's, before going up to King's, London, to read History; his mother hoping he would become a barrister and Rupert liking the idea of journalism. However through his involvement with the S. C. M. the idea of ordination grew and so he completed his theological degree also at King's. It was through the S.C.M. that Rupert and Connie met - briefly in 1932 - and finally married in 1944. The marriage took place at St. James's by one of those amazing quirks of coincidence. Connie had moved from her post in Nottinghamshire to be closer to her parents, during the war, and taught at L.E.H. and worshipped at St. James's. The wedding was fixed to be in Sussex, but because of the preparations for the Normandy landings, Rupert wasn't allowed anywhere near the church! The re-arrangement plans made St. James's the obvious second choice.

There was much to be done at St. James's when the Brunts arrived; physically to the church and pastorally. There were the all too familiar problems of woodworm, leaking roofs and no money. In 1952 the renovation fund drive began and everyone remembers Rupert and the barrel organ in the High Street. The spiritual life of the parish was not neglected with a Mission to the Parish and a follow on with Sister Simpson of the Church Army leading prayer and bible study groups and visiting every house on the Rectory Estate. As a result of that, Rectory Sunday School was started and very faithfully run for many years by Jean Western.

The momentum of the parish quickened further with Stewardship campaigns; the purchase of Wayside; and the change in services, both content and style, with the Eucharist at 9.30 becoming the main service of the day. Parish weekends and study and prayer groups followed. The parish was blessed with a very active Social Committee and a Drama Group.

The impetus for the parish was Rupert's firm belief that the church was and is the people and priest working together as one body 'bearing and forbearing' and 'ministering to one another', taking responsibility collectively and through it finding maturity. The responsibility included sharing and contributing to the worship and prayer life of the church as well as the financial requirements of the parish and the policies to be pursued. All these things were achieved by coming to a common mind, even if it meant deferring a decision until everyone felt the decision was right.

The wider community was also served by the parish with Rupert and Connie often involved or as the catalysts. The Nursery School started as also did the Old People's Welfare Committee; the Wayside Monday Centre; Newcomers Parties; a thriving Young People's Fellowship and so on. The commitment to service led many people to serve the church in many ways, very devotedly; there were ordinations and licensing of a significant number, and many followed caring vocations. Even the finances of the church were adequate for a period.

Rupert's resources came from his prayer life and the support of a much-loved wife. His spiritual director described Rupert as having a 'rare dedication to the priesthood' and being 'a natural mystic'. He certainly communicated to us all the potency and serenity of the prayer life and of a faith that added excitement to life but was not contrary to reason.

This is of course an inadequate testimony to someone the parish has much to thank for and for whom it has great affection. We rejoice that in retirement at Seaford, Connie and Rupert found time at last to be happily together and so much enjoyed each other's company.

Alan Taylor

To all users of the Parish Hall

Rumours about the imminent demise of the Parish Hall appear to be spreading with great speed throughout Hampton Hill. They are all untrue! The Parochial Church Council has discussed the future of the church's properties and is still involved in developing a scheme for improving and rationalising available facilities. No decisions have been made as yet. Please quash all the tall stories you hear. All users of the Parish Hall can safely plan ahead and will be notified immediately and directly of any decision made by the PCC, which will also be made known through 'The Spire'.

Rumours may not cost lives - but they do cause unnecessary anxiety.

Brian Leathard

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Are you organising an event of general interest in the parish?

If you would like advance publicity

Contact the Editor on 979 6865

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Hampton Council of Churches AGM

Those of you who have been to the recent series of lectures on 'The Old Testament in the light of Christ' will know what an inspiring and exhilarating experience it has been. The knowledge and depth of scholarship shown to us by the speakers made us feel very privileged to have heard them.

These lectures, and indeed many other activities connected with ecumenism, have been organised by the Hampton Council of Churches, now approaching its thirtieth birthday. We can all think of the ecumenical services organised four times a year, the twice yearly service leaflets and the Lent Groups in which many of us have taken part, yet we still seem a long way from being 'one body in Christ'. We are slow to grasp the opportunities to mix with other Christians even now, let alone people of other faiths.

One of many positive steps being taken to try and remedy this situation is a commitment by the Council of Churches to take part in the Lent Course 'Turning Points' in 1990. This is the third and final part of the series 'Not Strangers but Pilgrims' in which we participated in 1986 and 1988 to good effect. I have been asked to chair the group organising this venture, which I have agreed to do with some trepidation, so I shall be looking to you all to support me and the groups, and I know you will, just as you have always done in the past.

Two years ago as part of the 'Faith in Print' venture the local libraries received a number of books on various aspects of religion and Christianity. It was agreed at the AGM that now was a good time to further add to this collection, and each of the churches will be asked for a donation.

The recently formed Christian Union at Rectory School also asked the AGM for some money to buy 'Good News' bibles for the group who have no funds of their own. The Council were unanimous in approving this use of our resources and ask us to remember this work in our local school.

Remember the work too of the Hampton Council of Churches and support its activities whenever and wherever you can.

Helen Taylor

Leprosy Mission

As we are now nearing the end of 1989 I would be pleased if all those who have collecting boxes would let me have the money collected so I can send it off before the end of December. Last year, apart from many stamps which were donated, the sum of £135 was given.

To date this year we have sent £45 as well as three large packets of used stamps. Please help to beat last year's total as I know you will appreciate how much the money means to those who suffer from this very distressing condition.

David Lloyd



Almost everyone knows that the best - selling book of all time is the Bible. Most people have a copy knocking around somewhere. Yet whether it is read is another story altogether. If the Vicar comes to call, a copy (white leather) is dusted off and proudly displayed: 'I got this for my confirmation twenty years ago.' All too often, it is as good as new. Why?

One reason might be the old English of so many old Bibles, all thees and thous and lists of begats. But nowadays there are modern translations in readable English, so we can get round that problem for the price of a pub lunch (unless you insist on the white leather, of course).

Even with a modern version we may well run into a problem. We are reading about people who lived two thousand years ago or more and who in many ways were different from us. So can the Bible really have anything to say to us? And if it can, how can we understand it?

Well, it does indeed have something to say to us. It shows us how God met and helped his people over a long stretch of history. It tells us of how God has made himself known in Jesus, and it tells of the impact Jesus had on his followers, and what it means to follow him. For all these reasons, it is the Christian's guidebook to God, and we can't do without it.

So how can we understand it? In fact, it's not quite as difficult as it may seem. Many of the things we meet in the Bible are very familiar - love, hate, fear, jealousy, ambition, compassion, forgiveness. And God, of course. These speak clearly across the centuries.

At other times, though, we will need help, both with understanding the meaning and applying it to our own lives. And that help is quite easy to get. Some good Notes are published by the Bible Reading Fellowship. They come out every four months and provide Bible readings and comments for each day of the year. For serious study, look at GUIDELINES, with the latest results of Bible scholarship. For an easy-to-read help with praying and understanding the Bible, read NEW DAYLIGHT, which prints out the Bible passage for you. And so that all the family can join in, there's COMPASS for older children. Now let's see a few thumb prints on that white leather!

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Questioner: Do you believe that God is dead?

Lord Soper: I didn't know he'd been ill.

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From Milo Mission Hospital

Thanks very much for the donation of £500 which I received safely. It has been very helpful indeed. We used the money for subsidising the running costs of our hospital electricity generators. We haven't yet been able to find a donor for our hydro-power project but we are hoping that EZE in Germany might help us.

The rebuilding project of our hospital is still going on. We have finished a Maternity and Female-ward Wing and now we are building a rather big building comprising Out-patient Department, Maternal and Child-welfare Clinic, Laboratory, Pharmacy, Administration, X-ray, and Major and Minor Theatres. This will probably be finished by April or May 1990. It rained for a very long time this year so that it has been very difficult to ferry building materials to the site as our roads are not all-weather roads.

Gideon Mhagame is presently in Birmingham at the College of the Ascension doing a three months course in Development.

The Aladdin lamp bought for me isn't yet in use. Owing to a faulty gallery, each time I tried to light it, the mantle blew up, and I have no spare mantle now. Spares are not available in our local shop. I would be very grateful if you could get spares for Gideon Mhagame to bring back to Tanzania.

My motorbike is still on the road although it is getting old now due to our rough roads.

My best wishes and greetings to all my friends of St. James's

Benaiah Kilwale

From the M.U.

In September we had talks from Janet Jeffries and Jean Wilson. Janet spoke of her retreat in the East End of London, as already reported, and Jean spoke of her experiences when she was a new young Vicar's wife.

October 11th was Deanery Day, celebrated this year at All Saints', Hampton. Liz Robson spoke on 'Sharing and Caring'. Pastoral Development Support Groups are now being formed in some churches in the Diocese. For more information about these groups one can apply to the Rev. Kevin Eastell, Diocesan House, 30 Causton Street, SW19 4AV. These groups of about six people meet fortnightly, and are led by two professionally trained people (one man and one woman) and they discuss problems and difficulties which arise in caring professions.

Some members met in the vestry on October 18th to repair hassocks.

On December 6th, Margaret Bramall will be speaking to us of one-parent families.

Hettie Burgess

From the HCC Autumn Lectures

God did not wish to punish Adam and Eve, but to introduce them to the reality of the world. The Idea of 'original sin' only really dated from St. Augustine's time (about 400 AD).

How did the whole of mankind become evil so as to warrant The Flood? There seems to be a gap in Genesis here. The apocryphal Book of Enoch makes interesting reading.

The story of the Tower of Babel is a witty and elegant story of man's arrogance frustrated by God. Note the reversal at Pentecost! The New Testament brings healing of all these evils. Jesus is the New Adam and the New Noah.

Father Robert Murray

In the world of the Letter to the Hebrews, the Christians were seen as the unreligious ones. They seemed to be without a High Priest and not to make sacrifices. But the writer argues (Hebrews 5) that Christ was 'named by God High Priest in the succession of Melchizedek' (Genesis 14.18f and Psalm 110.4); and (Hebrews 10) that the conflict between God's dislike of sacrifice and the requirements of the Jewish law for sacrifice cannot be resolved in Judaism but only by regarding Jesus's offering of his life as a once-only sacrifice, a reality not a shadow like the sacrifices of Judaism.

Rev. Dr. Arnold Brown

Jesus came to fulfil the words of the prophets. We must apply their teachings in a general way, not often directly.

'Social Justice' was not meaningful in the Old Testament. Justice was necessarily about society.

Privatisation started with religion. The one thing one could not possibly privatise was water!

Support of the status quo is political.

Rev. Kenneth Leech

Scout Group News

The Group has been very active this term. Fourteen new boys have been invested in the Cubs, making a total of 40 boys in the two packs. In the District Cubs' Swimming Gala, Brown Pack came 7th and Gold Pack 11th. The Cubs have been making Church models towards the Spire Appeal, and the Beavers and Cubs held a joint Hallowe'en Party.

The Scouts entered 2 teams in the District Day Prowl and 6 Scouts have been on a flying day. On 21 October, the Group took part in a District event to raise money for the Star and Garter Home. Each Group walked from its headquarters to the Home collecting money from the public on the way. 22 members of 3rd Hampton Hill walked, wearing a variety of costumes, and collected £540 plus many goods from local shopkeepers. On arrival at the Home, they were awarded the Newson Cup for the best turn-out and overall effort. The money raised by all the Groups (over £1200 so far) will be used to re-furbish 2 recreation rooms at the Home.

The Group Scout Leader, John Nielsen, will be climbing Mount Kilimanjaro in December. If anyone would like to sponsor him in aid of Group funds, he can be contacted on 941 0352.

Proceeds from the carnival stall, Jumble Sale, Family Disco and the Autumn Fair will be going towards much-needed camping equipment, but the Group's greatest need is more leaders to ensure the continuation of the many activities enjoyed by the boys. Anyone who feels they could help or who would like more information should contact John Nielsen or any of the Section leaders.

The Group will be holding its annual Carol Service at 6.30pm on Wednesday 13 December in the Parish Hall, School Road.

Susan Horner

Parish Carol Singing

Carol singing round the parish will be on Thursday 21st December. We plan to leave the church at 7.30pm and sing our way around Hampton Hill. We shall end up at Wayside where hot drinks and mince pies will be available to warm us up. Please come along and swell our ranks for this traditional and enjoyable event.

David Lloyd

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An Entertainment for the RNLI (Lifeboat Fund)

Friday 5 January, 8pm, St. Mary's Church Hall, Hampton

STUART WARD

with Michael Goldthorpe, Tenor, a frequent broadcaster,
Marco Villani, a young flute player and Simon Lane at the piano
Songs & Operatic Arias, and flute pieces of 18th & 19th centuries

Tickets £3, at the door, or from Stuart Ward (979 4906)

Hot Punch (or soft drinks) and light refreshments included

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From the Registers

Baptisms

October	1	Joshua James Attewell	42 Buckingham Road
		Magan Kerry Joyce Downes	14 Stanley Gardens, Teddington
	15	Kelly Amanda Bezant	26 Sanders Close
		Emma Louise Bassett	25a Rydens Avenue, Walton
	29	Laura Louise Sarao	136 High Street

Funerals

October	3	Henry Frank Guns	1 Rectory Grove	Aged 74
	10	Henrietta May Weedon	9 Taylor Close	Aged 82

Regular Weekly Services

Sunday	08.00	Holy Communion (except on Christmas Eve)
	09.30	Parish Communion (except first Sunday in month)
Monday to Friday	09.15	Morning Prayer
Tuesday	09.30	Holy Communion
Thursday	19.15	Holy Communion

Other Services and Dates to Note

December 2	09.30	Churchyard Working Party (Leaf Clearing)
3	09.30	Informal Service
	18.30	Parish Communion with Healing Ministry
4	09.30	Editorial Board, 19 St. James's Road
6	14.30	M.U. Talk: 'One-parent Families', Wayside
8	14.30	L.E.H. Junior School Carol Service
10		Bible Sunday
	15.00	H. and H.H. District Brownies Carol Service, Church
	18.30	Prayer 'n' Praise
11		Dedication Festival for our Church
	20.00	P.C.C., Vestry
12	19.30	Rectory School Carol Service, Church
	20.00	Tuesday Club: Christmas Party, Wayside
13	18.30	Scout Group Carol Service, Parish Hall
	19.30	L.E.H. Senior School Carol Service, Church
14	19.00	H.H. Junior School Carol Service, Church
17	18.30	Parish Carol Service
21	19.30	Carol Singing around the parish
24		Christmas Eve
	16.30	Crib Service
	23.45	Midnight Eucharist
25		Christmas Day
	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Parish Communion
26		St. Stephen
	10.00	Holy Communion
27		St. John
	10.00	Holy Communion
28		The Holy Innocents
	10.00	Holy Communion



Immanuel
'God-is-with-us'

Advance Notices

January 1		The Naming of Jesus
5	20.00	Stuart Ward Entertains for R.N.L.I., St. Mary's Church Hall, [Hampton]
7	09.30	Christingle Service
11	20.00	Stewardship Committee, 5 Oxford Road
13	14.00	Parish Children's Party, Parish Hall
14		'St. Paul the Traveller', Church
17	19.30	Holy Communion, followed by P.C.C., Vestry

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