

"IT NEVER SNOWS IN HAMPTON HILL"

Lewis Carroll in *Through the Looking Glass* makes the Queen say to Alice 'Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast'.

What do you think of as being impossible? Nuclear Disarmament and World Peace? The Russians and Americans giving up their 'imperialist' attitudes? (which we in this country held not so long ago!). The end of grinding poverty in any part of the world? Work for all? An end to inflation? Unity between *all* Christians?

These are six possible pre-breakfast impossibilities. And the list could be very much longer and each one of us could produce a list of our own according to our hopes and experiences of life.

January 25th is kept in the Christian Church as the anniversary of St. Paul's Conversion on the road to Damascus where he was going to arrest the followers of Jesus. If anyone had asked the early disciples of an impossible idea the Conversion of Saul, as he then was, might have come high up on the list; after all Saul had urged on the men who stoned Stephen to death. But the seemingly impossible happened and the world has never been quite the same since.

Earlier this century the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was started in France taking the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul as its last day. Perhaps the tremendous strides towards visible unity that have occurred recently have been as a result of this continuous and strenuous effort by increasing numbers of people. Here in Hampton Hill the United Service will take place at the United Reformed Church at 6.45 p.m. on 24th January. This is particularly poignant this year since this Church has found itself unable to accept the Proposals for Covenanting towards closer visible unity as they now stand. The Local Anglican Deanery Synod, on the other hand, while seeing all sorts of difficulties of various kinds was courageous enough to accept the Proposals! Come if you can, and if you can't be there in person use the prayers for Unity.

Jesus had some trenchant comments on the behaviour of his disciples in differing circumstances. 'What is impossible for men is possible for God', he said, referring to the difficulty the rich would have in entering the kingdom of God. 'Everything is possible to one who has faith' Jesus said to the father of an epileptic child whom the disciples had been unable to cure.

Christians are often sadly noted for their lack of faith. When our human resources run out, or better still before they run out, we would do well to remember the strictures of Jesus 'With God all things are possible'. Even in 1982 in this world which is in such a mess all things are possible.

FILM EVENING

One evening in November a large crowd gathered in the church hall for the Social Committee's showing of "Watership Down" and "The Belles of St. Trinians". Excitement mounted as the children (and some of the adults!) stocked up with crisps and sweets. I thoroughly enjoyed "Watership Down", but felt it was perhaps a little frightening for some of the younger children. Having said that, however, it was an adult who confided to me the next day that she had dreamt about it, but her daughter had not. A raffle and refreshments brought a welcome break, then we settled down for the "St. Trinians" classic — enjoyed more by the adults than the children, who contented themselves with more supplies from the tuck shop. During the interval, a tape of cinema organ music was played, and a very entertaining and good value for money (£1) evening was had by all. Many thanks to those involved and may the experience soon be repeated.

Debbie Nunn

C.Y.C. NEWS

Joe Brownly (the C.Y.C. organiser) organised an evening for the C.Y.C. (Church Youth Club) on Sunday, 16th November at Wayside for P.C. Rice to come and talk to us about the Police Force. He spoke about where a policeman goes, what he does, what he carries and all about his life. Then he opened the floor for questions and he was showered with them from every direction. His answers were so interesting that it made us realise how hard policemen have to work and what a wonderful job they do. Many thanks to Joe for organising that evening and to P.C. Rice for giving up his evening to talk to us.

Robin Smith (age 10)

On Sunday, 22nd November C.Y.C. met Jan Murray, from the Hampton and Hampton Hill Community Care Group. Jan gave us a very interesting talk all about C.C.G. and what it does. We also had a discussion to find out what a good community is and what sort of help a member of the community needs. On behalf of the C.Y.C., I should like to thank Jan for coming along, and giving us a very good opportunity to find out about our neighbourhood needs.

Sarah Britten

DO YOU LOVE THE HANDICAPPED?

I wonder how you, sincerely in your heart, have reacted to the disabled persons you have met. Have you felt — revulsion, horror, sorrow, guilt, fear, pity, distress or compassion?

I know when recently giving birth to my young daughter Hannah, I heaved a great sigh of relief and a prayer of thankfulness that we now have two healthy and beautiful children. I don't know if I could really cope with a severely disabled child, let alone show him all the love he so desperately needs. Perhaps you have felt the same. Why do I question my feelings and ask you to question yours — mainly because the Young Families Group have recently viewed a film called, "And all your Children", published by the Church of England Childrens Society; filmed at one of their homes for disabled children, St. Christophers, Birmingham.

The film showed these physically disabled children as real personalities, not just deformed, unsightly human beings – but children needing to give and to receive love – some were obviously in great pain and showed great courage and patience. The children just like any other children wanted the reassurance of physical contact which the staff gave unstintingly, sharing a very special caring relationship with the children.

For me the message of the film was that these children are as beautiful and worthy of consideration as are my own – that each individual was a special, alive, personality with a well developed sense of mischief and humour.

The Society helped in 1980, 5,400 children and their families, as well as working with over 4,000 in their own homes.

The Society's work is very special, in that it tries to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ into the lives of the children and their parents. Their aim is to maintain, encourage and strengthen the bonds between child and family, to develop skills and allow them as much independence as possible. It should be said that the Society doesn't only care for the disabled – it is also one of the biggest adoption and fostering agencies in the country. It helps with distressed families of all kinds – as its motto says, "Children First".

The Society is funded solely from the generosity of the public, the Christian community in particular – so I ask you, whilst we are still remembering the Festivities and the expenses, the happiness of the New born child at Christmas – to spare a thought, a prayer, a gift for the Society's much needed work.

Another thought comes to me that there is nothing to fear from those who are disabled, that the Lord has brought each of us into the world for a particular purpose. He cares and loves each of us, and requires us to do the same. Who are we to question or discriminate against or for one of God's children?

Pam Atkinson

WELCOME SERVICE FOR EPIPHANY, SUNDAY 10th JANUARY, 16.30

Apart from an evening communion, on the 6th January itself, a special Welcome Service is going to mark the festival of Epiphany this year. It has been devised by the Young Families Group and will incorporate a picturesque procession behind our very own Star of Bethlehem. It will be quite informal and put across a simple message; a happy and beautiful way of rounding off our Christmas celebrations.

THE PARISH QUIET DAY – 13th FEBRUARY

The Parish Quiet Day will be held at St. Michael's Convent, Ham Common on the 13th February from mid-morning (about 10.30 a.m.) to after tea (about 4.00 p.m.). For some it will need no explanation. Others will ask "what is it for?" or "what do I do?" or "is it really necessary?". A quiet day is an opportunity to spend more than the usual amount of time we allow ourselves not only for 'our' prayer but for listening deliberately to God speaking to us in the silence. There will be three short addresses by the Vicar followed by periods of quiet. We are asked to take our own packed lunch; coffee and tea will be provided.

The convent can accommodate up to 50 people. Please put your name on the list at the back of the church, *not later than 31st January*, if you would like to go. We are asked to pay £2.00 per head, but no-one must stay away if that is a problem.

THE ALTERNATIVE SERVICES BOOK

This was published in November 1980 and since then the parish has been using the Collects and Bible Readings from it for the Parish Communion. But there is more in it than that and on two Sundays in January there will be an Explanation and opportunities to ask questions.

At Evensong on 24th and 31st January there will be no Sermon. Instead, after the service, we shall meet to explore the ASB together. Do come and take the opportunity offered to find out more about it.

THE CATECHUMENATE

We have three groups in the parish which help people in different ways to come to a deeper understanding of their Faith in God: the Good News Group, Koinonia and the Catechumenate. The Catechumante is rather more formal than the others and is based on the experience of Continental Christianity. On 31st January there will be an 'Announcement' at the Parish Communion at which people will be invited to join in a period of instruction. Some of those involved will be speaking briefly about what it means to them.

PANCAKE PARTY – SATURDAY, 20th FEBRUARY

Feeling flat and rather jaundiced after Christmas? Come and have a real flip in the Church Hall, School Road on Saturday, 20th February. The Social Committee are planning a special New-Year-cum-Mardi-Gras Party for all the family. Watch for posters nearer the date and get your frying pans ready. It'll be Fun! Fun! Fun!

Roger Bucknell

AROUND THE SPIRE

Our congratulations go to Ioanna Kikidas, Dawn Miller and Louise Murphy who will receive the Queens Guide Award. The presentation will be made at their meeting in the Church Hall on Monday, 25th January, 7 p.m.

THE LEGEND OF THE FOURTH KING

Did you know that four and not three kings set out from the East to worship the King of the Earth? So we are told in an old Russian legend. They were travelling along, each carrying with him the most precious gift he could find in his country: burning gold one, fragrant incense another, precious myrrh the third, and the fourth and youngest three priceless jewels.

The mysterious star was leading the way and they followed it without rest. They were oblivious to day or night, hunger or thirst. They were blind to the beauty of the earth, deaf to the noisy splendour of towns. The desert did not alarm them; not even the sun itself could do them any harm, since they were seeking Him, for whom their people had been searching for a thousand years, the God-King, the Saviour.

It was the young king who burnt most fiercely with the longing to see God. In the end he rode along quite lost in his dreams. Then – suddenly he heard a whimpering so urgent and desperate that it dispelled all his dreams. He saw a child lying in the dust, naked, bleeding from five wounds. So mysteriously strange and delicate was this child, and so totally helpless, that he was filled with

tender mercy and lovingly lifted it on to his horse. Slowly he returned into the village through which he had just come. The three other kings had not noticed anything. They kept on following the star.

Nobody in the village knew the child. Yet the young king had become so fond of it that he asked a good woman to care for it. He took one of the jewels out of his belt and left it to the child so that its life might be secure. Then he felt compelled to look for his companions and the star which he had lost. He asked people which way the other kings had taken, and eventually he saw the star again and hurried on his way. But it was strange, as much as he longed to find the Saviour of the World and to kneel in front of him — the distress of the child had opened his ears to all suffering, and he could not close his heart to it any more.

The star led him through a town where he met a funeral procession. Behind the coffin walked a woman with her children. Her face showed utter despondency, and the children were clinging to their mother in desperation. The king dismounted from his horse because he understood that it was not the bereavement alone that had caused this agony. After burying their husband and father the woman and her children were going to be mercilessly separated and sold into slavery, because nobody was willing to look after them. Overcome by pity he took the second jewel from his belt. It lay on his hand glinting and shining in the sun. It was meant for the new-born king. But with a quick movement he put it in the hand of widow. "Pay what you owe, buy some land and build a home for yourself and your children". Then he remounted his horse and made to follow the star again — but this had disappeared. He looked for it for days and weeks. A deep sadness fell on his soul. Doubts troubled his mind. Had he disobeyed his call? And the fear that he might never be allowed to find God ate away at his body. Until one day his light began to shine again and he pursued his goal with renewed strength and a cheerful heart.

He passed through a foreign country; it was ravaged by war; suffering and blood covered the earth and hearts. In a village soldiers had rounded up farmers and were going to cruelly kill them. In the huts the women were screaming in frenzy and the children whimpering. The young king was seized with horror. He had only one jewel left — should he approach the King of Kings empty-handed? But this misery was so enormous that he sacrificed this last gem with trembling hands, thus freeing the men from death and the village from devastation. Tired and sad he carried on. His star was no longer shining. His soul had perished in the suffering. Where was his own way? Again and again he was held back from reaching his goal by the distress of other people. He wandered for years. Walking in the end because he had even given away his horse. He possessed nothing now. A beggar himself, he roamed the lands; here helping an old woman carry a load that was too heavy for her, there looking after sick people, or driving away the flies that molested a half-starved horse.

He became familiar with all kinds of suffering. He could not avoid any pain that he met. And one day in the port of a big town he happened to come across a man who was just going to be forced away from his unhappy wife and children. He was a slave who had rebelled against the tyranny of his master and was to pay for this on a convicts ship — a galley. Beseeking the king begged them to pardon the poor man, and when all was in vain he offered himself in his stead. He paid for the unhappy man with his own freedom, his own life, and he himself entered the ship as a galley slave.

Was what he had brought on himself not too difficult? His pride rebelled when he was locked into the iron chain. So far he had not suffered any real agony himself. Here he had his place among criminals. The dull thud indicating the rowing rhythm constantly reverberated through the hull. Chained as he was to his bench, he faced certain death in any storm or battle.

Had he not acted senselessly? He groaned in torment. And in this dangerous hour, when his spirit was about to rebel and his heart harden — the star which he had never hoped to see again in the sky — his star arose in his soul. This inner light filled him with the quiet confidence that he was still on the right road. Comforted now, he grasped the oar. Years passed. He forgot to count them. His hair turned grey, his hands became calloused, his maltreated body tired. But his heart knew no bitterness, for his star was still shining for him. And his face shone with the warmth of love.

People noticed this remarkable slave, and one day what he had not dared hope happened; he was given his freedom. He left the ship on the shore of a foreign land. Poor fishermen looked after him for the night. This night he dreamt of his star, in the pursuit of which he had as a young man left home and riches. A voice called to him: "Hurry! It is time. Hurry!" He set out that very hour. And as he stepped out into the night, behold — the star rose before him once again, and its glow was red like the sun in the evening.

So he hurried along and came to the gates of a big town. Noisy bustle filled its streets. Excited groups of people were constantly being urged along by soldiers. Many people were making their way outside the town walls. The masses carried him with them. A dull fear weighed him down. He was climbing a hill. There between heaven and earth, he saw three tall staves. His star, which was supposed to lead him to the King of the world came to rest over the staff in the middle, flared up once more — it was as if the star screamed — and then it was gone.

Then the gaze of the man who hung on that cross fell on him. This gaze made him think that the man must have taken up into himself all the suffering, all the pain of the entire earth. But at the same time all goodness and boundless love breathed from his body which remained full of dignity despite the disfigurement of pain. His hands were pierced by nails, and light seemed to be pouring out from them.

Like a flash the realisation hit the king: this is the King of all men. This is God, the Saviour of the world, whom I have been searching for, longed for so desperately. I met him in all the people who were helpless and in need. I have served Him by helping the tortured and suffering.

He sank to his knees under the cross. What could he give Him now? Nothing. He stretched his empty hands out towards the Lord, and three drops of the precious blood fell into them from the cross. They glowed more than any jewel. A cry pierced the air — the Lord bowed his head and died. Beneath the cross the king had collapsed dead. His hands clasped the drops of blood. In death he was still looking on the Lord on the cross.

After an old Russian legend.

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

Here is an item especially for you. I do hope you have all had a happy Christmas and now a Happy New Year. I thought it would be a very good thing for us to start the New Year searching the Bible. It is a lovely book full of lots of

exciting stories, so, I will put down six questions for you to find the answers and if you do them correctly, your name will be in the magazine. Those up to the age of 8 years old to do 3 and those over that age to do 6. Put your name, address, and age, and send it to Miss V. Clark, 19 Fairlight, Uxbridge Road, Hampton Hill, before January 20, 1982.

Questions — Write out all the verse — all the answers come from Matthew 2.

1. How did the Wise men know where to find Jesus?
2. Were they happy or sad?
3. What did they do when they found Jesus?
4. What presents did they give Him?
5. Where did the Wise men come from?
6. Where was Jesus born?

LESOTHO DRAINS FUND — PROGRESS REPORT

In the autumn of last year I made an appeal on behalf of St. Catherine's, an African Girls' High School in Lesotho, Southern Africa run by the Sisters of the Convent of the Holy Name. I spent 3 months of the Summer of 1979 at the Convent in this small independent Kingdom landlocked within South Africa, and this included two very happy weeks teaching at St. Catherines.

Your generous donations last year amounted to almost £100 and this money has been used to finance 2 different projects at the school. The first of these is the building of a new drainage system and I have since heard that sufficient funds have been raised for digging to start. This has begun to remedy the very serious health hazard caused by the previous method of sewage disposal which was greatly inadequate.

In addition, the money you contributed helped to build a new dormitory which was completed and blessed by the Bishop of Lesotho on November 30th last year in celebrations which included a procession of blessing, an outdoor mass, Zulu dancing and many stalls and sideshows aimed at raising money for the Drains Fund. The children themselves have been very busy fund raising in many imaginative ways and with great enthusiasm; £350 alone was raised by some of the older girls when they took part in the performance of a play attended by the King of Lesotho himself, Moshoeshoe II, a very great honour for them all!

The new dormitory, as well as providing much needed new sleeping accommodation, has also released other buildings for other uses such as offices, bookstores, etc., hopefully improving administrative efficiency at the school. During a recent outbreak of chickenpox, thanks to a new room available as a sickroom the victims could stay at school and write their exams (of supreme importance to them) since they were not very ill but only just infectious, whereas previously they would have had to go home to prevent spreading the infection to other students.

As you can imagine your generosity was very greatly appreciated by both the Sisters and girls alike and I have been asked to thank you all on their behalf.

However funds are still needed in order to complete the drainage scheme and ensure that the health hazard will be completely remedied. St. James' P.C.C. has very generously agreed to donate a further £100 to the scheme this year and I would like to express my thanks for that. But most of all I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all the generous parishioners of St. James' for their contributions, however small, and for the extremely valuable improvements at the school that you have helped to make possible.

Helen Lawrence

P.S. For an interesting letter of thanks from the Sisters see the charities notice board in church.

LOOKING BACK 1953 — THE SPIRE

November: A firework coffee party to which guests brought money, fireworks and apples for toffee apples and a fireworks party in the Vicarage Garden were both organised by Mrs. M. Orton (the first of the Parish Firework Parties — functions which lasted up until 1979. For several years this function was funded in the same manner until it grew too big and the Social Committee took it over.) Many events were taking place for the Renovation Fund. It was a very busy and rewarding time and by January 1954 £1000 had been collected. Also much restoration had been achieved by hard manual effort by many volunteers.

1954 — P.C.C. MINUTES

April: Renovation Fund now £1058.

July: WAYSIDE to be purchased for £3750. I remember that night; it was a very close thing, 11 votes for and 9 against. What good fortune — literally — for St. James's that the ayes had it!

August: 16 applications received to join the newly formed St. James' Badminton Club. (This club flourished for many years). Mrs. Orton presented the report of the Commission on The Wider Church and the P.C.C. confirmed its approval of the FORMATION OF AN OLD PEOPLES' WELFARE COMMITTEE in Hampton Hill, Mrs. Orton and Mrs. L. Mills to represent the P.C.C. on the first Executive Committee (Mrs. Mills was later made a President of this Committee due to her long and faithful service to it.)

October: Renovation Fund stands at £1135. A letter of thanks sent to Miss H. Stanton for her work on behalf of the Fund. An inaugural meeting of the Old Peoples' Welfare Committee held in church hall, some 60 representatives of interested organisations were present and the proposal from the Commission to the Wider Church that such a Committee should be formed was carried unanimously. Specimen Crib Figures were viewed and Mrs. and Mr. L. Brown thanked for their part in making the purchase possible. (We enjoy these figures every Christmas as the Sunday School Children carefully place them in the crib).

December: On behalf of the Commission to the Wider Church a Street Warden Service had been set up, the volunteers agreeing to act on behalf of the newly formed Old Peoples' Committee. There were already 20 volunteers.

Once more the Thompson family were to supply the Church Christmas Tree — a practice which continued until very recently.

1954 — THE SPIRE

May: Miss Stanton reitres as Renovation Fund Secretary to read Theology at Oxford University.

Obituary on The Rev. F.P.P. Harvey, Vicar 1923-51. Educated Kings College and Durham University, ordained in 1902. It was in the early days of his incumbency that P.C.C.'s had to assume responsibility for obtaining funds for all purposes. The heating boiler was enlarged and kneelers were provided by voluntary

labour. The churchyard was enlarged and the conversion of the old school buildings into a Parish Hall and Club Rooms. The church land in St. James's Road was sold and the Victorian Vicarage replaced by the 1937 one. The Spire had been badly shaken during the war and this damage was made good before Mr. Harvey's period of office ended. Mr. Harvey's musical ability lead to high standards and his good delivery meant that his reading and preaching could always be heard and understood (inspite of the appalling acoustics!) It was a shock to the Parish when, after 25 years service his health broke and he had to retire.

M.O.

CHEMISTS ADDITIONAL DUTY ROTA

- January 10 E & R. Kirby, 53 High Street, Teddington
 17 Boots the Chemists, 59 Broad Street, Teddington
 24 D.R. Thomas, 113 Stanley Road, Teddington
 31 H. Hall, 62 High Street, Hampton Hill
- February 7 E. Moss Ltd., 14 Broad Street, Teddington
 14 F.G. Martin (Chemists) Ltd., 28b Priory Road, Hampton

BAPTISMS:

- 13th December Melanie Lee Gates, 5 Taylor Close
 Darrel Christopher Colin Gates, 5 Taylor Close
 Philip Charles Gordon Corney, 37 Cranmer Road

FUNERALS:

- 24th November Mary Mabel Woolmer, Laurel Dene, aged 92
26th November Doris Margaret Largent, 12 Roy Grove, aged 76
3rd December Leonard John Hitch, 56 Pigeon Lane, aged 80
8th December Walter William Powney, 70 Myrtle Road, aged 74

DATES TO NOTE

- January
- 10 EPIPHANY 1
Morning Services as usual
16.30 Epiphany Welcome Service
 - 12 09.45 Editorial Board, 75 St. James's Avenue
 - 13 10.00 Liturgical Dancing, 68 Park Road
20.00 Good News Group, 75 Burtons Road
 - 14 20.00 Hall Management Committee
 - 17 EPIPHANY 2
Services as usual
 - 18 14.30 Ladies Choir, Vestry
 - 19 20.00 Tuesday Club, Bring and Buy Auction, Wayside
 - 24 EPIPHANY 3
Morning Services as usual
16.30 Evensong, shortened, with discussion of ASB
18.45 United Service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity,
United Reformed Church
 - 26 20.00 PCC Wayside
 - 27 10.00 Liturgical Dancing Church
20.00 Good News Group, 75 Burtons Road
 - 28 20.00 Properties Committee, 19 St. James's Road
 - 31 EPIPHANY 4
08.00 Holy Communion
09.30 Parish Communion with Announcement by
Catechumenate
16.30 Evensong, shortened, with discussion of ASB
- February
- 1 14.30 Ladies Choir, Vestry
Presentation of Christ (Candlemass)
(Items for sale in aid of RSPB)
 - 2 20.00 Tuesday Club, Mr. K. Betton "Butterflies and Flowers"
 - 3 14.30 Mothers Union, Wayside
 - 7 9th SUNDAY BEFORE EASTER
Services as usual
 - 9 20.15 Liturgical Committee, 63 Park Road
 - 10 10.00 Liturgical Dancing, Church
20.00 Good News Group, 75 Burtons Road
 - 13 Parish Quiet Day, Ham
 - 14 8th SUNDAY BEFORE EASTER
Services as usual
 - 16 09.45 Editorial Board, 75 St. James's Avenue

Regular Weekday Events

- Monday 10.30-13.30 and 20.00-22.00 Monday Wayside Centre
- Tuesday 19.30 Vestry Choir Practice
- Wednesday 20.00 Catechumenate
- Thursday 10.30-12.00 Young Families Group, Wayside
19.15 Holy Communion
20.00 Koinonia
- Saturday 19.00 Catechumenate
- Sunday 19.30 Church Youth Club