

Our Archdeacon, Timothy Raphael, recently wrote an article published in Church Times entitled 'Schools: the risk of being elbowed out'. The Archdeacon of Middlesex is the Chairman of our London Diocesan Board for Schools and has a very keen interest in the subject - after all the Diocese of London - of which we are a part - has 155 church schools, nursery, infant, junior and secondary, scattered across 18 diverse Local Education Authorities. The reason for the Archdeacon's concern is the Education Bill currently passing through parliament which is timetabled to go to the Lords in March and to receive Royal Assent in mid-summer.

The Bill's prime provision does seem to be to make it easier for schools to 'opt-out', that is, to seek Grant Maintained Status, removing themselves from local education authority funding and receiving their funding from a centralised funding agency, which has no local or democratic accountability. Our Diocesan Board for Schools has unanimously decided, after long discussion and consultation, to recommend to church schools that they should not seek to opt out. Why?

There are two main reasons. The first is that most of our church schools are, quite rightly, run on a basis which proclaims by its life and work, the Christian Faith. They are witnessing, in the local community, to the values of the Gospel - to offering the highest standards, a broadly based curriculum, pastoral care and concern and individual attention to pupils as part of the Church's witness to God's love in creation. In many parts of our country - perhaps more particularly in rural areas and in areas of urban deprivation (of which our Diocese has many), the church schools are one of very few community resources - people, buildings, a stable presence which binds that community together and is a real focus of Christian care. Each church school is clearly linked, by statute, to its parish church.

The second reason has to do with cash. Church schools which opt out will no longer have to pay the 15% towards external fabric costs which is currently a major burden on the Board for Schools. That might seem a bonus. If, however, we stop making a financial contribution to the costs of our church schools, the Archdeacon asks correctly, how long will it be before we lose control of those schools? How long before the church is told that if we don't make a financial contribution we can't expect any say in the affairs of that school? In other words, the Church is elbowed out.

The issue of church schools is complicated. They are a result of a partnership between Church and state since 1944 and before that church schools were often the only places of education in many parts of the country. They are not just a valued heritage, they are living witnesses to God's incarnational love - they are places where the Gospel is experienced, taught and valued. Many people in our parish are involved with them - we have two church school heads, we have teachers, governors, parents, children, and I represent the Diocesan Board for Schools on Richmond Borough Education Committee.

Inform yourselves - speak to people who are involved with church schools, think about the contribution they make (they make up one third of all the schools in the country). Perhaps you went to a church school or have children or grandchildren at Bishop Wand,

Bishop Perrin, Archdeacon Cambridge, St. Mary and St. Peter, St. Stephen or Christ's. Do we want the church to be involved in the education of our country's children - and on what terms? The choice may not be with us much longer if we don't speak up for church schools and support those who are involved in them.

*Brian Leathard*

## The Song of the Hill

What Hill? Yes, we are on an eminence as anyone cycling from Teddington can testify.

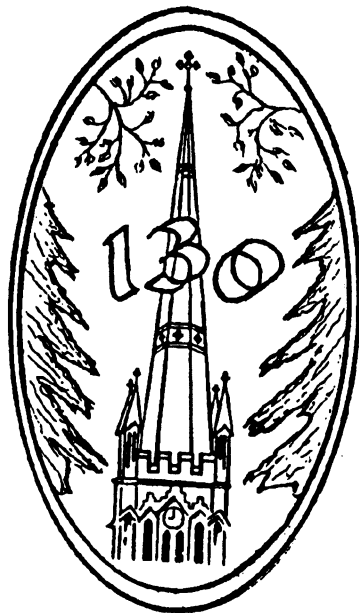
St. James's is celebrating its 130th anniversary this year. 'The Song of the Hill' is probably best described as 'a sort of musical' - anyway, it's got acting, singing, dancing, and a 'parade'. It tells the story of 19th century Hampton Hill, once known as New Hampton; and particularly, after 1863, of the influence of St. James's Church on the community.

When I was asked to write it, I thought it a good idea, which should give much fun and enjoyment.

We still need more men - specially young men; and chorus singers of both sexes. No standards are demanded - there will be no auditions, though we'll all work hard to give of our best! Those taking part will have to look 'Victorian' - help will be given if you need it.

Dates for performances are: Friday evening, July 9; Sunday afternoon, July 11. Book these dates now, and bring hosts of friends!

The first three rehearsals will be on Sundays March 7, 14 and 21 after the 9.30am service in church. So come on, offer your services! Take the plunge, and speak to Stuart - 'phone: 979 4906.



## The Choir

The P.C.C. has agreed, following consultation with the congregation, that the choir should sing, on one Sunday a month for a trial period of six months, at the Parish Communion service, starting this month.

## **The Men's Breakfast**

At 8.30am on a January Saturday morning, a group of mostly familiar faces tucked into piping hot coffee and filled croissants (chocolate ones too!).

But the main reason for this first breakfast was that Andrew Bye had invited Roy Khakhria from St. Helen's, Bishopgate to share with us some of his thoughts on being a Christian in the daily business environment. Roy introduced David Harvey, a well known London hairdresser and hair-loss 'consultant'. By way of a skilled interview, Roy extracted events in David's business and personal life that bore witness to a man whose life style was work = income = buying some mountainside land in Snowdonia = added weekend commuting time = harder work = strained family relationships including separation from his shepardess wife = more worktime spent in his shop.

On the surface he had everything. They had even found a natural spring on their Snowdonia land which had transformed their smallholding from being 'dry' with water needing to be carried or expensively pumped from lower levels to a business of bottling their own spring water for sale in national outlets. (Check Tesco's for his Snowdonia brand.) Underneath he had nothing. No meaning, no purpose, no aim in his life until he screamed for help to God whilst on a training run for the next London marathon. David's sister-in-law had recently 'become a Christian' and that was the trigger for him to attend a local Baptist church where he dedicated his life to Christ.

Since then, he has lost many so-called friends and clients but found new meaning, new purpose and a new aim in his life as well as healing the rift between him and his wife.

Roy then continued on the theme of St. Mark's gospel which he believes is the one that speaks loudest to business people. Both speakers were available for individual chats afterwards with more of that coffee!

Our thanks go not only to Andrew but also to Beryl, whose idea it was to ask Roy, and to her friend Betty Rainbow who organised the refreshments.

*Richard Melville*

## **Open House**

**The Church is open on Monday mornings  
from 10.30am to 12 noon  
for coffee, tea or soft drinks and biscuits.  
Come along and bring your friends  
All are welcome**



# Vera Rockliffe - A Woman of Faith, Hope and Love

Len and Vera, with Vera's parents, came to Teddington shortly before we came to Hampton Hill.

Early on, Vera and I got involved in parish 'Dramatics' and over the next thirty years or so took part in many farcical shows: she was always fun to work with and a Good Trouper. Hers was part of the driving force that kept the Drama Group on the road for a number of years, and to the end of her life her voice and diction was giving pleasure as she read in church. This was also the talent she used in making News Tapes for the blind.

Of Vera's many other interests - the Maddison clinic, Teddington Memorial Hospital, LEPR, Missions to Seamen, the Additional Curates Society, Scottish dancing, the Caledonian Society - probably her over-riding concern was for the Mothers' Union. She served on various Diocesan M.U. Committees where her hard work, attention to detail and high standards brought rewards for the rest of us. She was particularly involved with Overseas work and met and entertained visitors from abroad. She was once asked to escort a 19 stone lady from Africa on a shopping expedition to buy corsets: her account of this episode, though kind, was extremely funny and afterwards the two ladies became friends and continued to correspond.

In 1973 Vera attended a World Council of the M.U. which considered changes to its Constitution. Vera had strongly opposed these, but when, after much contention and a half-day break for prayer and meditation, the new Constitution was overwhelmingly endorsed, Vera was magnanimous and gave unstinting support to all that then had to be done.

Vera became one of my bench marks for how to grow old, I watched her apparently undiminished energy to get on with jobs she had set her hand to; her courage in personal and community affairs and physical pain - of which she often had more than she let on; her ability to put a cheerful face on the fact that the world didn't always tick the way she wanted or had ardently worked for it to do. It didn't seem that her intellectual capacity waned. Quite recently, at a Study group considering the Psalms, someone queried what the Koran might say on a certain point. Vera delved among her books, produced a translation of the Koran and very soon tracked down the relevant bit!

I know that I shall continue to have very thankful memories of a remarkable lady I was privileged to know.

*Connie Brunt*

For our first twenty-five years in the family of St. James's, it was not 'Vera': it was 'the Rockliffes'. Invariably together, they worked tirelessly in and for the parish, and also for many other causes. So we remember them as a great partnership.

Within this, Vera had her own separate identity. We remember her for her numberless kindnesses, for little gifts in time of sickness or worry, and many acts of Christian love, quietly and unobtrusively performed.

But chiefly we remember Vera for the years of her widowhood, for the great courage and resolution with which she faced and came to terms with life without Len. Throughout those years she continued to support those many causes close to her heart, constantly, courageously, cheerfully.

### *Ruth and Jack Gostling*

The most obvious sign of Vera's death is the empty place in the back pew. Everyone knew it as Vera's place, and yet never selfishly; it was a place into which people were invited - the unsure, those who wanted to be near the back, perhaps to get out quickly, perhaps through sickness, perhaps timid enquirers, perhaps the penitent, perhaps the mourning. They were all welcomed into 'Vera's pew'.

Her faithfulness was beyond dispute. Faithfulness in worship, in prayer, in service. Faithfulness in practice and rehearsal, in carrying out that which she promised to do.

Vera's hope was rooted in vision and lived out in commitment, perhaps above all in her care for the elderly at the Maddison Clinic. 'It's my day for the old people'- most of whom were considerably younger than Vera - she would say.

The photographs of Len and of their children and grandchildren were for Vera icons of love through which she travelled the tens of miles or tens of thousands of miles into the hearts of her family.

Vera was indeed a woman of faith, hope and love.

### *Extracts from the Vicar's Funeral Sermon*

## **An African Funeral**

No African funeral is complete without tributes by friends, and most are long drawn-out affairs; Helen Joseph's funeral in Johannesburg on 7 January was no exception.

The night before there was a vigil at her cottage which continued into the small hours. The next morning at 9am a huge congregation, mostly African, crowded into the Cathedral to attend and take part in the Requiem Mass. Archbishop Desmond Tutu preached the sermon. Nelson Mandela led the seven tributes. The service was billed to end at 12.30pm, and ended at 1.30pm.

There followed a long and slow procession to Avelon, the African cemetery, where Helen had asked to be buried beside Lilian Ngoyi, her African friend and fellow protestor. A lot of people lined the roads. At the cemetery there were many bees and tiny fires had been lighted to disperse them. At the graveside there were more tributes. My brother Tom writes: 'I did the Committal at the end - after 4.30pm - then we drove to Jabavu, to the Epilegang Centre, for "washing of hands", and the multitudes were fed.'

*Hannah Stanton*

# Creche

The creche is available for under 4's during the 9.30am Sunday Parish Communion services. Bring your children along to the Vestry during the first hymn or at any time during the service.



## Is the Bible True? A Personal Statement

The immediate reaction of a Christian to the above question might be: 'Of course! Or I wouldn't be a Christian'.

True in what way? Literally true? Every word of it? These are not just niggling questions. They affect our whole attitude towards God.

In what way are Christ's parables true? Are they literally true? When Christ says, 'You talk of the speck of dust in another's eye, and ignore the plank in your own!', does he refer literally to an actual speck of dust in the eye, and to an actual plank in the eye? I imagine you saying, 'Don't be silly! Of course not! What are you getting at?'

Christ of course is pointing out that we criticise small faults in others, while ignoring our own great faults. So his words are not to be taken *literally* - it is a parable.

Jesus didn't invent the use of parables; they were a common method of Jewish moral teaching. What of the Book of Jonah? The Book of Job? Are they not also parables? Not so much because the events described in them are 'impossible' (or in the Book of Job, who did the reporting?), but because if we take them 'literally', we are in danger of missing their outstanding moral guidance.

Most important of all - if every word of the Bible is as if God himself had written it down, then those who in fact wrote it were only pens, or typewriters. God was using them as puppets. Is this how God acts? Did Jesus use men in such a way, when he lived on earth? 'Those who have seen me have seen the Father'.

The Bible is the most important set of books in the world. It contains God's truth: 'Seek, and you shall find'. But to declare it literally true in every word, I find meaningless - even harmful.

If one accepts the literal truth of the Bible, it is not hard to work out that the world was created in about 5,000 BC. Is this a tenable statement?

*Stuart Ward*

## **From Israel to the West Middlesex Hospital**

Little did I know what a significant day 31st December would prove to be when I went for a walk in Bushy Park with my sister Pam and her two dogs.

Ten weeks earlier I had joined a pilgrimage to Israel, fulfilling a lifelong wish. But two days before setting out, the friend, who had invited me to join a party from her church, was too unwell to travel, and I was faced with a group of people who were almost unknown to me. However they were friendly and supportive, and quickly made me feel at home. So began a memorable two weeks, starting in Jerusalem.

How we walked! - the best way to see as much as possible, particularly of the Old City, with its appearance and atmosphere so much as I had pictured it in the time of Jesus. But how different so many of the sites of events in Jesus's life now look, often contained inside lavishly decorated churches. Just a few scattered areas such as the Western (Wailing) Wall, the Garden of Gethsemane and the Garden Tomb, gave one a feeling that the events could actually have happened there.

We eventually reached Galilee and stayed in Tiberias. This bears little resemblance to the village of the time of Jesus, but the Sea of Galilee brought the scenes alive, with traditional fishing boats and even authentic storms whipping up the surface of the water and giving us a taste of the storm which so terrified the disciples. We ate some of the fish from that sea and had a Communion Service on the site where Jesus appeared and gave the disciples a fish breakfast after his resurrection appearances in Galilee.

Then home, and on New Year's Eve the 'chance in a million' accident when both my legs were broken after being hit by Pam's dog's hard head in a freak collision. That night, as I lay in bed in hospital, recalling the doctor's words 'you will be here for eight to ten weeks', I remembered that it was eight weeks since I had returned home from Israel. Now I faced the same stretch of time with my legs in plaster and in a hospital ward.

In spite of this I have never felt despair, simply amazement that such a situation could be brought about in seconds - and that, through it, I was able to get to know people in circumstances I hardly ever thought about, and to be looked after by a dedicated, caring team of nursing staff, doctors and a chaplain whose contribution to life one tends to take for granted. I have proved also the truth of the words of a prayer on a card brought to me by Betty Stewart - 'Lord, help me to remember that nothing is going to happen to me today that you and I can't handle together'.

Last but by no means least, I want to thank all my friends for visiting, writing and supporting me by their prayers. When the surgeon told me that the manipulation of my legs had been more successful than he had dared to hope, I was convinced that the prayers had been, and still are, power lines. Thank you all for your care and kindness.

*Jean Western*

# Handel's MESSIAH from Scratch

Come and Sing (or Listen)

St. James's Church

Friday 19 March at 8pm

Entrance (at door) £2

Bring your own score if you have one -

Don't worry if you don't.

All are very welcome to sing,  
to listen and to enjoy

Refreshments



Our Scratch Messiah is part of the 'Sing Hallelujah!' project devised by 'Music at Oxford' to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the first British performance of Handel's Messiah on 23 March 1743. 'Sing Hallelujah!' events, sponsored by Classic FM and The Observer, will take place all over the country and **proceeds will go to The Malcolm Sargent Cancer Fund for Children and to the Thomas Coram Foundation for Children.** Handel was a great benefactor of the latter, very early, charity.

Many schools will be involved in "Sing Hallelujah!" as part of the aim of introducing children to Messiah, and a Children's Edition of Easter Highlights from Messiah is being produced.

## Dream Auction

The Dream Auction on 30 January, thanks to those who organised it, those who offered goods and services, and the somehow familiar, very professional, Auctioneer, made over £1,750 for the church. A very entertaining evening and a splendid effort.

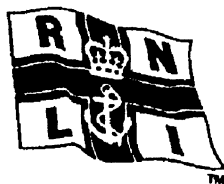
## Help Wanted

We still need more **church cleaners**. The task is not an arduous one. It takes about an hour if two people work together, and if we have enough people they will only be needed once a month. Please think about doing this very necessary job. Speak to Helen Taylor (979 7042).

**The Depaul Trust Housing Homeless Youth** requires volunteers at its 36-bed nightshelter for homeless young people in Vauxhall to assist in practical tasks and befriending of the residents, on one night a week. Meals and travelling expenses are provided, and training is offered. Please contact the nightshelter on 071 820 0344,



The Royal National Lifeboat Institution Twickenham and District Branch will once again be holding its Annual Church service at St. James's, on 7th March. We do hope you can join us when we give thanks for the unselfish way that lifeboat personnel risk their lives to save others, together with the unstinting back-up from onshore staff and volunteers. Your continued support during our forthcoming Flag Week will be much appreciated.



## Around the Spire

Rosemary, the daughter of Ray and Brenda Oliver, has recently given birth to a son, Jacob, and Sandy, daughter of Margaret and David Taylor, had a son, Sebastian, two days later. Congratulations to all the grandparents and to Rosemary and Ron, and Sandy and Andrew, and we hope the boys will continue in good health.

Congratulations also to Ann Davis and Paul Peterken who became engaged on 30 January and have fixed their Wedding Day for 25 September.

A very happy wedding was celebrated recently when Joanna and David Harvey were married. We send our love to them and to young Daniel.

Most of you will know by now of the death from leukaemia of Gavin Alexander, retired Head of Hampton School and local councillor. We send our condolences to his family and friends, and to all those people who have been bereaved, known and unknown to us.

## From the Registers - January

### Baptisms

3	Edward Lawrance Rensmann	Bonn, Germany
17	Adam Gary Purcell	129 Priory Road, Hampton
	Christopher Mark Lee Purcell	
	Laura Natalie Purcell	
	Linda Abercrombie	3 Bishops Grove
	Reginald Abercrombie	
	Shanie Lee Abercrombie	
	Stephanie Jade Propert-Lewis	43 Garrick Close, Ealing

### Marriage

23 David James Harvey and Joanna Clare Springall

### Funerals

11	John William Kelvin Carr	77 St. James's Avenue	Aged 51
13	Daisy Elizabeth Drew	6 Wolsey Road	Aged 91
13	Ronald James Lutz	48 Taylor Close	Aged 65
22	Isabel Vera Rockliffe	40 Gloucester Road, Teddington	Aged 89
28	Lena Ann Dawes	26 Deacons Walk	Aged 80

## Dates to Note

March	3	14.00	Women's Forum, Coping with Finance, Church
	5	14.30	Women's World Day of Prayer, St. Richard's, Hanworth
		& 20.00	
	6	10.30 - 16.00	Parish Quiet Day, St. Michael's Convent, Ham
	7	09.30	RNLI Service, St. James's, during Informal Service, followed by the first 'Song of the Hill' rehearsal
	8	14.00	Editorial Board, 19 St. James's Road
	17	20.00	Women's Forum, Making a Will, Church
	19		<b>St. Joseph of Nazareth</b>
		20.00	Come and Sing Messiah, St. James's Church, in conjunction with 'The Observer' and Classic FM
	21	09.30	Mothering Sunday Children's Eucharist
	24	20.00	P.C.C., Vestry
	25		<b>The Annunciation</b>

## Advance Notices

April	3	10.30 - 12.00	Coffee Morning & Taster for St. James's Recipe Book
	4	18.30	Words and Music for Holy Week, Church
	5	14.00	Editorial Board, 19 St. James's Road
		21.00	Music and Compline (Night Prayer)
	6	21.00	Music and Compline (Night Prayer)
	7	14.00	Women's Forum, Music & Readings for Holy Week, Church
		21.00	Music and Compline (Night Prayer)
	8		<b>Maundy Thursday</b>
		20.00	Celebration of the Institution of the Holy Eucharist
	9		<b>Good Friday</b>
		12.00	Three Hours' Devotion
	10		Easter Eve
		20.00	Lighting of New Fire and Easter Ceremonies
	11		<b>Easter Day</b>
	21	20.00	Women's Forum, Sacred Music for Eastertide, Church
	25	11.00	A.P.C.M. followed by lunch, Church



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