

Vicar's Notes

The church looked very beautiful on Easter Day, thanks to the hard work put in beforehand on the intensive cleaning and then on the decoration. I should like all who shared that work in any way to know that it was much appreciated. I am also very grateful for your kind gift to me: the collections this year were the largest since I came, and only a very little short of £50—a great practical help and source of encouragement. I was also very glad to have the freely-offered assistance of our new neighbour, the Reverend G. H. Stevens, who recently left his large parish in Derby to fill an important post on the headquarters staff of the Church Missions to Jews. We shall look forward to seeing him again on the first Sunday in June, when he will be preaching at Evensong. We have missed seeing Mr. Thomas in his stall for many weeks, and his absence at Easter was the one dark spot in an otherwise bright and joyful day. Since then his health has improved sufficiently for him to take his usual place and part at our morning services, and we hope that this happier state of things will now continue.

WAYS OF GIVING

A good deal has appeared in the Press recently (including our own inset "The Window") concerning the finances of the churches, and what is being done to put things right. More and more the stress is being laid on direct giving, and less and less on such things as bazaars and "Bingo" drives. We have read of the great results achieved by the Wells Organisation and its dedicated men, who take up residence in a parish and with the teams of helpers they enlist not only increase the income four or five times, but quicken the whole life and enthusiasm of the place. We have heard of other parishes who off their own bat and without professional assistance have been able to get what is called the "Christian Standard of Giving" generally accepted. This asks for the giving of the amount earned in one hour's work each week—roughly one-fortieth of the entire

income. So a family with £1000 a year coming in would accept a pledge to give 10/- a week as a regular due.

"THE PARISH COMES ALIVE"

The Wells Organisation can work effectively in a parish only if it has already attained a certain degree of liveliness—it cannot start from scratch in a parish in the grip of apathy. One of the parishes in which it is now at work is one which has reached such a high level of vitality that its fame has spread far and wide. This is the parish of Halton, Leeds, about which a book has recently been written with the above striking title. Apparently its direct giving had not kept pace with its other developments—it was about £1000 a year (ours is now roughly £650). So Wells was called in, and a campaign is now in progress which seems certain to raise this figure to £5000.

For years visitors have been coming from many parts of the world to stay in the homes of these hospitable Yorkshire folk to find out for themselves just what is going on. Then, much impressed, they have returned home to see if they could not attempt something like this in their own locality, and so the Halton pattern of parish life is beginning to spread. I myself have long felt that something like this was the way forward for us in Hampton Hill, but how to get the idea across I have not known. I have thought that perhaps it needs a vicar with a stronger personality and a greater power of leadership than I have to put it into effect—and I have met other clergy who feel the same. "The idea is right and sound—but it needs men of exceptional calibre to translate it into action. We must just go on in the old, ordinary ways." But I now think that this is perhaps a cowardly evasion. Canon Southcott is certainly an outstanding man, but he would be the last to claim that it is only because of his outstanding leadership that the parish has become alive. He would say that this can happen in any parish when the Church really sets out to be the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Halton pattern is not a blueprint to be carried out in similar

detail everywhere: it is rather a continuing experiment and something a parish grows into in the course of time as the Church within it becomes more fully the Church. Now we have this book to help us who can't go to Halton to see what is happening for ourselves, we can get down to reading and discussing it together, and then to asking "What is the next step for us to take? Where do we go from here?"

THE CHURCH MUST MEET

This is one of the things which the Holy Spirit soon led Halton to see. The Church cannot be the Church if its members meet only in the church, even if they all come together for one and the same service. A parish meeting once a year, especially one so poorly attended as ours, is not sufficient. Parish policy ought to be something which every member of the congregation feels he is constantly helping to create and carry out. So many important parish concerns are usually delegated to the Vicar or the Treasurer or the P.C.C., but the Church itself must have a mind on these things. For instance, this ever-pressing subject of finance referred to earlier. Canon Southcott says "I believe that such a thing as the finances of the Church ought to proclaim the Gospel. There are those who feel that things like bazaars and whist drives are not a good way of financing a church . . . but I believe that the most important thing is not whether or not we have a parish bazaar, but whether we realize that we must have a parish policy about Church finance as well as every other matter." That is certainly what we need to work out together here—a parish policy, which we can help to make and understand and work to carry out. At the moment, for lack of it, the parish is filled with rumours—some of them obviously malicious and spiteful, others based on misunderstanding. A regular Parish Meeting would provide opportunity for these rumours to be corrected, grievances to be openly aired, and for all sorts of things to be put straight, as well as being a main means in developing a working and witness-

ing as well as a worshipping community.

THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE

It used to be said that "A house-going parson makes a church-going people." At Halton the stress soon came to be on "a house-going Church," and this led to "the Church in the house," or house-church, which was one of the main features of early Christianity, and which the Holy Spirit is now urging us to revive again. The emphasis now is not on church-going, which can sometimes do more harm than good if people are not prepared for it, but on "being the Church"—in the church, in the parish meeting, in the home, in the street, in the factory, in the office. These small house-churches have become one of the most distinctive elements in Halton's parish life. They serve all kinds of purposes—educational, evangelistic, healing, recreational. It is interesting that a body of medical men at a conference of doctors and ministers, held in May, urged very strongly that the Church should create groups like this in every parish, to which they could send patients (of whom there are many) whose illnesses are caused by conditions of loneliness and frustration, and who need to enter such small fellowships for their healing. "The fellowship of your churches is too large," said a London consultant. "It puts off the timid and fear-ridden. What we ask you to provide are small groups of about 12 people which can act as a half-way house between isolation and complete fellowship, and forestall illness arising from stress. Many of my patients would need at least two years in such a group before they could feel at home in anything larger." Though not primarily created for this purpose, the house-church has in fact proved able to meet this urgent need.

BACK TO WHERE WE ARE

We have been thinking of some aspects of the Church as it is in Halton and as it might be in Hampton Hill—now back to where we are! As our direct giving is at least £250 short of ordinary expenditure, we still have to rely for the raising of this amount on indirect giving. We are now ap-

proaching our big effort in this line, the Summer Fête. This year its planning has met with snag after snag, and innumerable letters have been written with no tangible result, but we hope that the worst is now over, and if everyone will help to supply goods for the different stalls (see list in May magazine and additions below) all should be well. A Jumble Sale of high-class stuff is also being held this month. One encouraging item—one of the families which gave a £50 loan towards the cost of changing the heating-system to oil-firing has asked us now to regard it as a gift, and we are most grateful for this generous gesture.

The Confirmation and Parish Communion is at 9.0 a.m. on July 14th. Our fortnightly parish communion has not developed towards the fulfilment of its name as our Commission on Worship hoped it would—the choir has dispersed, numbers have dwindled, and its future is one of those things we must discuss when we get down to the formulation of a parish policy. At the moment there is nothing into which to build our younger communicants—they come to a large church with only 12 or 20 people there scattered about, and feel that if this all the older people care about it, then it can't matter much after all. This all adds to the heavy odds against them, and it is little cause for wonder that after a few months only a handful remain faithful. I should like them to see the Church there at 9.0 a.m. on June 23rd,

when they come as part of their preparation, as well as at 9.0 a.m. on July 14th, when they receive Communion for the first time, and I hope that all the necessary support and fellowship will be given to them as they find their way into the very centre of the worshipping community. The service on June 23rd will have the same Communion hymns and settings as at the great service three weeks later when the Bishop comes. Incidentally, one of these hymns, which we have hardly ever had here, has been voted the overall favourite in the survey recently organised by the "Church Illustrated." (I cannot understand why only six of us take this magazine—it is a very good six-pennyworth!). It is, "And now, O Father, Mindful of the Love," No. 322. Hymn No. 298, "Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven," which the B.B.C. regards as the most popular hymn throughout the country, came eighth in preference.

I have rather spread myself this month, so Mr. Bougourd's interesting article on Thomas Tomkins is held over till July. I hope his forceful appeal at the end for new members of the choir will not fall on deaf ears.

Two very old members of our church recently died—Mrs. Chamberlin at Ovingdean, who was only a few years from her century when she had her accident, and whose charm and grace shone through her to the end; and Archie Coe, a former bell-ringer, who died at Whitstable.

AROUND THE SPIRE

being notes and news about people, activities & organisations

A PARISH JUMBLE SALE

There is always a Jumble Sale impending, but this time it is a Church Jumble Sale and there hasn't been one for four years. It is to be on Saturday, June 22nd, at 2.30 p.m. The Mothers' Union is not having its usual spring sale and it seemed a good opportunity to fill the gap with one for everybody. And will everybody please support it by sending as much as possible in the way of goods to Mrs. Allport, 55, Park Road, or ask her to arrange for it to be

collected (MOL 3956). She will even take hand-knitted garments that are beyond resale. Please ask your friends too; they are often pleased to know of a good cause to which they can send things of no further use to themselves.

We already have some very "high class goods" and intend to make this the Bumper Jumble Sale of the year. Please help.

THE SUMMER FETE

One or two alterations and additions to last month's list.

There will be no Men's Needs Stall, but articles of clothing for men in good condition find ready sale on the "White Elephant" Stall (Mrs. Orton, 30, St. James's Road). Offers of cakes, etc., for refreshments, and help in serving teas on the day should be made to Mrs. Mills, 40, Oldfield Road. Also note Pound Stall (Mr. Geer, 4, School Road); Bran-Tub (Mrs. Pyne, 32, St. James's Road).

To help seat the crowds watching the entertainments on the lawn, it is suggested that some parishioners might be able to lend deck-chairs. These should be brought to the Vicarage or direct to Laurel Dene on the Wednesday or Thursday before the Fête, and each chair should have a label attached with the owner's name.

THE SCOUT GROUP

Our 3rd Annual Show was held on Saturday, May 4th, and as usual we had a large and appreciative audience.

This year the Cub Pack presented rather a different type of entertainment in a play "Twilight Tale" or Tales of Hiawatha, and I feel I must mention personally one or two people outside our Committee without whose help I could not have produced the Play so effectively.

First I would like to mention the two Students from the College of St. Mark & St. John, who together with Akela and Kim spent the whole of one Sunday painting the very delightful scenery on the back wall of the stage.

Also I would like to thank Mr. Davies, who made so many of the props and head-dresses.

The Scout half consisted of Band items and a number of Variety items, ending with a combined Camp Fire Scene conducted by Kim.

The "Show" was presented again on May 18th to a large audience from the "Old People's Club," when we were honoured by a visit from the Mayor of Twickenham, Councillor Mrs. Mary Owen.

In the evening we had a friendly Bingo Drive when Mrs. Redding, the Chairman of the Old People's Welfare Committee, presided, and altogether with parents, Scouts and friends there were about 100 present.

CUB NEWS

Last Wednesday at the Cub meeting Andrew Long was presented with "The Bassett" Shield having proved himself to be the most helpful and conscientious Cub for the previous term.

D.E.C.

Future Events:

Scout Group Fête: September 7th at "Laurel Dene."

SOME DATES TO NOTE

- June 5.—3.0 p.m. Mothers' Union (W); 8.0 p.m. O.P.W. Committee (89, Connaught Road).
- June 9.—Whitsunday.
Holy Communion 8.0, 9.0 a.m. and 12.15 p.m.; Matins 11.0 a.m.; Children's Service 2.30 p.m.; Evensong 6.30 p.m.
- June 12.—3.0 p.m. "Baptismal Party" (V).
- June 15.—3.0 p.m. Sunday School Teachers' Garden Party at Fulham Palace.
- June 16.—Trinity Sunday.
- June 17.—8.0 p.m. Fête Committee (Laurel Dene).
- June 18.—St. Barnabas.
Holy Communion 7.15 a.m.
- June 19.—Mothers' Union Outing.
- June 20.—8.0 p.m. Church Council (W).
- June 21.—8.0 p.m. Annual Meeting of Moral Welfare Association (St. Mary's Hall, Twickenham).
Speaker: Father Groser.
- June 23.—9.0 a.m. Parish Communion (see Vicar's Notes).
- June 24.—St. John Baptist.
Holy Communion 7.15 a.m.
- June 26.—8.0 p.m. Young Wives Group (W).
- June 28.—7.30 p.m. Magazines should be ready (V).
- June 29.—St. Peter.
Holy Communion 7.15 a.m.
Senior and Junior Sunday School Outing to Pageant of Guildford.
- July 6.—3.0 p.m. Summer Fête (Laurel Dene).
- July 14.—9.0 a.m. Confirmation and Parish Communion.
- BAPTISMS**
- May 5.—Jane Arabella and Caroline Ann Stewart, 70, Strawberry Hill Road.
- " 5.—Christopher Laurence Hyde, 6, White Park Bungalows, Saundersfoot, Pembs.
- " 26.—Trevor Nigel Lloyd, 85, Hampton Road.