

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF OUR NEW VICAR

At the Parish Communion Service on Sunday, January 18, 1981 Mr. L.R. Rockliffe announced that the churchwardens have now been informed by the Patron, The Rev. John Rogers, Vicar of St. Mary the Virgin, Hampton that:

The Rev. J. Nicholas Chubb, at present Vicar of All Saints, Brixworth, Northampton, in the Diocese of Peterborough, had been offered the living of St. James's Church, Hampton Hill, and that it had been accepted by him.

Mr. Chubb and his wife Susan, have three children, Andrew who is seventeen, Sarah who is fifteen and Naomi who is twelve. Due to the children's schooling Mr. Chubb will not take up the appointment until July.

Mr. Rockliffe repeated the arrangements during the interregnum, namely that our services will be conducted with the help of the Area Dean and his staff and our licensed readers. Anyone with problems in which they need help should contact, initially, Miss Hannah Stanton.

We extend our most warm and hearty greetings to our new Vicar and his family and we look forward to an article for a forthcoming magazine from him, just as was received by us from Rupert 30 years ago, part of which we reprint in this issue.

FORWARD FROM CHRISTMAS

At this time of year there are doubtless many people who are reflecting on the Christmas, which we have just celebrated, with a feeling of anticlimax. The reasons for this feeling seem clear when are considered the weeks of preparation, which the commercial world allows to us, for Christmas and its secular celebration. These are weeks of hectic shopping in crowded shops in busy towns and cities where the individual gift for a loved one tends to become very insignificant after a few hours searching! When Christmas Day arrives the time which is available to greet family and friends seems disproportionately small when compared with this much longer preparation.

With the outward signs of our Christmas celebrations now removed from our rooms or the front door surely we can be forgiven for a sense of loss? More seriously, when we read our newspapers and watch our television screens, we may fairly ask if Christmas and its celebration has changed for the better the conduct of the affairs of this world?

With firmness and conviction a Christian in his or her daily life can share these thoughts which reflect the historical fact that the first Christmas was a time of suffering for Jesus and His Family. Jesus was born into the same world as we were. The same world of sin and suffering, with their attendant grief and disappointment. Let us never forget that, as the New Testament clearly records, life in the first century was dangerous and frightening with the lives of many people limited by physical sickness. Life in first century Palestine was no earthly paradise!

Yet beyond the suffering of the Holy Family during and after the first Christmas there was, is and always will be a triumphant joy. Why? Surely because the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ began the process of changing the hopelessness of this world in which sin seemed triumphant. This process of redemption led from Bethlehem to a ministry among ordinary people before culminating in a Death and Resurrection and triumphant Ascension into Heaven. This Jesus is God Incarnate who has transformed this world and its people. So He has transformed all who have responded to Him in faith. He has transformed us.

When we reflect on these tremendous facts and that Christmas only was the beginning of our reconciliation to God, we can begin to cope with our current feelings of loss of Christmas splendour! God did not leave the world after the first Christmas. He has not left us now. He requires our faith now to believe in Him as we begin another year of our Christian calling. He requires us to witness to Him in a troubled world with so many distressed and hungry people. He requires us to pray so that He may speak to us and develop within us. He requires us to transform the tinsel values of this world into the eternal values of God's Kingdom.

Let us try to see the reality of what our Christmas celebrations mean to us and the wider community. By such a comparison the true and Christian response to Christmas can be separated from the secular reaction to this great Festival. Our first reflection is to recall the unnecessary hustle and bustle instead of the majesty of receiving our Christmas communion. Certainly we regret the first but never the second of these activities. We will realise that secular society has devalued Christmas by emphasising human pleasure at the expense of divine worship and left us breathless!

Let us recall one further activity of Christmas. The Christmas Card. Primarily they are sent as a greeting of joy to remind sender and receiver of the Joy who is Our Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, Christmas Cards move to the farthest corners of this world. So does God. Will we in our daily lives?

David Dore

LOOKING BACK OVER THE PAST THIRTY YEARS

Parish Magazine September 1950: Message from Edward Beckett and William Wigginton, Churchwardens, announcing the Retirement of the Rev. F. Harvey, "May we ask that everyone will be, during the coming days, pleading that only the man of God's choice may be appointed to take up the reins, and be the one who, constrained by the Holy Spirit, shall come to lead us here at Hampton Hill . . . then let us resolve that during this interregnum all members of St. James's shall be bound by a three-fold cord which shall not be broken, made up of unity in purpose, harmony and loyalty to our unseen, but everpresent Head who watches to see how we will acquit ourselves."

December 1950: The Vicar of St. Mary's, Hampton, the Rev. C. Knapp, M.A., Patron of the Benefice of St. James's, Hampton Hill, informed the P.C.C. on Thursday, November 16 that he had offered the living to the Rev. Rupert Hoyle Brunt, B.A., A.K.C., Vicar of St. Faith's, N. Wilford, Nottingham and that it had been accepted by him.

January 1951: MESSAGE FROM OUR FUTURE VICAR " one thing that has greatly impressed me as a result of the contacts which I have already had is the loyal and efficient way in which St. James's is now being served, and has been served, in not very easy times. When I have heard these things all those who are so faithfully maintaining the work and witness of St. James's in the parish are people after my own heart, and it will be a joy and privilege to work with them as their vicar.

What exactly will our task be? Well, that is something we shall have to think out together when I am actually with you. Two phrases which have been much used in recent years do help us to see part of it is — "going to church" and "being the Church." Both are important but we have in the past often stressed the first and neglected the second. "To be the Church" — that is the primary duty that is laid upon us; really to be in Hampton Hill the fellowship in Christ God wills us to be. To be this in our worship and in our work; to be this in all our planning and playing, in all our thought and action together. This is a very big thing indeed, and all of us have our part to play in working to achieve it.

" It is perhaps not often that a man comes back as vicar to the church in which he was married! But I think it is a very happy link to have, because it means that the church already has a warm corner in our hearts. We start with this affection for it; it is not something which we have to wait to grow. And my wife, a Londoner born and bred is coming back to a district in which she spent four happy years. Chiswick became my home just before I was eleven and I have often rowed from Kew to Hampton Court on the river. So we feel we are not coming to strangers in a strange parish, but are in a sense "coming home" — but not to rest, but to work with you and for you, to the best of our ability and to the utmost of our strength, in the service of God."

As for the aspiration, a non-church witness has paid tribute to its success "Mr and Mrs Brunt were ahead of their time, they made this a Christian parish in the widest sense. Long may it remain so." And as to the vow, expressed above, before they came to us, Connie and Rupert truly gave to us the best of their ability to the utmost of their strength.

Also in the same Magazine, January 1951, appears this tribute: "Sincere thanks to Mr J. Thompson for providing and erecting the beautiful Christmas Tree used for the Childrens' Toy Service also to Mrs. Thompson and David for supplying and fixing the lights and many decorations."

This gift which ushered in the new Ministry continued to be supplied by Mr and Mrs Thompson until the very last Christmas of Rupert and Connie's Ministry with us, and our grateful thanks, too, go out thirty years later to the Thompsons' for all the joy they have given to decades of St. James's worshippers.

M.O.

THE TOWERING INFERNO AT CHRISTMAS

When I saw "The Towering Inferno" advertised as part of the Christmas TV programme I found it rather sad that they should choose to show such a film at Christmas. How can people find it entertaining to watch a disaster? I am told it is a very well made film. How can people find it worthwhile to spend large sums of money and employ great skill to depict a disaster?

We often think we are so civilised now. We find it revolting to think that the Romans enjoyed watching gladiatorial fights where man and beast killed each other. And we find it equally shocking that people flocked to see public executions or torture. Is violence and suffering on the screen so different? I don't think people have become much better over the centuries. Maybe we do not tolerate bloodshed before our eyes, but we do not shrink from watching it in a more indirect way.

That is why I find it sad to see "The Towering Inferno" included in Christmas entertainment on TV. It is not entertainment, and it is most unsuitable for Christmas. Maybe it is a useful reminder that people in the 20th century still need the Saviour to reconcile them with God. God demands justice, love and compassion, and we are very far from these. But that is a thought which will not suggest itself immediately on seeing this particular film advertised.

A more straightforward argument is that Christmas is to remind us of the birth of Jesus, who came to bring healing, love and peace. It strikes me as an odd way to celebrate His birthday and honour His memory by watching a terrifying disaster, which can mean only suffering, the opposite of those three gifts of His.

Hilde Bucknell

I read the above article with some interest when Hilde sent it to me for inclusion in this month's issue of 'The Spire' because it has often been the subject of some debate as to what is suitable television viewing at Christmastime in past years. There is no doubt that the various television companies vie with each other to provide as interesting and exciting a programme of films over the holiday as they are able, and indeed many of the items provided for our entertainment are delightful and thoroughly enjoyable, The Wizard of Oz, Chitty, Chitty Bang, Bang and last Christmas 'The Sound of Music'.

The Towering Inferno was a film which all six of our family sat through enthralled and indeed enjoyed. True it was the story of a disaster, a man-made one at that, could it be a warning to others that greed, in this case skimping on the architect's specifications, and pocketing the cost difference, can lead to terrible consequences? The film showed disaster true, but it also showed courage, humanity and compassion none of which attributes featured in the film the following evening, namely 'The Godfather'. What a horrible film that was — the little of it I could bear to watch, vicious, brutal and at times quite nauseating (the children were all in bed!). It had no redeeming features to me that is, and showed man at his lowest — hardly suitable viewing for Christmas.

It would be interesting to know what other people think about this subject. Christmas is a special time when love, joy and harmony should be the keyword, so what about these films and any others you may have watched; let us know what you think.

Helen Taylor

IRISH CHRISTMAS

As I boarded the plane at Heathrow for Cork I knew I'd miss you all at Christmas time and the friendliness and warmth of services at St. James'.

However, when I was met at the Airport by my niece, Jenny, her husband and Alana, now 10 months old, I was aware of compensations.

Christmas preparations were in full swing in their home about 70 miles west of Cork, these included shopping excursions to Skibberean about 20 miles away. Since fresh vegetables only come to the shops once a week Jenny checked up when the lorries would be in and we had to drive the 20 miles again on the Tuesday to buy vegetables and fruit to last the week.

On Christmas Eve we all four set out to visit friends and as we drove along the empty roads between quiet fields and rocky hills with glimpses of water inlets from the sea I was fascinated to see the lovely houses each with lighted candles set in all the windows, lit to welcome the Christ Child. It really brought a feeling of wonder and expectation to the dark night.

At 11.30 we were driving back along these country roads taking Alana to her first midnight service in the little old church of Altar. I feared that it might be cold but was pleased to see small gas fires placed just above head height along the side walls. I was told that they were presented and connected up, Calor gas of course, by a local inhabitant.

The little church, with its small organ and good organist but no choir was full for both this and the Carol Service later that week although it is way out in the country and people have to drive for miles to worship there.

Alison Thompson

REPORT OF THE LITURGICAL COMMITTEE

When the parish is fortunate in having a fairly large staff in addition (in normal times) to the Vicar, one might wonder, as I sometimes do, what the function of the Liturgical Committee is. What I do know is that there always seems to be plenty to do, not only for the staff who are also members of the committee, but also for the rest of us.

There are, of course, the regular festivals of the church year for which, in addition to the main services or as part of them, special events, such as the play-readings of last Easter and the ever more popular Christingle service at Christmastime, are planned to try to make our celebrations of the festivals as meaningful as possible to as many as can be attracted to them. The other regular feature of our church life for some years now has been the monthly Welcome Service and perhaps the time has come to re-consider the whole concept. However, a great deal of work has gone into these services. For most of the past year, we adopted a common theme for them – each was based on an Old Testament character and a more modern one who had, in various ways, heard and responded to the voice of God. Maybe this became too much of a straight-jacket, but it did give those of us involved much food for thought, and we hope that we gave the congregation something to think about too. We have also taken the opportunity with some of these services to involve groups, such as the Catechuminate, the MU and the Young Families Group, in their presentation. We are just learning to live as a committee without Rupert's invaluable guidance, but the present interregnum does mean that major decisions on such matters as the form of our main services must await the arrival of our new incumbent. We shall continue to try to make our services occasions where we may feel the presence of God and worship Him together in Christian fellowship and love with all who come. If you have any ideas that might help us in this task, please let us know of them.

REB

THE PRAYER AND STUDY GROUP

For a number of years a small group of us has met on alternate Tuesdays at Don Rawlins' house to sing, pray and study the Bible. The atmosphere is friendly and informal, but we do make a serious attempt to analyse and discuss Bible passages with the aid of various commentaries and critical works. Most recently we have 'dissected' Acts and 1 Peter and are at present reading 2 Peter.

During Lent we shall be meeting on a *weekly* basis. As a change from the usual BRF or SU courses which we have followed in past years we are hoping to make use of the Lent Course to be broadcast on Radio 4 from 8 March. The Archbishop of York, Dr. Stuart Blanch, will be giving six lectures on what is sometimes called the second table of the Ten Commandments: do not murder, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, covet. The Archbishop thinks that these commandments are directly relevant to serious problems within our society. He will not be forgetting the other commandments about responsibility to God but, he says, in the Hebrew mind, if not always in ours, religion and ethics are inseparable. Each talk will be followed by questions from the audience, the Archbishop's replies and then questions for discussion by individuals or groups. We hope to record the whole programme each week and use it as the basis for our Lent meetings (Wednesdays at 8pm, 4 March – 15 April).

Needless to say, we would be delighted to see new faces at these or any other of our gatherings. Although we shall sorely miss Rupert and Connie's wise pronouncements and guiding hand, we shall still endeavour to 'seek after the truth' and to grow in love and fellowship with one another.

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER : FRIDAY MARCH 6

This year the services will be held at the United Reformed Church in Hampton Hill and the theme for our thoughts and prayers is "The Earth is the Lord's". The order of service has been devised by the Christian American Indian women. The American Indian tradition holds a special reverence for nature and man's place within the natural order of things – a place we have too often abused – here is an opportunity to review our stewardship of God's great gift. Speakers will be Miss Hannah Stanton (at 2pm) and Mrs. Carol Tipper (8pm). If you would like transport to either of the services please contact: Miss Hannah Stanton, 63 Park Road Tel: 979-5821.

BISHOP WAND P.T.A.

Bishop Wand Parent Teachers' Association are organising a Film Evening on Saturday February 28 at the Methodist Church Hall, Percy Road, at 7.45pm. Tickets for refreshments will be £1 for adults and 50p for children under 16. The programme will consist of a cartoon and a showing of the film 'League of Gentlemen' starring Jack Hawkins, Roger Livesay, Nigel Patrick and Richard Attenborough. Tickets will available in February from Helen Taylor. Two weeks after the Film Show the same P.T.A. will be holding a Jumble Sale at the Methodist Church Hall, Percy Road. Jumble will be taken in from 10am and selling will begin at 2pm. If you want jumble collected phone 979-7042. Volunteers also wanted to help man the stalls, provide refreshments etc. – again contact Helen Taylor.

**CHURCH OF ENGLAND CHILDREN'S SOCIETY
CENTENARY 1881 – 1981**

I would like to thank all those including the Cubs and Brownies who so generously responded to my appeal for Coins and Jewellery, and as a result two large cardboard boxes were filled and taken to the nearest collecting Depot in Sheen.

Our effort was much appreciated and I would draw your attention to the letter from the Special Appeals Organiser which I have put on the Church Notice Board. I am still collecting and there must be many more of you with unwanted coins, foreign coins and Jewellery. Please look it out and send to me to help this very worthwhile cause.

In the Society's Homes and Day Care projects children of all races, creeds and needs are welcomed and cared for by members of the Staff from many parts of the world.

Doris Childs

FINAL REMINDER – PANTOMANIA DANCE 21 FEBRUARY 1981

There will be a super (yes) Buffet Dance with the John West Trio including female vocalist organised by the Social Committee in the Church Hall on Saturday 21 February. Fancy Dress optional, i.e. pantomime characters. Tickets £3.50 each. Limited number only.

THE CHILDREN AT CHRISTMAS

I was greatly inspired by the Christingle Service, and as the children held their Christingle oranges around the church it made me feel Christ the Light of the World so very close to me. As we walked in procession around the church to see those children's happy faces in the candle light was very touching. It brought the true meaning of Christmas to us as was shown by the Sunday School Children in their special presentation; it isn't the crackers, mince pies, decorations, or even Carol Singers with lovely voices like Christopher Taylor's 'Harking to the Herald Angels', but a child, a little baby is the real, true best. I think that presentation and the Christingle made Christmas real to me.

V.C.

ST. JAMES'S YOUNG FAMILIES GROUP

We continue to meet every Thursday at 10.30am until 12 noon at 25 St. James's Road – Wayside – nearly opposite the church. Any mothers with babies or young children are most welcome to join us and enjoy a cup of coffee and a chat. There are plenty of toys to keep the children amused and occupied.

Spring Programmes

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| Feb. | 5th | Bring and Buy of Nearly New Childrens' Clothes. |
| | 12th | T.C. |
| | 19th | Marriage in the '80s – Ann Starky |
| | 26th | Half Term |
| Mar. | 5th | National Health Film |
| | 12th | T.C. |
| | 19th | Pre-reading skills – Sally Low |
| | 26th | T.C. |
| Apr. | 2nd | Mothering Sunday – Pram Service in Church with refreshments. |
| | 9th | T.C. |

N.B. T.C. stands for Toddlers' Club

On Sunday afternoon, January 11, we held a special service. Led by Pam Atkinson, the service consisted of short talks, interspersed with readings and hymns, explaining the significance and meaning of Jesus's light leading us. The offertory was presented with dignity by the 3 Kings (alias Elizabeth Copland, Rachel Lloyd and Victoria Hazell) whose costumes were splendid. Ron Bridges carried a tall lighted star from the front to the back of the church, in otherwise complete darkness, stopping at the Bethlehem scene. Everyone enjoyed the service although attendance was poor, especially from the group itself. Thanks to all who helped, particularly Ron Bridges, Olive Wright and Olive Hayward.

D. Nunn

MEDITATION – A WAY TO PEACE IN OUR TIME

When we have spent Quiet Days at the community at Ham, we have sensed the peace there, and we were fortunate at a recent meeting of our Koinonia, to have a feeling of that peace brought to us by Sister Judith from that community. During the evening, we all felt the peace that was within her and somehow left our busy lives outside as we tried, with her, to become aware of the presence of God with us.

The sisters at Ham had obviously been impressed by the example of two Japanese Buddhist nuns who had stayed with them recently, and Sister Judith clearly believed, as they did, that peace must start within and that harmony must be found between God, the cosmos and one's self. If one is at peace within one's self, then there is at least that peace in the world. Speaking of the symbolism of the circle in the east and also in the west, Sister Judith suggested that we might think upon the beautiful rose windows of many of our Christian churches – of the spokes leading to the inner self or to God, and of the circle enclosing and containing not only the good things but also the bad and the

chaotic. This need to bring all aspects of our lives to God, and not just the relatively good parts, was echoed later, and we heard, in an aside, how the sisters at Ham had rejected an expurgated version of the psalms after coming to the conclusion that it was helpful to bring before God the terrible as well as the holy. In the middle of the evening, we listened to readings from "The Cloud of Unknowing" (by an anonymous fourteenth century English mystic). The cloud of unknowing is the English equivalent of the aridity sometimes experienced by Spanish divines, but no doubt most of us have first to rise above the lower clouds of perception to get the glimpses of the light we seek. And to help us in this, Sister Judith led us in the technique of bodily relaxation and quiet meditation around the lighted candle which we find so helpful. Thus, in our simple way, we tried to open ourselves to God and found, and shared with each other, in some part, the peace of our Lord, and we are grateful to Sister Judith for helping us in this. We do not usually have such an experienced voice to guide us, but we do hope that more will come to share the Koinonia with us on most Thursday evenings — all are very welcome.

Ron Bridges

CHRISTINGLE 1980

Our Christingle service led by the Reverend Frank Winderbank, of the Church of England Children's Society, was held on Sunday December 21. During a very interesting talk the custom of Christingle was explained to us — the orange which represented the world, the red ribbon around the orange the Blood of Christ, the candle on top of the orange the Light of the World and the raisins and sweets the fruits of the earth. After singing carols old and new the service ended by each child coming forward into the aisle and being presented with a Christingle, some of which were lighted. The lights of the church were extinguished and with parents and friends joining in we all processed around the church, now illuminated only the The Light of the World. It was delightful to see the candlelight reflected on the children's wondering faces. After the service my son's Christingle lighted our path through a dark and damp churchyard and lasted until we reached home. Thankyou to those people who worked so hard beforehand preparing the Christingles. I wonder, did you all see the photograph of our Christingle service, taken on Sunday morning and printed in The Times the following day? I hope that this happy photograph gave as much pleasure to Times readers as it did to us in Hampton Hill.

Mavis Williams

CHEMISTS ADDITIONAL DUTY ROTA

Feb.	1	E. Moss Ltd., 14 Broad Street, Teddington
	8	F.G. Martin, 28b Priory Road, Hampton
	15	D.G. Manley, 122 High Street, Teddington
	22	F.G. Martin, 3 Station Approach, Hampton
Mar.	1	E.R. Kirby, 53 High Street, Teddington
	8	Boots, 59 Broad Street, Teddington

SOME DATES TO NOTE

FEBRUARY 1981

- 1 FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
09.30 Monthly FAMILY AND PARADE SERVICE
- 2 PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE
(Arrangements for services to-day will be notified at a later date)
- 3 20.00 TUESDAY CLUB meets at Wayside
- 4 14.30 MOTHERS' UNION meeting at Wayside — Mrs. E. Severn and Mrs. V. Prentice will speak on "Our Australian Visit".
20.00 Prayer & Study Group meets at 75 Burton's Road
- 5 19.15 Holy Communion : 20.00 Koinonia
- 8 FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
16.30 Evensong. There will be no Welcome Service on this Sunday
- 9 14.30 Ladies' Choir (in vestry)
- 12 19.15 Holy Communion : 20.00 Koinonia
- 15 NINTH SUNDAY BEFORE EASTER — Services are as usual to-day
- 17 20.00 TUESDAY CLUB MEETS at Wayside
20.00 SOCIAL COMMITTEE : Meets at 115 Burton's Road
- 18 20.00 Prayer & Study Group meets at 75 Burton's Road
- 19 19.15 Holy Communion : 20.00 Koinonia
- 21 20.00 PANTOMANIA BUFFET DANCE at the Parish Hall
Tickets £3.50 each
- 22 EIGHTH SUNDAY BEFORE EASTER — Services are as usual to-day
- 23 14.30 Ladies' Choir (in vestry)
- 26 19.15 Holy Communion : 20.00 Koinonia

MARCH 1981

- 1 SEVENTH SUNDAY BEFORE EASTER
09.30 Monthly FAMILY AND PARADE SERVICE
- 3 20.00 TUESDAY CLUB meets at Wayside
- 4 ASH WEDNESDAY
14.30 Mothers' Union Ash Wednesday Service
(If weather is indifferent this service will be offered at Wayside)
19.15 Holy Communion (in church or vestry)
20.00 Lent Course starts at 75 Burton's Road
- 5 20.00 Koinonia
- 8 FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT
16.30 Evensong. There will be no Welcome Service on this Sunday
- 9 14.30 Ladies' Choir (in vestry)
- 11 20.00 Lent Course at 75 Burton's Road (continues weekly)
- 12 19.15 Holy Communion : Koinonia

FUNERAL SERVICE AND INTERNMENT AT NORTH SHEEN/CHISWICK CEMETERY

January 13 Mrs. Lily Manley, Aged 86 years
14, Queen's Road, Hampton Hill

INTERNMENT IN ST. JAMES'S CHURCH GRAVEYARD AFTER REQUIEM MASS AT CHISWICK

January 20 Mrs. Beatrice Margaret Ewells, Aged 86 years