

Family History has now become big business. There are associations dedicated to it, magazines devoted to it, evening classes for it and a great throng of people beavering away to trace their ancestors or at least to try to follow back their roots for a few generations. We often get requests here to provide information from our parish records of the past 130 years or so, on births, deaths and marriages. That is one of the reasons why all our older material has been deposited with the archives for the Diocese of London at the City of London Archive office. There the material is professionally cared for and readily available.

But why are people so interested in Family History now? Perhaps it is because families are so easily and quickly scattered not only across the country but also across the world. Perhaps it has to do with older members of our families not living with younger members and so not passing on family stories, gossip or skeletons in cupboards. Perhaps it is a way of asking more profound questions - who am I, what am I, where do I come from?

My family, probably like many of yours, still has a family bible in which family births and marriages are recorded. And to record such information in a bible is actually rather special, because the bible itself has many tables of family history, even if they wouldn't pass the test of today's standards of strict factual recording. One such family history occurs right at the beginning of the New Testament, at the opening of Matthew's Gospel - it's tempting to miss out all the 'begets' and go straight on to the story of the birth of Jesus; tempting but foolish.

Matthew's family history is selective and very stylised - but it connects the birth of Jesus with the birth of Adam, interestingly enough through Joseph's side of the family, not Mary's - and what does that say about our notion of virgin birth? Matthew's family history of Jesus traces the connection, right through the story of the children of Israel (including both crucially important women and foreigners) back to the creation of the world.

Of course it is not a historical record as far as Somerset House is concerned. It is much more important than that. The family history which connects Jesus and Adam is there to connect God and every human being. God, made known in this baby, child, person Jesus, it says, is made known in every baby, every child, every person from the creation right down to us. We carry God in us, we meet God in each other, we serve God as we serve each other, we deny God as we deny each other, we ignore God as we ignore each other.

As Christmas comes think about your family history - but don't stop there. Think also about God in you and your family, in you and your neighbour, in you and those who

have little cause to celebrate. Celebrate God's becoming human in Jesus, being wrapped in human joy and strength, frailty and pain in Bethlehem nearly 2,000 years ago and in Britain, or Bosnia, the doorways of the Strand or the deserts of Somalia today. Celebrate the risk God takes in loving creation, and risk loving God's creation this Christmas.

Join us in our celebrations of God being born in the midst of human life.
You will be most welcome - Happy Christmas.

Brian Leathard

Christmas Services

Sunday 20 December	6.30pm	Parish Carol Service
Christmas Eve	4.30pm	Crib Service
	11.45pm	Midnight Eucharist
Christmas Day	8.00am	Holy Communion
	9.30am	Parish Communion
St. Stephen (Saturday 26 December)	10.00am	Holy Communion

Come and worship
Christ the New-Born King



Prayer and Meditation

Some time ago, a Sister from the Ham Convent came to speak to St. James's during an evening service. She gave some useful comments about prayer being a two-way communication between ourselves and God, and how, in order to grow in our relationship with him, we need to spend time with God, and talk with (not to!) him regularly, in order to get to know him and become more like him.

She then led a meditation about a hungry silkworm feeding on a mulberry tree, eventually emerging as a beautiful moth. During the meditation, I was reminded of a chorus I was taught as a child - 'Read your Bible, pray every day, if you want to grow' - a simple but important discipline to follow. Also, a verse came to mind - 'Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they will be filled' (Matthew 5 v 6). Hunger is a very compelling emotion, and if we felt as much in need of God's righteousness and forgiveness as we do of food, we would certainly be filled.

In the 'open forum' afterwards, a number of people voiced a concern that meditation can so easily become introspective, and that current trends do seem to encourage this. As Christians we must be careful to remain true to God and what is taught in his Word. As a clergy friend of mine says 'If it's new it ain't true, and if it's true it ain't new!'.

The writer of Psalm 119 praises God and rejoices through his meditation on God's precepts (vs. 15 and 78), his decrees (vs 23 and 48), his wonders (v 27), his laws (v 97), his statutes (v 99), his promises (v 148) and (in Psalm 145 v 5) his wonderful works. Since these are some of the only verses in the Bible which refer to meditation, should this not be a guide as to how we should meditate upon God? It certainly gives us a lot to think about!

Meditation can be a useful instrument if used as part of our prayer life, so long as it is directed towards the person of God. Since most of us find prayer rather difficult, it is always helpful to look for useful guidelines in the Bible.

Here is a brief study on the subject of prayer, which I found very useful and inspiring in my personal prayers:

Turn to Luke 18 and read verses 9 to 14.

Then ask the question 'how should we pray?'

- a) humbly (v 13)
- b) seeking forgiveness (v 13)
- c) simply and naturally
- d) with faith

Are there any particularly important times in our lives when we should especially pray?

Here are some ideas:

- Before making important decisions (eg Jesus choosing his disciples - Luke 4 and 5)
- When we're rushed off our feet (eg Jesus withdrawing from the crowds to be alone -

Luke 4 v 42)

- When tempted (eg as Jesus was in Luke 4 v 1 to 13)
- When we need strength and encouragement (eg Jesus's prayers before his arrest - John 17)
- When we're hurting (eg Jesus on the cross - Luke 23 v 46)

Think about the following different types of prayer:

- a) WORSHIP - adoration, honour, respect
- b) CONFESSION - acknowledgement of our sins
- c) INTERCESSION - to plead on behalf of others
- d) PETITION - supplication, voicing our own requests
- e) CONSECRATION - dedicating ourselves to God's service



Are there any which we find particularly difficult or tend to miss out?

Why not make a list of prayer topics which include each of the above, and use them in your personal prayer life?

Finally read Ephesians 3 v 14 to 21 - a wonderful prayer, sent by Paul to the church at Ephesus, but relevant for us all.

Beryl Bye

Prayer Groups

The Julian Group continues to meet for prayer and healing at 2.30pm on the first Tuesday of each month at 30 St. James's Road. The Group is led by Margery Orton (979 5868). Its next meetings are on 1 December and 5 January.

A new Prayer Group is now meeting on alternate Tuesday evenings at 8pm at 54 Fulwell Road, Teddington. Meetings will be held on 1 and 15 December. Do call Andrew or Beryl Bye on 943 4629 for further information.

All are welcome at either group - do not feel under any obligation to pray if you would rather just come to listen, and if you are not able to come on any particular dates, please send in any prayer requests you may have.

Quiet Day

This year we are not having the Parish Quiet Day on our usual date just before Advent. It will be held at St. Michael's Convent, Ham on the second Saturday in Lent, 6 March, from 10.30am to 4pm as usual.

Please book the date.

Hannah Stanton

Quite a large party from our church, lead by the Vicar, recently made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and visited Jordan:

1. Eager band of pilgrims,
Reach the Jordan bank.
Promised land awaits them,
With soldier, gun and tank.
Crossing safely over,
On to Jericho.
Tiberias for two nights stay
O'er desert hills they go.
 Onward Hampton pilgrims,
 Brian to the fore.
 Jerusalem and Petra,
 Galilean shore.
2. Early rising pilgrims,
Ready for the fray.
Oliver instructs us
For hours every day.
Debra, Joel, Elijah,
Matthew, Luke and John.
Hearts and minds are happy now
With Christian duty done.
 Onward, etc.
3. Hungry pilgrims sighing,
Lunch is far away.
Will the Lord provide us
With sustenance we pray.
Three more sites to visit,
Is our faith deceived?
Then Peter's fish is offered
And gratefully received.
 Onward, etc.
4. Hopeful pilgrims singing
Jerusalem for all.
Holy sites abounding
Within the City wall.
Temple Mount surprising,
Open and so clean.
Mosques so strange and awesome
With beauty so serene.
 Onward, etc.
5. Driving through the canyons,
Pilgrims petrified.
Eila's screams are answered,
Abdullah's on our side.
Onward, ever upward,
From the wadi bed,
Cross the plains of Moab
To reach our goal ahead.
 Onward, etc.
6. Grateful pilgrims leaving,
From this ancient land.
Open and forgiving,
For now we understand.
Muslims, Jews and Christians,
Living side by side.
Peaceful co-existence,
Love not genocide.
 Onward, etc.

Tony and Margaret Lawrance

(sing to the tune of 'Onward Christian Soldiers')

From the Diaries of the Young Taylor Pilgrims

23 October:

We crossed the Jordan River by crossing the Allenby Bridge and then we were in Israel. We went by bus to Jericho where we went to a place with a hill. There was a bus shelter thing. Then we went to an 8th century B.C. tower. We had lunch at a kibbutz and then went to Mount Tabor. After that we went to our new hotel which was at Tiberias, by the Sea of Galilee.

Beatrice Taylor (7)

25 October:

We got up at 6.30 and at 8 we got in the coach. Then we headed off to Cana. When we got there we went to the wedding church where Jesus was said to change water into wine. Then we went to the synagogue in Nazareth. After that we took part in an Anglican church service in Christ Church, Nazareth and had pink biscuits at the end. We had lunch at an old Roman town called Caesarea. There was an aqueduct and an amphitheatre there beside the Mediterranean Sea. We all paddled in the sea and Brian gave me a piggy-back to the coach. Before we went to the hotel in Jerusalem, Oliver, our guide, took us up to the top of Mount Scopus to see the view of Jerusalem.

Romilly Taylor (9)

26 October:

Our hotel room overlooked Esther's tomb. Some Jews were praying over the tomb because they believed that she had saved the Jews. Others thought it was wrong to honour her because she had used unorthodox methods to do it. The Jews who believed it was wrong were trying to attack those who believed it was right. The praying Jews had police protection.

27 October:

Today we did a lot of walking in the old city of Jerusalem. First of all we visited the Wailing Wall or 'Western Wall' as it is sometimes called. The wall is divided into two parts, the left part for men and the right part for women. The Jewish people think the wall is very important. There were lots of Jews at the wall so it was impossible to see it close up, but it was still very interesting.

Alice Taylor (12)

Fund Raising

December 1	8 pm	Pizza Party	40 Cardinals Walk
December 3	8 pm	Share my Music	4 Byron close
December 5	6 pm	Mince Pies and Mulled Wine	16 Cranmer Road (children welcome)

Watch this space for further events in the New Year

Coal Mining

Those of us who wrote to our M.P., Mr. Toby Jessel, in protest at the precipitous government plans for the future of the coal-mining industry, encouraged to do so by a letter from a former member of our church, the Rev. Raymond Draper, whose parish is in a mining area, were pleased to note that Mr. Jessel abstained from supporting the government on this issue. We look forward with interest to the outcome of the proposed review of the energy industries.

The Work of Welcare

Welcare, supporting single-parent families, continues to meet a very real need within the borough. Over fifty families have been seen by Welcare social workers in the past six months. Debt and inadequate child-care provision are two ever-present realities many are facing.

Welcare is hoping to start training a number of volunteers to complement the office staff in their work and would be interested in hearing from any potential volunteers from within the churches. Please 'phone Welcare (744 1061) or see Corinne Evans in church for further information.

The staff at Welcare are now looking towards Christmas and the specific needs of their clients at this time. They are particularly looking for new toys for aged 5 and under and gifts for the mothers. Please see Corinne if you can help.

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Concert of Instrumental and Vocal Music

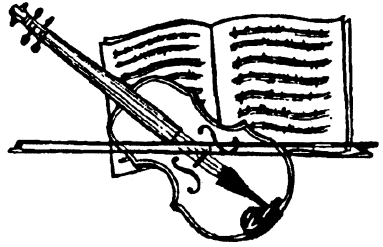
by Members and Friends
of St. James's Church

3pm

Sunday 13 December

Glass of Mulled Wine

Donations for Church Choir
expenses will be welcomed



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Christmas Day Help Please

The Churches Together in Teddington are again helping to provide lunch on Christmas Day for lonely and elderly people at Elleray Hall, Teddington. Can you help in any of these ways:

- Transporting guests to arrive between 10.30 and 11.30 am and leave at 3.30 pm.
- Helping in the kitchen from 9 am onwards. An hour or two would be useful.
- Greeting and chatting to guests, and waiting at tables.
- Providing Christmas cakes, for distribution at the end, and small presents.
- Serving teas, washing up, and wrapping presents.

If you cannot help on the day, perhaps you could help beforehand. Please give your name (by 12 December, if possible) to the Vicar or to Stella or Trevor King on 977 3891. Please also contact one of them as soon as possible if you know of anyone who would appreciate an invitation to be a guest.

Women's Forum

Following a very successful meeting on 4 November when Mr. Sid Heaford talked about 'Locks, Stocks and Barrels', this is a word of encouragement to all ladies at St. James's to come to either or both of the meetings in December. For the elderly lifts can always be organised.

2 December at 2pm:

(Please note this time change)

The Rev. Kitty Platt - A Meditation for Advent with Words and Music.

16 December at 8pm:

Pre-Christmas Celebration. All who come are asked to bring a small taste of Christmas fare.

The annual subscription to join the Women's Forum is £3 and by early 1993 we hope to have printed programmes ready for members. All are welcome, young and old.

Jean Wilson, Convenor

St. James's Festival, 1993

The coming year sees the **130th anniversary** of the dedication of our church. A grand celebration is being planned!

The Bishop of London is to preside and preach at our Parish Communion on Sunday 4 July and the Archdeacon of Middlesex on St. James's Day, Sunday 25 July, when there will be a parish lunch after the service. There will be other special preachers on Sundays 11 and 18 July, and during this time it is hoped there will be a number of special events, such as a barbecue, a steel band, and concerts.

Please remember to avoid these dates when planning your holidays and try to be in Hampton Hill for our parish celebrations!

Friends in need

Alison was recently struck by a car on a pedestrian crossing at Hampton Court near to her home. By great good fortune, she was not seriously injured, and she is showing great fortitude and determination to get well again. She writes:

'You were lucky' my friends say as I try to sit upright on my fat cushion that goes everywhere with me. I didn't feel lucky just then.

Yes - I am lucky, not because of my battered body but because of my wonderful friends.

Sometimes it is necessary to have pain or trouble to demonstrate that wonderful love, the human expression of God's love which passes all understanding.

Thank you for your prayers and visits.

Alison Thompson

Stewardship giving over recent quarters has been as follows:

October - December	1991	£ 6,149	1990	£ 5,862
January - March	1992	£ 7,501	1991	£ 6,802
April - June	1992	£ 6,805	1991	£ 6,042
July - September	1992	<u>£ 6,838</u>	1991	<u>£ 5,713</u>
		£27,293		£24,419

Around the Spire

Changes take place all the time, some small, some larger. Hampton Hill or any other place you care to mention is always a reflection of the times, a world in miniature.

Malcolm Hill, our neighbourhood policeman, will no longer be seen around on his bike. No, progress dictates that he must cover a larger area in a Panda car! He will still be about but not quite so visibly - pity, he has a very re-assuring presence.

Other changes are to be seen along our High Street. Several new shops have opened up recently while others have unfortunately closed down. Do you remember Johnson's where one could buy everything from a Pyrex dish to a doormat, a pair of scissors to a garden hose, or 'Bakers' in Hampton - a magic cave of goodies, nothing ever too much trouble? Well we now have a hardware shop again and a toy shop. We also have a new greengrocer and a new paint shop. We wish them all well. Try and support our local shops, especially those who advertise in this magazine.

Olive Wright is at present in West Middlesex Hospital, so is Violet Clark. We hope they will soon be well enough to leave. Ruth Mills, who has injured her back, is at home recovering, and her mother has become a permanent resident at Gifford House on Twickenham Green. Peter Lockyer is now recovering from a major heart operation. We wish him a full and speedy return to full health.

The present occupiers of what was Olive Wright's house are Dr. Jim Brockbank and family. Jim's twin brother died recently after a long illness, still in what should have been the prime of life. Our condolences go to all the Brockbank family at this sad time.

Golden Wedding celebrations are always a time for happiness and reflection. We send our love and congratulations to Megan and Trevor Parry as they prepare to celebrate fifty years together. Blessings on them both.

From the Registers - October

Baptisms

4	Nathan Richard Brockgank	15 School Road
11	Alexander Murray Taylor	42a Balaclava Road, Surbiton

Funeral

1	Alan Benjamin Chadwick	22 Kingswood Avenue, Hampton
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Dates to Note

Dec.	1	20.00	Prayer Group, 54 Fulwell Road, Teddington
		20.00	Pizza Party, 40 Cardinals Walk
	2	14.00	Women's Forum: Rev. Kitty Platt, Wayside
	3	20.00	Share my Music, 4 Byron Close
		20.00	Taizé service, Methodist Church, Hampton
	5	18.00	Mince Pies and Mulled Wine, 16 Cranmer Road (Children welcome)
	6	09.30	Christingle Service (there will be a collection for the Children's Society)
	13	15.00	Music Concert, Church
	15	20.00	P.C.C., Vestry
		20.00	Prayer Group, 54 Fulwell Road, Teddington
	16	20.00	Women's Forum Pre-Christmas Celebration, Wayside
	20	18.30	Parish Carol Service
	24	16.30	Crib Service
		23.45	Midnight Eucharist



Immanuel
'God-is-with-us'

25			Christmas Day
		08.00	Holy Communion
		09.30	Parish Communion
26			St. Stephen the first Martyr
		10.00	Holy Communion
27		09.30	Parish Communion (only service on this Sunday)
28			The Holy Innocents
29			St. John the Evangelist

Advance Notices

Jan.	1		The Naming of Jesus
	4	14.00	Editorial Board, 19 St. James's Road
	6		The Epiphany of our Lord

COPY DATE FOR JANUARY ISSUE: 6 DECEMBER