

There is trouble brewing in Ambridge. The whole village turned out for Mrs. P.'s funeral in the Parish Church; the flowers were beautiful, people had been so kind; but no Vicar. It wasn't right that Mrs. P. should be buried by a stranger, it just didn't seem proper. And all because the Bishop and the Archdeacon had taken away Ambridge's own parish priest and they now had to share in a team ministry, never knowing who was to turn up come Sunday morning.

I suppose similar sentiments have been expressed in hundreds of parishes up and down the country, in rural areas and in the inner cities. Even in the suburbs the lack of curates is lamented. At the end of this month about 400 deacons and 300 priests will be ordained in the Church of England to serve in the widest variety of parishes and institutions both stipendiary, that is paid by the church, and non-stipendiary, that is deacons and priests who minister in and through their normal jobs or situations as well as within the Church's more formal service.

We rejoice with Chris Swift who was a placement at St. James's last summer and is to be ordained deacon in Blackburn Cathedral on 29th June, St. Peter's Day. But the month of ordinations, and of stirrings in Ambridge raises important questions about ministry. I don't think this is the place for yet another rehearsal of the rights or wrongs of the ordination of women to the priesthood. I am sure you know that I am fully supportive of the ordination of women a priests, and indeed our Parochial Church Council unanimously supports the legislation currently passing through Synods.

However I think we should ask, on the one hand simpler, and on the other hand more disturbing questions about ministry, based on our Anglican understanding of ordination as to do with ordering, the ordering of the body of Christ. So, first I think we have to ask 'To whom do we minister and how?' and conversely, 'Who ministers to us and how?' Then we must ask how the ordering of ministry, that ministry which we receive and which we give, measures up to the command of Jesus to love God and love our neighbour as ourself. How does the ministry of the whole people of God reflect Christ's command? If there are areas of mismatch then serious thought and action is called for.

Down in Ambridge it was being suggested that everything would be alright when women are ordained priests, because then there would be enough to go round. Is this the B.B.C. at its liberal best? Whatever it is, it isn't the answer, for this is not a numbers game. It is a matter for us all, a call to re-examine our own ministry, the ministry of those around us, and the traditional ministry of the church, that is God's ministry in and through his world.

Writing in about A.D. 100 the Christian leader Ignatius asserted that, 'Wheresoever Christ Jesus is, there is the Catholic Church.' Note that he did not write it the other way round. Ours is to gather in unity wherever Christ is in the world, both to minister to him, even in the least of one of these, and to be ministered to by him and the church universal. What sort of minister are you, and who ministers to you?

Brian Leathard

Impressions of the A.P.C.M.

As new members of the parish we were particularly interested to attend the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to find out how the church functioned, what had happened over the past year and to get a feel of its future direction.

There seemed to be a good turnout, and it was helpful that the children were looked after so that we could attend the meeting. From the very clear presentation of the accounts we gathered the impression of a very efficiently run parish whose finances were in good order. We were impressed that the high level of common fund payments seemed to be met without too much difficulty because of the generally responsible level of giving by the parishioners.

It was apparent from the presentation on fabric that there is a great deal of commitment in both time and money by a number of people in order to maintain the church and churchyard. It will be very exciting if the plans for the new hall come to fruition.

We found the brief reports from the committees and groups of the church interesting as far as they went but were disappointed not to hear much about the future plans of these groups; perhaps if their retrospective reports were circulated in advance, more time at the meeting could have been given to the latter.

Whilst we gained a clear impression of the financial and administrative organisation of the parish we did not gain an impression of the church's spiritual progress and direction for the forthcoming year. We would have found reports from the house groups, prayer groups, Sunday School, youth groups, dance/music groups a valuable addition to the meeting.

Finally we enjoyed the superb bring and share lunch and appreciated the opportunity to meet at leisure many members of our new parish.

Susan Blay

The Parochial Church Council

One of the main functions of the A.P.C.M. is to elect the P.C.C. for the coming twelve months. Broadly speaking, the main responsibilities of the P.C.C. are the financial affairs of the church, including budgeting, and the care and maintenance of the church and its contents. The P.C.C. is also able to acquire and administer properties for ecclesiastical purposes and to make representations to the bishop affecting the welfare of the church in the parish, and it has a say in the forms of service used and in any pastoral scheme for changes affecting the parish.

The P.C.C. for 1991/2

The P.C.C. comprises the Vicar (Chairman); Lesley Mortimer and Alan Taylor who were re-appointed Churchwardens; Pip Rowett and Charles Dobson (and Lesley Mortimer), the Deanery Synod Representatives who were elected last year; Hannah Stanton (and Alan Taylor), our Readers; and the following elected members:



Susan Blay
Ann Davis
Mona Gow
Monica Heaford
Margaret Hobbs
Rachel Lloyd
Rosalie Meyerowitz
Ruth Mills
Marion Nevill
Margaret Revis
Eila Severn
Moya Meredith Smith

Terry Baldwin
Andrew Craig
Jack Gostling
David Lloyd
Richard Melville
John Meredith Smith
David Taylor
Dick Wilde

Thanks from Nazareth

Dear Fr. Brian,

Thank you so much for your kind letter. I did enjoy reading 'The Spire' and was impressed by the concise but accurate description of the situation here in the Holy Land and the thoughts you shared with your parish. I am sure they were very inspiring.

In fact they must have been, as witnessed by your very generous donation for our school, for which I, the pupils of Christ Church school and the congregation thank you most sincerely. We do appreciate your help and the self-denial which it portrays.

Maybe we shall have the pleasure of thanking you personally if you and your wife can come back to the Holy Land in the autumn. You can be sure of a heartfelt welcome. But maybe we shall even meet before that, since I am coming with a group of young people from Nazareth to take part in the Greenbelt Christian Arts Festival in August. Might you be there?

For now, my best regards to your wife, and warmest greetings from all the Brothers and Sisters to you in Hampton Hill.

Love in Christ,

Riah Abu El-Assal (Archdeacon of Nazareth)

[A receipt for £220 - the result of our Lenten self-denial appeal - was enclosed.]

Confirmation - Ascension Day

Confirmation classes started on 4 March at the Vicarage. Nine of us kids were taking part, and four adults joined us on the day. In the first class we talked about what we would be doing in future classes. In the classes we discussed various subjects to do with our faith. The last class was not on its usual Monday night but on Tuesday as the day before was a Bank Holiday. On that evening we met at 6 o'clock instead of 5 o'clock to practise the service that was going to take place the following Thursday. At about 6.30pm all the children were taken to McDonald's in Twickenham as Brian's treat as it was the last day.



On Thursday 9th May, we all turned up a little early for the 8 o'clock service which was going to be our Confirmation. The Rt. Rev. Roderick Coote, Assistant Bishop for the Kensington Area, was there to do the job, with Brian assisting with names and such like.

The whole service was based around the 9.30 Family Communion but with the Confirmation in the middle (before 'The Peace'). The Bishop's sermon was that Confirmation is God commissioning us to live our lives as he would want us to as a Christian example to others. It was a lovely service with refreshments afterwards.

I would like to thank Brian who took the classes and answered any queries we had. I would also like to thank all those who helped with the refreshments and all the congregation of St. James who came to support us.

Geoffrey Nunn

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It seemed appropriate that 9th May was both Ascension Day and the day of our Confirmation because both were significant and moving occasions. That morning, I tried to explain to one of my friends at work (who is a Baptist) what confirmation was all about. It was certainly more interesting than checking up on whether all G.P.'s had met their immunisation targets or how many teeth were extracted in Rochdale last month. We considered what the disciples must have thought and felt on that first Ascension Day, particularly before Pentecost, and what it means to be a servant of Christ in the modern day.

I confess that when we all assembled in the front pew of the church that evening, clutching our Order of Service and hymn sheets, my mind was on more humble things. Would we be able to follow the various sheets? Would anyone trip over the altar steps? Simple tasks, like reading from the book and kneeling in front of the Bishop seemed straightforward at the rehearsal, but now they appeared fraught with difficulties. The older candidates huddled at one end of the pew to avoid having to go up first. The Bishop then came over and delivered some well-chosen and reassuring words - we should enjoy the service and he would soon put us right if we made any mistakes.

We then had a few moments to relax and elicit some supportive words from family and friends, and to think again about what the ceremony meant to us as individuals and as members of St. James's. It was wonderful to see so many people had come to be with us - families and friends and several godparents.

The service was joyous and the Bishop commissioned us all as officers of Christ. We could feel the support and good will of the rest of the congregation, especially when everyone came rushing up to share the Peace with us. For me, about to take communion for the first time, though I say the words every week, the phrase, 'we are one body because we all share in one bread' became very meaningful.

After the service, David and I were very moved by the warmth of everyone's thoughts and prayers. It made us even more sorry that we are having to move to Yorkshire. We will be blessed indeed to find another group of such lovely people.

Jane Revell

Why not join in the Pilgrimage of a Lifetime?

The Holy Land

17 - 27 October 1991

Soak up the atmosphere, tread the path of Christ in Jerusalem and Galilee, float in the Dead Sea, fight the battles of the Old Testament.

Relax, pray, experience life for Jews, Muslims and Christians today in the Holy Land.

For 11 days, we stay in good hotels with full board.

All sightseeing and entrance fees included, as are transfers, and we fly El Al scheduled flights. £739.

If you are interested please contact the Vicar.

A New Forum for the Women of St. James's

At this time when triennial elections take place in the Mothers' Union for new leaders, and new committees are required, it seems opportune to reconsider the future of our branch.

It is felt that there are ladies at St. James's who would like to have the opportunity of joining a women's group, but who feel that the Mothers' Union is perhaps a little too exclusive and complex to give them what they want. With this in mind, thought is being given to the possibility that MU members might form the nucleus of a church organisation serving the women of the parish, providing comradeship and support, with an opportunity to 'work, worship and witness' (MU AGM).



It is hoped that by November a small new committee could be elected to plan a programme for next year.

I have been reminded of my years as a teacher. Shortly after I was appointed Deputy Head we had the joy of enlarging the school from six to nine classes. But after some ten or twelve years it became apparent that numbers of children were falling; there had to be changes and redundancies. These caused much heart-searching: reducing the size of something is more difficult than making things grow. But when you realise how much you have to prune a rose tree to produce next year's blooms, you understand that the same treatment may have to be given to us in life.

Jean Wilson

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St. James's Flower Festival

and Open Days

Saturday 27 July (with Barbeque)

Sunday 28 July (with Buffet Lunch)

Monday 29 July

Open each day

10.00 am to 5.30 pm

Music, Refreshments,

Displays, Tours of the Tower

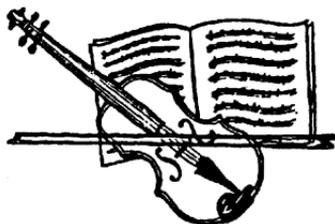
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Church Drama with Music

Brian has suggested to Stuart Ward that he organise some sort of dramatic production in St. James, probably in February 1992, though the date is not yet settled.

Stuart proposes to write an original work, based on episodes in the history of the Church in Britain; some well-known and some not, but all of which should lend themselves to some kind of dramatic treatment - acting, singing, instrumental, dancing, mime.



Before starting to construct this piece, it is obviously important to know what forces might be available. It would be wonderful if every member of the church took part, leaving nobody in the audience!

Please contact Stuart without delay, if you can offer your services as: actor, singer, musician, chorus and crowd scenes, and any form of behind-the-scenes help, including costume. The Dance Group has already expressed willingness to participate.

Part of the music will be based on real traditional folk tunes, and part will be original.

Adults of all ages and abilities, and children, are most welcome.

Help make this production both immensely enjoyable, and a vibrant expression of our living faith! Get on to Stuart with a positive response now! (either after a service, or by 'phoning 081 979 4906).

This month we commemorate

(among others):

Columba (9 June)

Abbot of Iona, Missionary

At the age of forty-two, St. Columba (c521-97), who was an Irish priest and had spent some fifteen years preaching and teaching in Ireland, left there and settled on the small island of Iona lying off the island of Mull on the West coast of Scotland. From there, with his companions, he preached to the heathen Picts of the mainland and did great missionary work. He was 'loving to everyone' and 'happy with the joy of the Holy Spirit.'

Ski Trip 1992

Following the very successful ski-trip this year, we are planning another for early April next year. If anybody is interested in joining us, I shall be pleased to give them details. Total cost will again be in the region of £500. Please contact me by mid-June as we need to book early owing to the size of the party.

Paul Revis (979 4858)



Our summer outing is on Saturday 29 June and we are going to Beaulieu in the heart of the New Forest.

There is lots to see, lots to do and it is an ideal day out for all family.

The inclusive admission covers the National Motor Museum and a ride on 'Wheels'; palace house; Beaulieu Abbey and Exhibition of Monastic Life; plus vouchers for a choice of extra special features including the monorail, veteran bus, model railway and many others.

The coach leaves at 10 am from St. James's and should be back by 7 pm. Keep the date free and join us for a fun day out together. A list of names is on the notice board in church and if you have not yet done so, please add yours or contact me.

David Lloyd (979 2964)

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* **Summer Outing to Beaulieu** *
* **Saturday 29 June** *
* **£8 all-inclusive** *
* **(Senior Citizens and children under 16, £7)** *
* **For further details see above** *
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Around the Spire

First this month for the clerical news. Congratulations to our Vicar Brian, for obtaining his Ph.D. from Loughborough University. Many of us have experience of trying to study and do a job at the same time, so we know how gratifying it is to achieve the hoped for result.

Congratulations also to Betty Stewart who has been accepted by the Advisory Council for the Church's Ministry (ACCM) for training for ordination. Last year Betty became

a Reader but it has long been her desire to be ordained so we rejoice with her and will follow her progress with interest. Some of you will have heard Betty preach recently and remember her long service with the Sunday School. We wish her every blessing in her new vocation.

Hannah Stanton's brother, Tom, who works in Soweto in South Africa will be coming home soon on holiday. He has not been well lately so we look forward to seeing him and hearing the latest news of the ever-changing situation in South Africa.

Another family who have recently returned from abroad are the Rajan's. We welcome Roger, Cathy and Nadine home again and hope that they will soon settle down among us.

Another new arrival is Oliver Craig, brother to Ian and son of Andrew and Rachel. Congratulations to all the family, and we hope to see Oliver very soon.

An afternoon of fun and games is being organised by the Hampton Council of Churches at Denmead School on 30 June at 2.30 pm. Come along with your rounders bat and join in the fun.

From the Registers

Baptisms

| | | | |
|-------|----|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| April | 14 | Alexander Stephen Kennewell | 47 Park Road |
| | | Lee Stephen Morris | 105 Uxbridge Road |
| | 27 | Kate Victoria Bradley | 3 Hawkesley Close, Strawberry Hill |

Confirmations

| | | |
|-----|---|----------------------|
| May | 9 | Lisa Atkinson |
| | | Judith Hennessy |
| | | Christopher Melville |
| | | Geoffrey Nunn |
| | | Emily Ormerod |
| | | Lucie Ormerod |
| | | Caitlyn Robinson |
| | | Sanaz Sazegar |
| | | Jessica Traherne |
| | | Anne Hale |
| | | Martin Hinkley |
| | | Jane Revell |
| | | Gordon Shackleton |

Marriages

| | | |
|-------|----|-------------------------------|
| April | 20 | Robert Boxer and Deborah Mays |
| | 27 | Philip Hobson and Eve Hughes |

Funerals

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|-------|---|-----------------------|-----------------|---------|
| April | 4 | Robert William Parker | 35 Ringwood Way | Aged 56 |
|-------|---|-----------------------|-----------------|---------|

Dates to Note

| | | | |
|------|----|-------|---|
| June | 3 | 14.00 | Editorial Board |
| | 5 | 14.30 | Talk to M.U. on the Holy Land, Helen Taylor, Wayside |
| | 8 | 10.30 | Christianity in the World of Work - a Day Conference, St. Mary's Hall, Twickenham (Crèche available) |
| | 11 | | St. Barnabas the Apostle Diocesan M.U. Festival |
| | | 20.00 | Tuesday Club: A.G.M., Wayside |
| | 24 | | The Birth of St. John the Baptist |
| | 25 | 20.00 | P.C.C., Vestry |
| | | 20.00 | Tuesday Club: Royal Star and Garter Home, Wayside |
| | 26 | 20.00 | Taizé Prayer Meeting, St. Francis de Sales |
| | 29 | | St. Peter the Apostle |
| | | 10.00 | Summer Outing to Beautlieu |

Advance Notices

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|-----------------|-------------|-------|--|
| July | 3 | | St. Thomas the Apostle |
| | 9 | 20.00 | Tuesday Club: Rev. Harry Burlton - Chaplain of London Airport (Heathrow), Wayside |
| | 23 | 20.00 | P.C.C., Vestry |
| | | 20.00 | Tuesday Club: Buffet Supper, Wayside |
| July 27, 28, 29 | 10.00-17.30 | | St. James's Flower Festival and Open Days |

COPY DATE FOR JULY ISSUE: 9 JUNE

