

## EASTER IN PRAGUE

Ten days to be spent in Czechoslovakia for the primary purpose of academic liaison — my colleague Peter and I decided to take our wives and make it into a working holiday. We went by train, a journey which took us across France and Germany, crossing the Czech border at Cheb, through the wild and beautiful hills, woods and rushing streams of West Bohemia and into Pilsen after 32 hours of travelling.

Czechoslovakia has roughly the same area as England, with less than a third of our population. It has six international borders, Hungary and Austria on the South, the two Germanys on the West, Poland on the North and Russia on the East. A tourist map of access routes to the country showed arrows pointing through each border. This might be said to represent a history of Czechoslovakia, uninvited tourists having crossed the borders fairly frequently. As we picked up fragments of the enormously rich and complicated history of central Europe during our visit, we realized how very parochial our own historical knowledge was. Some towering figures we had barely heard of, like Charles IV, the terrible Wallenstein, and the great religious reformer Jan Hus, a disciple of Wycliffe.

Pilsen is an industrial city, not a great tourist attraction. While we were there our College hosts arranged a tour of the Bohemian spas for us. We visited Marienbad, rather like our Bath, with delicious fizzy mineral water gushing freely out of the fountains; we also went to Karlsbad, a bigger town, more clearly catering for the tourist trade. Karlsbad has numerous springs, some very hot, and thermal baths. In both spas the former hotels and luxurious houses of the rich were now used as hostel accommodation for holidaying workers.

Our hosts were almost overwhelming in their kindness. Most spoke good English, although the idiomatic usage, painstakingly learnt from Czech tutors, was often not good. The Czech language has a Slav root, and is related to Polish and Russian. It has its own modification of the Roman alphabet, and looks formidable. It is indeed formidable, and the combinations of multiple consonants, accents and spoken stresses defeated me. Mary, however, managed some quite enterprising shopping without an interpreter.

We gave our talks and finished our academic business in Pilsen on Maundy Thursday. On Good Friday we moved to Prague, which is about 50 miles East of Pilsen. We were taken in two large Russian-made cars over rather modest roads at speeds which astounded me. We were delayed on the way by a speed trap, though our driver had actually dropped down to 120 km/hour at the time we were caught. A fine was levied on the spot.

Our Prague lodging, a college staff-hostel, was about 3 miles from the centre of Prague. The city was a wonderful surprise to us. The old town lies in a bend of the great river Vlatava, which is a wide, fast-flowing body of water, lower down becoming the German Elbe. The old town itself made me think of illustrations in old fairy-tale books, to Mary it was like scenery from a romantic opera. Narrow, cobbled streets, high, magnificent old houses with great metal-studded doors, glimpses of courtyards, in the centre of the town a great open cobbled square with a statue of Jan Hus. The old, wide Charles bridge, for footgoers only, crosses the Vlatava, and leads to the so-called "castle" area on

the other bank of the river. The castle (more of a palace) is on a high hill overlooking the river and the old town. The most outstanding building is St. Vitus cathedral, which still has its religious treasures, crowns, crucifixes, monstrances and chalices, all remarkably ornate, on display in a nearby building.

The Catholic churches in Prague were fully functioning. Huge, lofty buildings, every inch of their interior ornamented with gilded angels, cherubs or hung with pictures. The Masses sung were those which are performed in this country by our choral societies. To hear them in their true setting in those magnificent churches with full chorus and orchestra was a wonderful experience.

Transport in Prague was really enjoyable. One crown (5p) bought entrance to the underground system, and unlimited travel. No tickets, no mess, no rush, no crowds, no adverts, no smoking and hardly any waiting for the clean, efficient trains. The delightful Prague trams also had a one crown flat-rate fare. One buys books of tickets, and punches one's own ticket on boarding the tram.

The city was full of tourists, most from the two Germanys. The Czechs speak German as a second language, though officially the second language is Russian. The West German tourists were welcome for their hard currency, in which there is a black market.

No account of Czechoslovakia would be complete without mentioning the fictional folk-hero Schweik, created by Jaroslav Hasek in his uproarious novel. The Good Soldier Schweik, by his obedience to idiot orders to the letter, almost manages to lose the war single-handed. Never a word of disobedience, always happy and willing to serve. Every Czech knows and loves Schweik, except those in political authority, who I suspect know and fear him.

R.W. Wilde

## THE CHRISTIAN AID SERVICE

The image of a little African girl with a bare, wizened bottom, knobbed sticks of arms and a wide smile was my over-riding memory of the film on the Sahel shown after the service held in the Hampton Methodist Church on May 13 to inaugurate Christian Aid Week. The film showed something of the life and problems of drought in the Sahel for we were raising money in this area to assist irrigation works in that area of North Africa. Shown also in several of our local schools, the film was clear, factual and vivid. It revealed the terrible disaster of seven years of drought, disaster which had, perforce, changed a largely nomadic life into one of sad dependance on aid and, more hopefully, into a new era of dry-land farming aided by intermediate technology.

The service itself, unfortunately not well attended, was thoughtful and dwelt on the problems of the city – problems that often began in rural areas causing drift to the towns – and it emphasised anew the importance of our work and giving in Christian Aid Week. The address was ably given by the Rev. Maurice Munns, who developed the theme of the service.

I felt that the worship, fellowship and knowledge that we had gained was a real incentive to play our part fully in this work.

J.R.

## CHRISTIAN AID WEEK (MAY 14 – 19)

I took over as organiser in the parish this year from Margery Orton, who has been running this annual collection since about 1966. She gave me an excellent briefing, a well-tabulated file and a list of willing helpers. My assistant organiser, Margaret Taylor, lives opposite me, which has helped, and I would like to thank my thirty collectors for all their dedicated work, which has resulted in a collection for the parish amounting to £349. In 1978 the total was £304, and £251 in 1977, so we have managed to increase our total by nearly £100 over the last two years.

It might be of interest to know how the £344 was made up. £10 notes £10, £5 notes £75, £1 notes £73, 50p pieces £44.50, 10p pieces £112, 5p pieces £18.50, 2p £10, 1p £5, ½p £1.

One can expect a few foreign coins to be put in the envelopes and the U.S.A. one cent is the favourite, as it is almost identical in size to our new penny.

The total collected by the Hampton Council of Churches was £1,500, which is 15% up on last year and well up on our target figure of £1,000.

Many thanks again to all collectors and au revoir until May 1980.

A.E.L.

### A PRAYER

Thank you God for little things  
That often come our way –  
The things we take for granted  
But don't remember when we pray,  
The unexpected courtesy,  
The thoughtful kindly deed –  
A hand reached out to help us  
In the time of sudden need.  
Oh make us more aware, dear God  
Of little daily graces  
That come to us with "sweet surprise"  
From never dreamed-of places.

Helen Steiner Rice

### THE COMMUNITY CARE GROUP

The annual general meeting of Hampton and Hampton Hill Community Care Group was held in Linden Hall on Wednesday, May 18. Marie Martin took the chair. The business part of the meeting was conducted with great expedition. Hannah Stanton, who has been a tireless and invaluable co-chairman since the foundation of Community Care, resigned and John Kitchin was welcomed in her place.

The annual report was circulated and was detailed and interesting. It is difficult to pick out any particular items amongst so many, but it was good to hear that the Housebound and Handicapped Group have now received their ambulance, that the two co-ordinators are doing indispensable work, that a new concern group, concentrating on young people, is to be formed.

Finances are in a healthy state, mainly because of the excellent continuing work of the book-shop, charity-shop and a grant from the Borough.

The guest speaker, welcomed with style by Susan Bell, was Margaret Bramall, erstwhile director of the national association for the One-Parent Family. Mrs. Bramall complimented the Group as one of the liveliest in the London area and said that she found the wide variety of concern groups exciting. She reminded us that this was the Year of the Child. Comparing our children's needs with those in the Third World made one feel guilty. Nonetheless, this is a time when each country is considering its own children. The disadvantaged group which she wanted to discuss was the one-parent family. Today one out of every eight families is headed by one parent, mainly because of the increase in divorce. This was the largest group, followed by single mothers, widows and lone fathers. The increase in such families is 6% a year. These families are vulnerable because we tend to compare the best of two-parent families with the worst single-parent families and social isolation and prejudice can still bedevil them. They are deprived because society is organised towards the more conventional family unit. Also, they are materially disadvantaged. The average income of such families is half that of their two-parent counterparts. More than half of fatherless families are living on supplementary benefit for long periods. The children have problems such as being confused by death, parental conflict, where the child may love both parents dearly, and illegitimacy. A child will often exhibit problem-behaviour and habits after the crisis has occurred. However, he will ultimately adjust if other things are favourable. It has been found that material problems appear to affect behaviour and school performance more than the one-parent syndrome. Forty percent of the homeless are one-parent families. There is much social isolation and this is added to by poverty. The poor quality of life is detrimental to the development of the family. Many are in care.

There is much that could be done by voluntary bodies to provide care for school-age children in after-school hours. Mrs. Bramall cited several schemes which did this and much interest was shown in the meeting. What else can be done to alleviate the difficulties? It must be achieved by statutory means. A special cash-allowance is needed, more day-care, supportive help from the social services and a change of attitude towards the families.

Mrs. Bramall therefore gave us a very clear picture of the situation of one-parent families and some clues as to what we could do to help. A question asked at the very end was relevant, though it would have taken another evening of discussion. It is one which we could each ask ourselves: 'Since the one-parent family can be in such difficulties and since such families are on the increase, should we not ask ourselves what we, as a community and a nation, do to prevent this happening?' Also, when it has happened, we should extend loving care and concern, and beware of convention and prejudice.

J.R.

## **TOWARDS RACIAL HARMONY**

The Hampton Deanery Committee for Social Responsibility has made contact with Mrs. Pearson at the Richmond Adult College with a view to establishing means of teaching English to immigrants who come to this country knowing none, and in consequence may feel very lonely and cut off from the host community.

Classes of this nature will probably be on a one-to-one basis, and the prospective teacher, unless he or she has already some experience of teaching

English as a foreign language, may need coaching in this specialised field of teaching. When there are enough volunteers a class or classes can be arranged. There is definite need among Asian newcomers, particularly among the women. Such a project could make our new friends feel more at home, and would contribute towards racial harmony.

The Committee is asking parishes to insert this suggestion in their parish magazines. Those who are interested in helping should contact the Secretary of the Committee for Social Responsibility:

Hannah Stanton, 63 Park Road, Hampton Hill TW12 1HX.

Tel: 979 5821

### Y.F.G. OUTING

One afternoon in May, the St. James's Young Families' Group spent a few hours at Polesden Lacey near Dorking. The manor house there has beautiful and extensive grounds where we managed to picnic without accompaniment of rain.

The children enjoyed the freedom to run about, as did the Mums the peace and tranquility of a place so near the bustle of London. The short coach-trip home rounded off the happy afternoon.

Many thanks to Hilde Bucknell for organising the outing.

Debbie Nunn

### WELCOME SERVICE

On Trinity Sunday a Welcome Service arranged by the Mothers' Union and Young Families' Group presented themes relating to the International Year of the Child.

Following a warm welcome we listened to readings and thoughts on the unity of life. The three parts of the service illustrated points:

Life is a unity from conception to everlasting life in that the quality of each phase depends on what has gone before; the quality of each life also depends on those of the community around us and the only true foundation for a fulfilled happy life is God.

A recorder group gave a short recital and the children present were invited to the baptistry where, well provided with crayons and paper, they were encouraged to draw pictures of their homes and families. These pictures having been assembled to represent 'streets' were proudly displayed during the hymn "He's got the Whole World in His Hands".

As a helper, albeit on the fringes, I appreciated the care and time devoted to these special services, I wish a few more people would try to come along.

J.L.

## ST. JAMES'S WOMEN'S TUESDAY CLUB

For our meeting on June 5 we had a coach tour of London's East End. Our members were allowed to invite guests so we had a full coach and all agreed it was a very enjoyable evening. Even the weather was good to us — after a very dull day it cleared with a beautiful sunset.

The driver gave an excellent commentary, and it was very enlightening to be reminded of so many things now forgotten from our history lessons at school, such as the great fire of London when passing the end of Pudding Lane and actually seeing the site, now a beautiful square with trees and grass, where the many thousands of victims of the plague all those hundreds of years ago were buried. On our way we also learned of many things that perhaps we didn't know about some of London's churches and hospitals. In fact some thought another trip was needed so that we could remember it all!

Before our return journey we stopped for refreshment at a typical old beamed inn by the river, and then arrived back at Hampton Hill about 10.30 pm.  
V.M.P.

### THE LONG WALK

In early June the St. James's "Gang of Four" ventured out to the western limits of England to patrol the border which separates us from the wild Welsh. Our trek was along the line of the original dyke erected by the Great King Offa of Mercia to control the persistently punitive Celts.

Starting south of Monmouth in the Wye valley and proceeding northward o'er hill and dale we eventually arrived at Welshpool, a distance estimated (or more likely overestimated) by our cartographer to be some 95 miles or, as we E.E.C. members like to say, 160 kilometers.

The countryside was delightful, the weather was generally kind and the companionship which came from shared hardships was something to behold. Overnight stops at local hostelries, farmhouses and B & B landladies offered plenty of variety.

Those present: Taylor, Alan; Bridges, Ronald;  
Lawrance, Susan; Lawrance, Tony.

Highly recommended for those stalwarts with grit, determination a sense of humour and with feet in good working order.

P.A.L.

### AROUND THE SPIRE

Congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. E.B. Taylor of Cannon Close, Hampton Hill who celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on June 7. Mr. Taylor, a model-train enthusiast, used to work at the N.P.L., he is 84 years of age and his wife is 86.

Mass Attack: A disappointing response but the weather was not encouraging, many thanks to the few who braced the elements. However, it should be pointed out that workers are always welcome in the churchyard at any time — the need is perpetual. A Nature Note — we were asked to preserve the Lady's Smock plants as the Orange Tip butterfly has laid its eggs on the blossom-heads.

Tennis Match – Don't forget, Friday July 13 at the rear of The Lady Eleanor Holles School – with racquet, suitable shoes and tennis balls if possible, 7 pm onwards. Please do not come if you have any pretensions of playing serious tennis as the standard varies from inadequate to incompetent. It's just fun!

A new Cub-Scout Pack has been formed for boys between eight and eleven years of age on Monday 5.45 – 7.15 pm in the parish hall. Anyone interested should contact Michael Childs on 977 5041.

We are grateful to Gillian Gostling for her valuable service as assistant secretary to the Parochial Church Council last year. Unfortunately she is unable to continue her good work, and we urgently need a successor. The ideal would be an audio-typist with a Phillips dictaphone, who would be able to type out the minutes from Terry Baldwin's dictation, and then duplicate copies for every member. If you think you know of someone who might fit the bill, please let any member of the PCC know. And if you who read this have yourself the necessary skills and equipment, please do not let modesty or shyness prevent you from coming forward and offering them in the service of St. James's.

Our thanks to Judy Hewitt, who has kindly agreed to be responsible for the church-cleaning rota. Anybody willing to help should contact her. There is immediate need for at least another four helpers.

## TWO LETTERS

I should like, through these pages to extend sincere and hearty thanks to all those at St. James's who, during my husband Norman's recent extensive surgery, prayed for us both, visited him, and kindly invited me into their homes for a meal!

I believe these prayers were wonderfully answered – not in half-measure but with "compound interest", for the long and serious operation went through in a way, I believe, well beyond the surgeon's expectations and Norman's recovery has been phenomenal!

We both felt literally 'bathed' in kindness, warmth and good-will and rejoice at the number of good people around us.

Bea Page

May I use the pages of The Spire to thank all the large family of St. James's for the love and concern shown to me during my recent stay in hospital. There were times when I was totally unable to pray myself – I know now that I was upheld by the prayers of so many dear, caring friends. Many thanks for all the cards and words of encouragement and support – they all helped towards my good recovery. THANK YOU.

Pat Young

## VIEW FROM THE PEW

I read with interest the 'Replies to the Questionnaire' in the May issue of The Spire. I feel that you mean to be a caring church and this is why I started attending Parish Communion when I moved into the district 18 months ago. How I wish I could echo the sentiments of the answer quoted in 'To end the introduction . . . . .' – but I cannot. I dare to suggest that the author was a young person. I am not young but neither am I old, and perhaps that is why folks like me get missed. In all the 18 months only twice has anyone spoken to me. Everyone is busy, greeting their friends or arranging business. No – I do not rush out of church as soon as the service is over. Several times I have stayed to coffee, but it only makes one feel more lonely standing drinking coffee with no one to say a cheery word. I am omitting my name and address as I do not want a fuss just because of what I have said. One wants to be valued for one's own sake.

## SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Who's for tennis? Don't forget Friday July 13 at the tennis courts at the rear of The Lady Eleanor Holles School. All you need is the appropriate clothes, a racquet, tennis balls if you have them, and the ability to enjoy yourself. Standards are unimportant. Turn up from 7 pm. onwards and have a good evening.

For the future book the following dates in your diary and watch out for further announcements:-

August (date to be arranged)	A Ramble
Saturday September 15	Hampton and Hampton Hill Community Association Annual Carnival
Sunday October 14	Harvest Tea in Church
Saturday November 3	Annual Fireworks Party at Laurel Dene

## CANCER RESEARCH

On July 20 in the Parish Hall, the Keep Fit Group are having an open afternoon, starting at 2.30 pm in aid of the above fund. We hope this will appeal to many people – the group will give a short demonstration and there will be an opportunity to join in a brief session of Keep Fit.

Admission of 25p includes tea – to be served at 3.30 pm.

To boost the Fund there will be a raffle and a Bring & Buy stall for those who wish to contribute.

We hope this will be an enjoyable afternoon. Do make a note of the date and join us.

Pat and Eila



## CHEMISTS' ADDITIONAL DUTY ROTA

### July

- 8 D.R. Thomas, 113 Stanley Road, Teddington
- 15 H. Hall, 62 High Street, Hampton Hill
- 22 E. Moss, 14 Broad Street, Teddington
- 29 F.G. Martin, 28B Priory Road, Hampton

### August

- 5 D.G. Manley, 122 High Street, Teddington
- 12 F.G. Martin, 3 Station Approach, Hampton
- 19 E. & R. Kirby, 53 High Street, Teddington

## SOME DATES TO NOTE

### July

- 8 Themes at the Welcome Service at 16.30 will be related to SEA SUNDAY and all offerings at this service will be sent to the Missions to Seamen.
- 10 20.00 Parochial Church Council (W)
- 11 19.15 Holy Communion
- 12 20.00 Wayside Monday Centre : Management Group (21 St. James's Road)
- 13 19.00 Parish Tennis Evening (on the courts of The Lady Eleanor Holles School)
- 16 10.30 Editorial Board (75 St. James's Avenue)
- 17 20.00 Prayer Meeting (75 Burton's Road);  
Liturgical Committee (63 Park Road);  
Tuesday Club (W)
- 18 19.15 Holy Communion
- 19 10.30 Young Families Group; 'Childbirth and the Family' (W);  
20.00 Properties' Committee (19 St. James's Road)
- 20 14.30 Keep Fit Open Afternoon in support of Cancer Research (Hall)
- 22 We observe this Sunday as ST. JAMES'S DAY, our PATRONAL FESTIVAL. Morning services and meetings as usual, but instead of Evensong a special WELCOME & FAMILY SERVICE at 16.30, followed by Afternoon Tea on the Churchyard Lawn

- 24 ST. MARY MAGDALEN : 19.15 Holy Communion  
31 20.00 Prayer Meeting (75 Burton's Road);  
Tuesday Club : Summer Supper & Social Evening (W)

**August**

- 1 19.15 Holy Communion  
6 THE TRANSFIGURATION: 19.15 Holy Communion

**BAPTISMS**

**June**

- 10 Andrew Paul Blakeman, 5 Hampton Road East, Hanworth  
Deborah Judith Hennessy, 17 Byron Close

**CREMATION & INTERMENT**

**May**

- 22 Charles Berkeley Rushton, 14 Linksvie Court, Paget Close,  
aged 72 years (at S.W. Middlesex Crematorium)

**June**

- 19 Phyllis Audrey Mitchell, 56 Swan Road, Hanworth, aged 59 years