

Look up the word Steward in the dictionary. You will find that it has a surprising number of meanings. One of these is the name given to a club official — the provider of food and drink; another is the name given to someone who looks after you on a flight on holiday (as often also of course a stewardess); another is the official at a race meeting (he seems most often to be holding enquiries into complaints of one kind or another); and the meaning generally explained first is "a person employed to manage another's property, especially a great house or estate". (This is actually the literal explanation of the word because "sty" (as in pigsty) means a house in Old English and "ward" means a protector).

The word steward appears in the Old and New Testaments from Genesis to the Gospels and Epistles. In St. Peter's First Letter (ch.4,v.10) this instruction is given "whatever gift each of you may have received, use it in service to one another, like good stewards dispensing the grace of God in its varied forms".

Perhaps we don't usually look at the world like this, but we could say the world and the whole creation is God's Estate and Christians are those who are called and appointed to look after it. And that lays on us a great responsibility. If we are to be good stewards, then we must first be aware and take account of all we have to look after. Each one of us has gifts and skills and abilities which are God-given, and our problem is how to use them best to the glory of God.

Allied with this, not separate from but all intermingled with it, is what we have evolved to live with, money. For many people in Church circles the word "Stewardship" immediately has overtones of cash contributions to the central coffers. I have tried to explain that it covers much more. However, it does cover money, and currently cash is our problem. At our Stewardship Review on 27th November we shall this year be concentrating on this part of Stewardship. Those of you who are already part of the Stewardship family I would ask to make a special effort to attend. Those of you who are not yet part of it, please come along and join in. You will all almost certainly hear something new from those who speak. It is a chance to find out fresh facts and to discover how each one of us can make a real contribution to the life of the Church locally and further afield.

November is also the pre-eminent month for Remembrances, both ecclesiastical and civil. The first day of the month is All Saints' Day, which we might describe as the day when we thank God for all those who got their Stewardship right in years gone by. Not the "great names", but the "little ones". Then by tradition some Christians have kept November 2nd as All Souls' Day on which people remember those departed especially dear to them. Finally we have Remembrance Sunday on which those who have lost their lives in the military struggle for peace are remembered.

IMPRESSIONS OF A MOSQUE

On Saturday September 21st a coachload of visitors from three local churches set off from Hampton Hill to visit the Mosque in Regents Park. This visit had been organised by the Hampton Council of Churches.

The Mosque is a very large building with a dome covered in gold leaf and very lovely in the afternoon sunshine. In the entrance hall children were playing, groups of people stood chatting and a stall selling books, gifts and souvenirs was doing a steady trade. All notices were in Arabic with English translations.

Our group removed our shoes and entered a very large room carpeted most luxuriously. One's eyes were immediately drawn upwards to the largest and most beautiful chandelier I have ever seen. The only fittings in the room were a pulpit, 2 small doors and an arched recess. These were all joined together and made of intricately carved wood. The windows were plain glass and underneath were a few small cupboards with books on top. No crosses, candles, flowers, seats, ornaments or organ.

As visitors we were allowed in as a mixed group, but normally only men are present downstairs, while women go to a balcony on the first floor. Our guide spoke most courteously and answered questions. We then divided up – ladies upstairs, men down, and two sisters showed us the ablutions room. This is very special to them, as before worshipping five times a day they go through a special cleansing ritual.

After the call to pray was chanted by the Imam, everyone faced Mecca and then prostrated themselves. Noses and foreheads must touch the ground, and this was done several times with much chanting. The men stood in straight rows and all late comers dropped their bags or carriers and ran over to join the others. After their worship was completed they relaxed and stood or sat around quite informally.

A glass screen and net curtains fronted the balcony so we could see but not be seen from the room below. The women and children worshipped upstairs at the same time as the men downstairs. Afterwards the sisters chatted to us for some time and explained many facets of their religion. Finally we said our farewells to them, replaced our shoes and returned to the coach, happy to have had the opportunity to visit this most interesting building.

Freda Moses

During our visit to the Mosque at Regent's Park with the Hampton Council of Churches the following amusing reply was received from the Muslim guide to a questioner who asked if a Christian sought permission to pray in the Mosque would it be granted. The guide, with a twinkle in his eye replied: "Why, yes of course – but you would not be able to pray in the correct Muslim way. However, God has a sense of humour. He would know that you could not help being an Englishman and would listen and respond to your prayer".

Dick Waltham

LITURGICAL DANCE AT A CHRISTIAN YOUTH DAY

It was about 3pm on a beautiful autumn day, when we arrived at St. Augustine's Church in Whitton on Saturday 28th September. Six dancers from St. James's Liturgical Dance Group, we had been invited to assist at a work-shop for young people meeting at this church, in the hope of capturing their imaginations by introducing them to dancing in church as a valid, and indeed desirable form of worship.

The first item of the afternoon was a talk with a video clip. The theme was Live For All You'r Worth. Everyone was asked to make an evaluation of their own worth. How did they rate themselves? This talk encouraged all of us never to lose faith that God loves us, no matter what our failures or circumstances. God wants us to love Him and stay close to Him.

After this very reassuring introduction, the youngsters were encouraged to join one of the three groups, Music, Drama or Dance, selecting the group which appealed to them most as a means of expressing praise and worship.

Our leader Eila Severn had carefully prepared a programme which we hoped would fit all eventualities. We wondered how willing or able the teen-agers would be at contributing their ideas towards constructing a dance for the presentation at the end of the day.

In the event our group was quite small. Hilde Bucknall gave a short talk about Liturgical Dancing as being not only a valid but very successful and even desirable means of expressing a wide range of the deepest emotions, from utter desolation to joy and jubilation, and an effective way of leading. As is our usual practise, Helen Taylor said a quiet prayer, to bring our minds into a peaceful and contemplative mood and we prayed for God's blessing on our efforts. Eila then gently encouraged the young people to free themselves from all inhibitions and really let very deep and varied emotions have freedom of expression. Any form of movement was to be tried without any restraint. At first there were only shy and tentative attempts, but gradually we seemed to make a real breakthrough and the enthusiasm and enjoyment of moving to music, led to the abandonment of selfconsciousness and real joy and delight prevailed.

We worked on two dances. At first we taught them "Nailed to the Cross", a very sad agonizingly profound depiction of the Crucifixion and its redemptive power. The second presentation was a complete contrast: an arrangement of the Harvest hymn "We Plough the Field" set to the music from "GODSPEL". A dance of real joy, thanksgiving and adoration, which we choreographed on the spot using everybody's contributions. Let us hope there will be more opportunities in the future to bring dancing to the fore. It is such a natural form of self-expression in worship. Also it is a strong means of communication with other people and must therefore increase our tolerance and understanding of them.

After our break for tea and a rest, we all went into the church to watch the various "Presentations". We enjoyed the opportunity of seeing and hearing the Drama and Music Groups presentations. The Drama group depicted life for people of Sierra Leone. This was effective in making quite clear how comparatively rich we are in the free world.

The music contribution was of a high standard, some fine singing and instrumental accompaniment. It was specially warming to observe the conviction of faith in some of the young people, when they explained why they had chosen a particular song.

Rosalie Meyerowitz

And a 'Footnote' from a young participant, the remainder of whose article we have unfortunately had to cut for space reasons:

After tea we had a small service bringing together all the aspects of Dance, Drama and Music, showing how God could be learned about and worshipped more through each. The day was a great success for those who attended but it seemed a shame that there were so few young people present. It would be lovely if the day could be repeated in other years hopefully with more people to reap the benefits of such hard work on the part of the many organisers.

Naomi Chubb

HARVEST SUPPER

Supper? It was more like a Dinner; the food, wine and coffee were so good and well organised. A particular vote of thanks is due to all the workers and to the very young helpers who served our pre-meal snacks so pleasantly. About one hundred came to this annual feast in the Parish Hall on October 3rd and enjoyed a truly heart-warming Parish communal get-together.

Following the meal we were entertained, firstly with duets from Helen Taylor and David Taylor, introduced as the 'Taylor Twins' and most ably accompanied by Charles Dobson at the piano. They were really good. Perhaps 'Successors to Anne Ziegler and Webster Booth' should have been their intro.

Then followed two more of our great songsters, Margaret and Paul Revis, backed by his guitar. After some very enjoyable songs from them both they then went on to lead us all in a happy sing-a-long with a mainly Spiritual flavour.

The only thing that was missing was the amusing sketches we used to enjoy from the Youth Group. Let us hope that this group will soon re-form. However we were provided with humour by Joe Brownlee who as compere told us a very funny tale about a squid. If you weren't at the supper ask someone who was, to tell you the story.

Dick Waltham

MARGARET CRANSTON'S VISIT on 5th and 6th OCTOBER

Saturday Evening

What a pity so few were present at Wayside to hear Margaret's fascinating and beautifully illustrated talk about her three years in Hindu Nepal. In our minds, we were soon on the four-hour bus ride from Kathmandu and enjoying a rest at a tea house before setting off on the long climb, on foot, up to the village where Margaret teaches.

Then we saw the village (quite a big one) and the house which Margaret shares with an extended Nepali family – and always the snow-capped Himalayas making a spectacular back-drop. There was no need to lock the doors unless there were strangers in the village, and villagers were often dropping in to see Margaret for a friendly chat (sometimes from 4am onwards!). All around were neat terraces for the crops and a little way up from the village, where it could be seen by all, stood a proud stone building – the state school where Margaret teaches with an American colleague, Jean, and several Nepali teachers. In fact the teaching often took place out of doors – in the shade in summer to keep cool and in the sun in winter to keep warm.

Some way down the valley is another school for a poorer group of children where Margaret teaches, for one day a week, several sets of children of different ages.

Margaret also brought to life the visit she had recently described for us in a letter, that she and Jean had made to an even more remote village in the western part of the country. We saw a school there which had been built on an impressive scale but which lacked a proper roof as the funds had run out, and we also saw the house of a Nepali family with whom she and Jean had stayed. On its roof was a cross, a lonely sign to show to all that this was the home of a Christian family.

Perhaps the greatest hardship for Margaret and Jean is their separation from other Christians, and to ease this they journey (on foot, of course) for two hours each way every month to meet with two other Christian teachers from another village, also two hours' walk away, and together join in Christian worship. This, no doubt, helps Margaret to cope as well as she obviously has done with a very strange language, strange customs and strange food; and it was clear that her friendliness, quiet strength and attitudes were making the villagers very aware of the strength of her faith and of the reality of her loving God.

Ron Bridges

Sunday Morning

Each of the monthly parade services I have been to has been a happy vigorous occasion, with the children participating enthusiastically. Margaret's talk on 6th October fitted the occasion perfectly. She had a most exciting tale to tell of life as a teacher in a Nepalese village.

I was sorry that the children could not see what I had seen the previous evening, a picture of the fragile-looking rope footbridge (often shaken by the local children to add to the fun) which was the start of a four-hour uphill walk from the nearest road to the village perched 4,500 feet in the foothills of the Himalayas. They did see, however, the communication problem, as Margaret displayed an example of the Nepali script which she had had to learn before she could begin to teach. They also saw Margaret's very effective cut-out models of a Nepalese boy and his family. The continual labour needed just to fetch food for the animals, water for cooking and fuel was made very clear. Every journey had to be made on foot; every load carried on someone's back. If the children were not weighed down by the thought of Nepalese village life, I was.

"If the boy lives in the house with his brothers, mother and father, uncle, aunt, grandmother" said Margaret, "how many in the house?" A forest of children's hands shot up. They were all following her tale closely, completely gripped by it. So was I.

Forbidden by the government to teach Christianity, she could bear witness to her faith by her life of dedication and service. The respect and trust and affection of the villagers for Margaret was obvious by the tales she told. I wonder if some of the children thought "I want to be like that when I grow up". I hope so.

Dick Wilde

Sunday Evening

I had had the opportunity during the weekend of meeting Margaret several times, and on each occasion was very impressed with her single-minded and courageous attitude to what can be called the new type of missionary work.

The Government of Nepal does not countenance the old fashioned missionary work of "preaching the gospel", perhaps they feel that it would bring divisiveness into the small state. Members of missionary societies, under an umbrella organisation, are allowed into the country if they are prepared to help with teaching in the schools. Margaret lives in a very remote village; she eats what the village people eat, lodges with a Nepali family, stays in the tea shops when travelling, and risks worms, lice and bugs. She has, however, kerosene to cook by and is able to pay for water to be brought to her each day. There is complete identification in this; with her knowledge of Nepali she can talk to the villagers and share their joys and sorrows. She lives among a people who make sacrifices to their Hindu and Buddhist deities, who display their religious flags and emblems on their roofs to keep out evil spirits and who live in fear. Margaret's calm acceptance of the hardship and remoteness of this life is impressive.

During her sermon she told us of a family whose loss of a small daughter of 5 had led them to question her about the Christian Faith. She had been able to talk to them and tell them about Christianity. There were also others. Conversion is to risk imprisonment, but some have certainly become Christians and have also risked alienation from their own communities. There are churches served by Nepali Christians in Kathmandu. Margaret's long journey described elsewhere led her to a family who had become Christians through the example of their son, the only ones in the neighbourhood. It is to this far area that Margaret may move in a year's time, and will continue with her hidden but immensely important missionary calling.

I am glad that St. James's, through Leslie Mortimer, keeps in touch with Margaret, and makes a contribution (through the Church Missionary Society) towards her upkeep. I feel we are in touch with one of the most remote areas in the world.

Hannah Stanton

THE PARISH RAMBLE – SATURDAY 12th OCTOBER

Fourteen of us and Sally the dog left St. James's Church for an afternoon of rambling on Ranmore Common. The weather was really beautiful and the sun shone showing the beauty of the trees and the fruit they bore. It was lovely to be also joined by Margaret and Tony Lawrance and Sue, friends from our congregation who now live in Walton.

It was very muddy underfoot and at one time Sanaz's shoe was quite covered, but it was soon retrieved. Her little brother Resa walked very well and reminded us that he was just three years old! There were about six stiles to climb over and a kissing gate. We had a rest in a field where there were a lot of flintstones and the children took some home. The copse and fields were great to be in. Here one really did see beauty, hips and haws, blackberries, elderberries, wild flowers. On we went through trees and mud until we came to a little path and there to refresh us were damson trees where we picked and ate some. All too soon we reached the car park again and ate our picnic. We came home about 7pm. Thank you David Taylor for arranging such an interesting ramble.

Violet Clark

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

First Steps in Prayer

Strange Title! However, we do hope it will meet a need with those amongst us who would like to pray and need some support and guidance on the subject. Certainly this view was clearly expressed in the Lent Groups. On four Thursday evenings, starting 8.00pm and finishing about 9.15pm at Wayside, with the first meeting starting on Thursday 14th November. We aim to be practical and uncomplicated and to explore and expand our desire and need to pray. If you already have a regular and on-going prayer life these meetings will probably not be for you. If prayer is missing from your life and you feel you would like to know more, please do come.

Important – Hall Spring Clean

Able-bodied and willing helpers are needed – many of them – on Saturday 9th November, to give the Church Hall its annual thorough clean. A great variety of different jobs is involved and many manhours are needed to finish the job to our satisfaction. Please come and help, even if you can only spare a short time. Bring your own rubber gloves if you like to wear some. Any time after 9am your help will be much appreciated. If you have never taken part before, you will find that cleaning somebody else's place is actually fun when it is done in good company!

Hall Committee

Visit to the Festival of Lights

As announced earlier the Hampton Council of Churches is arranging a second visit to a place of worship of another religion this autumn. On Monday 11th November a coach will take visitors to the Hindu temple in Wimbledon to witness their celebration of the Festival of Lights, Divali. It is a short ceremony; we are told that children are welcome. By the time you read this you will probably have seen notices with exact details of time and price in the church. The coach is leaving at around 6pm, and should be back by 9pm.

Social Committee Barn Dance

There will be a Barn Dance in the Church Hall on Friday November 22nd from 7.30pm to 11pm. The Caller 'Julie' is a very experienced and well-known barn dance caller and the evening should be rather energetic but very enjoyable. Tickets will be available at the beginning of November and the price will include some light refreshments.

Community Care Christmas Fair

This invariably pleasant occasion will be in the Church Hall on Saturday 23rd November, from 11am - 2pm (Note the new time). There will be ample opportunity to find desirable Christmas gifts and provisions whilst also helping Community Care. The GRAND RAFFLE will be drawn at 1 o'clock. Light Lunches will be available.

As usual St. James's will be well represented amongst the stallholders. Vera Bannister asks you to look out some bric-a-brac for her stall, either bringing it to church or to 26 St. James's Road. Margaret Leatherdale and May French need gifts of homemade cakes, etc., and please make some sweets for Dorothy

Western. Margery Orton (Christmas Present Stall) will be holding the usual coffee morning to collect presents at 30 St. James's Road on the Thursday before the Fair, November 21st at 10.20 - 12.30. Put the date in your diary and please come, bringing with you that present from last year that was not quite 'your cup of tea' or some other suitable offering, and enjoy what is always a pleasant social morning.

Remember – CCG needs your help to be able to continue to care for the community.

Margery Orton

Stewardship Review

This year's stewardship review will be an even more important event than usual in view of our financial position, and in order to understand just what it is we are being asked to do, the Archdeacon Timothy Raphael has agreed to come along and speak to us. The review will take place in the church hall on Wednesday November 27th, 7.30pm for 7.45pm, when refreshments will be served.

AROUND THE SPIRE

Congratulations to Marie Martin, named as one of two 'Citizens of the Year' by Richmond Council. Nobody could deserve such a title more than Marie, whose name among the elderly in his area is synonymous with care, kindness and a fund of useful information regarding their needs. One of the many people that knew the benefit of Marie's concern was Mrs. Casey, now sadly no longer with us, and we thank Marie for all her ministrations there.

We shall all miss Mrs. Casey, another very faithful member of our congregation right up until the end. More is written of her elsewhere in this magazine, an indomitable spirit!

Another well-known 'Hampton Hill' figure also died recently, Fred Sully, for so many years owner of the grocer's in the High Street, whose never failing 'old-world' politeness and jaunty bow tie will be much missed; both now sadly in short supply.

Many people have been praying for young Ross Wilson, afflicted with leukaemia. Sad to say Ross died on October 5th; he was just fifteen. We send our love and prayers to all his family, parents Audrey and Bill, and brothers Nick and Greg, in their time of sadness and loss.

Helena Jeffries was recently confirmed, along with some fellow Horse-Rangers, at the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court by the Bishop of London. We look forward to seeing her from time to time among our own congregation and wish her God's blessing.

GOLDEN WEDDING CELEBRATION

We would like to thank all our friends who came along on August 3rd and helped to make it such a happy day. The party so expertly organised by Michael and Yvonne was a complete surprise to us, also the beautiful Celebration cake made by Robert. Thank you one and all for the lovely flowers, gifts and cards. Truly a memorable occasion.

Stan and Doris

***APOLOGY** By an editorial oversight this item was omitted from last month's magazine.*

DOROTHY CASEY

I first met Dorothy Casey in the early 1950's when we were both working for the Scout Group. Later she became Brown Owl and from then on her life was very dedicated to the Guide Movement. She loved to reminisce about her early life in Gloucester and the beautiful surrounding countryside, also about her long connection with St. James's Church, particularly as a Sunday School teacher in the 1920's. Right to the end of her life she was always eager to be involved in everything, as a member of the Old People's Welfare Committee she was always at her post organising the raffle at the monthly teaparty. Dorothy was also on the Committee of the Hampton Hill Resident's Association of which she was a founder member. On the Sunday before she died she was in her usual place at the 9.30 Service and again at Evensong. She will be sadly missed. One of the many ways in which she contributed faithfully to the life of the parish was by valuable donations towards the flower fund. Over the years we have enjoyed many a beautiful flower arrangement thanks to her generosity.

Doris Childs

FAREWELL TO BRENDA AND RAY OLIVER

When I was asked to write an appreciation of all the work that Brenda and Ray have undertaken for the welfare of so many people in this parish my mind really found it difficult to know where to start.

So let me begin with the young. Brenda has given many hours of her time to the Brownies and has been Brown Owl to many youngsters guiding them through their training and taking them on various outings and camps. Recently she was made District Commissioner in the Guide movement. To commemorate 75 years of Guiding Brenda presented a kneeler to the church at Harvest Festival, and it was a touching coincidence that she had been finishing work on it just as another worker in the Guide movement passed on; so Brenda was able to incorporate Mrs. Casey's name in the embroidery – a very fitting tribute.

As a Mothers' Union member for about thirty years our branch is losing a very valued member, always willing to do whatever was asked of her and she served on Committees for some years.

Perhaps, for many people Brenda will be remembered for her hard work with the older generation in Hampton Hill. The Old People's Welfare Committee will not find it easy to replace anyone with her boundless energy in organising the catering at their monthly parties and the outings when she was always ready to give a helping hand to those not so agile.

The Friends of Laurel Dene were an active and flourishing group under the guidance of Ray (with Brenda helping his as secretary) and with his expert horticultural knowledge the gardens at Laurel Dene were a delight for all to see. His donations of plants and greenery to decorate the church were much appreciated. Ray's creation of the Easter garden was I think his 'crowning glory'.

You will be greatly missed Brenda and Ray, but our very best wishes go to you both as you settle in your new home where doubtless your talents will be appreciated as much as they have been here over the years.

Dorothy Edmonds

3rd HAMPTON HILL SCOUT GROUP

Group Scout Leader Michael J. Childs 977-5041

CUB PACKS for boys 8-10¼ yrs.

Meetings Mondays or Wednesdays at St. James's Church Hall (6-7.45pm).

Contact G.S.L. or Yvonne Childs 977-5041.

SCOUT TROOP for boys 10½-15½ yrs.

Meetings Friday at St. James's Church Hall (7-9pm).

Contact Greg Martin 979-7268.

VENTURE UNIT for boys and girls 15½-20 yrs.

Meetings Tuesday 7.30-9.30 mainly on the Headquarters' Site at rear of Holly Road Recreation Ground. Contact Colin Hucklesby 898-9609.

Congratulations to Dianne Irving and Peter Brittain who were presented with their A.C.S.L. Warrants at the Cub Meeting on 29th September by the District Commissioner, Gerry Day. Peter is now off to Cardiff University with all our best wishes.

BONFIRE PARTY 2nd November 7pm Admission 75p at gate.

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR 30th November - The Parish Hall.

DATES TO NOTE

All Sunday Services in November as usual.

For special events please refer to the articles under Forthcoming Events.

Group meetings as usual.

Please check in last month's Spire.