

I've made a new rule for Lent this year: 'Thou shalt resist all the Hot Cross Buns, which have been available since Epiphany, until Maundy Thursday'. I shall try very hard to keep it, but I have no doubt I shall fall headlong into temptation. I suppose that this is the level on which we think of Lent most of the time - giving up things, avoiding chocolates or second helpings. Doubtless this is all very laudable and desirable, but is it really what we should be concentrating on in Lent? I fear not.

It seems to me that Lent is primarily a period for critical examination - of our thoughts and views and motives, of our habits and life-style, of our spirituality and commitment. A time for critical self-examination. Elsewhere in this magazine you will find details of the many opportunities to do just that this Lent at St. James's - early morning eucharist in the quietness of a new dawn, compline late on Sunday evenings when the day is spent, study groups, four Sunday evening talks about the old Testament. All this in addition to the normal round of work and worship.

I would like to mention two books which I think well illustrate this dimension of critical examination of ourselves set in today's world in this city of ours. The first is a fat book (and expensive) but great fun and very readable. Fortunately Richmond Borough Libraries have ten copies of it and part of it is also available on cassette. It is a book of writings by the marvellous playwright, Alan Bennett, called 'Writing Home'. Much of it is his own diaries, which you may have heard him read on Radio 4. Like any great playwright, his primary skill is observation. He has a well-honed, finely tuned sense of seeing and hearing people around him, and in so doing observes and writes about human beings, warts and all. He cuts through pompous people and arrogance he abhors. Yet he writes with a dignity, a hope, a love for humanity in all its diversity.

The second book could hardly be more different - it is Sainsbury's 'Religions of the World'. It is cheerful, vastly informative, full of concise information - in word and picture - about the world's major religious traditions. It is brief, user-friendly and a stunningly good introduction to some basic elements of how our Jewish or Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist or Christian neighbours live, worship and structure their lives. It is meant for children aged 8+ but is just as good for adults! In our world village, how can we just go on ignoring each other's faiths, beliefs and practices?

Critical examination - either with the playwright's eyes and ears, or with eyes and ears open to those around us whose search for truth, meaning and value differ so much from ours. I reckon that both types of critical examination would serve us well in Lent - or any other time for that matter.

Try to make Lent a positive time for you this year - look around you, look within you to see what God requires.

Brian Leathard

The books referred to in the leader opposite are:

Alan Bennett: **Writing Home**, published by Faber and Faber, £17.50

(available at all Borough Libraries).

Sainsbury's Religions of the World, written by E. Breuilly and M. Palmer,

published by Sainsbury's / Collins, £2.95 (great value!).

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Ash Wednesday, 1st March: Parish Communion at 8 pm (with imposition of ashes)

Lent Study Groups (beginning 6th March):

Mondays	2 pm	Hall
Mondays	8 pm	5 Oxford Road, Teddington
Tuesdays	8 pm	Upper Room, Hall
Wednesdays	10.30 am	162 Broad Lane, Hampton
Wednesdays	8 pm	8 Parkside

For more information on these groups, contact Helen Taylor, 979 7042.

Compline: Each Sunday evening at 9 pm

Dawn Eucharist: Each Friday at 7 am

FOUR TALKS by THE VICAR

Why bother to read the Old Testament?

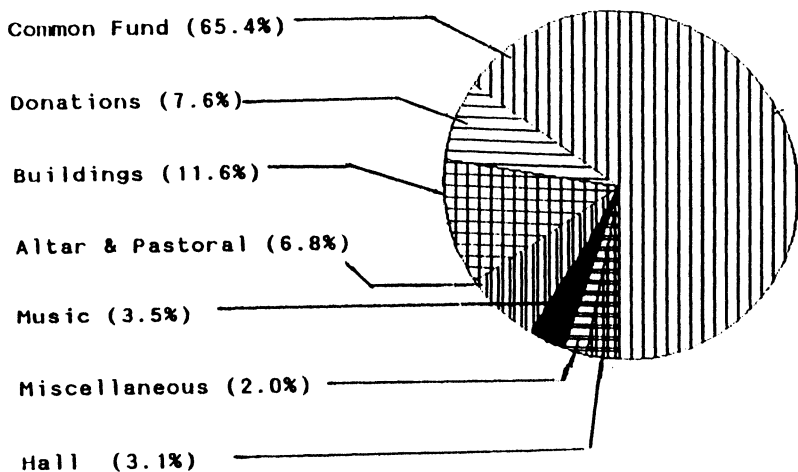
What's in it for me?

Sunday at 6.30pm March 5, 12, 19, 26

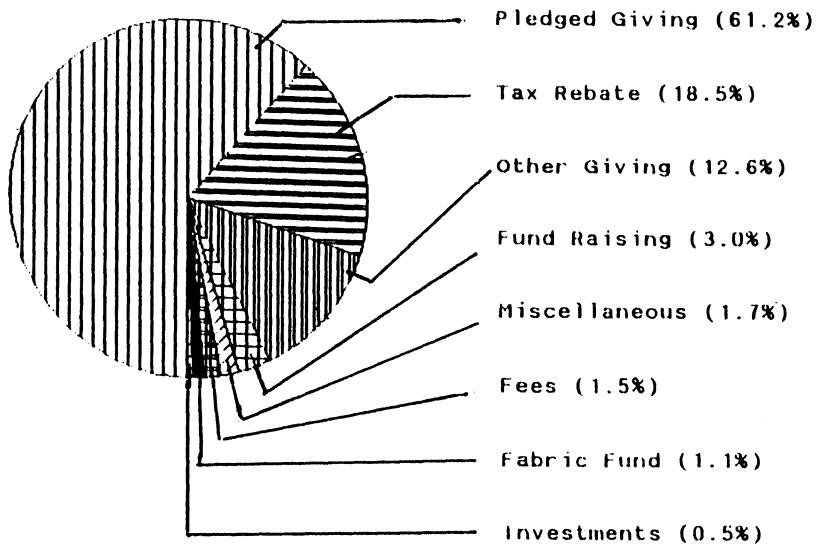
In Church - All Welcome

In our January issue, we reproduced a poem by Ann Lewin, entitled 'Discovery'. This poem came from an anthology called 'New Christian Poetry' edited by Alwyn Marriage and published in 1990 by Collins.

ST. JAMES'S CHURCH - OUTGOINGS 1994



ST. JAMES'S CHURCH - INCOME 1994



Stewardship Review

Forty to fifty people attended the Stewardship Review held in the Church Hall after the Service on the morning of Sunday 5th February.

The Chairman of Stewardship, Andrew Craig, said that the stewardship giving for 1994, at almost £32,700, was up significantly on the figure for 1993, although we had lost several members who had contributed generously for many years. However, despite gaining six new member families, our membership was at present only 96. This was about the level of membership for several years, but lower than the numbers we had had in years gone by,

Our Vicar, Brian, and Alan Taylor reminded us all that stewardship was about being fully involved with the church and in the work of the parish and of the wider church. Our giving of money was a vital part of that.

John Meredith-Smith explained the present financial situation of the parish. The component parts of the outgoings (some £55,000) and of our income (some £53,000) for 1994 are shown in the charts opposite.

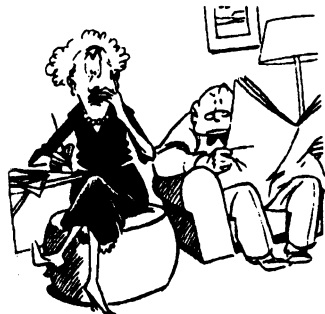
The accounts show a sizeable deficit. Other salient features were the large proportion of the outgoings accounted for by the Common Fund and the similarly large proportion of the income derived from pledged giving and the tax rebate obtained from covenanted giving. Donations were below the 10% objective, and looking ahead, they were the item which would be squeezed if income did not increase sufficiently to balance our books. The first year of the Hall was of course exceptional, and it was hoped that in the coming year, income generated by the Hall would help to balance its accounts.

Andrew said we could be pleased with what had been achieved in the last year by stewardship. Now we must look for an increase in our membership to over 100 and for an increase in our giving to bridge the gap between income and expenditure.

The meeting was followed by sherry (not paid for out of church funds!) and a splendid shared lunch. The overall effect seems to have been very beneficial, as within a day or two, our membership had indeed reached 100 and we had had some increased covenants! I look forward to receiving more.

Ron Bridges

"Oh dear . . . I accidentally sent the butcher's £12 dog food cheque in place of our £2 church pledge."



The St. Mungo Museum of Art and Religious Life

Saint Mungo is the patron saint of Glasgow. Some of the miracles attributed to him are celebrated in large paintings on the walls of the biggest room (free for charitable functions) in the very splendid City Hall. Slightly further out of town and next to Glasgow's ancient Cathedral is the St. Mungo Museum of Religious Art and Life.

The concept of this museum is unique - to present religious works of art from different faiths alongside each other, and even more imaginatively, the way in which different faiths celebrate rites of passage from birth to death.

This is not a large museum and as entry to all Glasgow's museums is free, it is good to be able to go in for a short time and as often as time (or interest) permit. In the first section on religious art hangs the famous Salvador Dali painting entitled 'Christ of St. John of the Cross' showing Christ hanging from the cross and a lake with a small boat laying at his feet. Here also is an old Islamic prayer rug, a large dancing Shiva and my favourite, a medieval Madonna and Child, he holding a now faded bowl of strawberries.

The religious life part of the museum is fascinating. Here, side by side, articles are displayed from different faiths celebrating the same events, traditional gifts given to new-born infants, money, clothes, charms to ward off evil spirits, clothes worn by holy men, clothes worn by brides, and displays to illustrate the different ways in which people deal with death and the dead.

The museum also boasts the only permanent Zen garden in Britain. Forget herbaceous borders and the like, the garden is composed of rocks, stones and what looks like a camomile lawn. There are wooden blocks to sit on for those who wish to sit and contemplate, which is the *raison d'être* for such a garden, and in the gently falling rain on a winter's afternoon, it had a quiet greyness. What really lifted the place out of the ordinary was the stark and dramatic backdrop of Glasgow Cathedral's necropolis set on a hill behind the garden, complete with its fantastic Victorian monuments and mausoleums.

After the delights of the Zen garden, it is very nice to know that the museum also has an extremely good coffee shop, some unusual and tasty vegetarian dishes may be had here, as well as all the usual things, and all reasonably priced.

If in Glasgow, there is plenty to see and do. The Burrell Collection is, of course, a must (also free), but St. Mungo still has a lot to commend him.

Helen Taylor

Letter from Zimbabwe

16th January 1995: Mary and I have just arrived back in Bulawayo after spending a very happy Christmas and new year holiday in Western Australia. We stayed with our daughter Susan and her husband, who both work as nurses in the Perth area. Australia is a rich country, and its leaders have taken the opportunity to invest generously in public transport, health-care, education and recreational facilities. The Perth area is planned for the future, spaciouly laid out with superb communications. It is a wonderful place to visit, and seems to be a wonderful place to work in as well, purposeful yet relaxed.

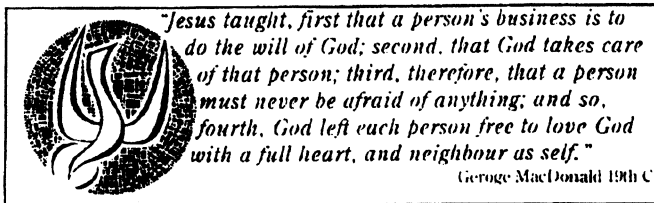
It was an interesting contrast to Zimbabwe, which has a similar climate (not quite as hot, though it is nearer the equator), similar water shortage and similar good agricultural potential, though it lacks the enormous mineral riches of Australia. I am sure Mr Mugabe would like to do what Australia has done and build a country of wealth and opportunity. But Zimbabwe is struggling just to get a reasonable standard of living for all its people. Experts from the IMF and the World Bank are advising on growth strategies. Their basic formula is simple, less public spending and more privatisation. A similar programme for Zimbabwe's poorer neighbour, Zambia, has resulted in the closure of public road transport, and I hear much hardship. Experts say they will feel the benefit in ten years time.

The rains here have so far been a disappointment. Last night for instance there was a very fierce thunderstorm, but the heavy clouds gave us only a thin sprinkling of rain. Our mealies in the garden have withered and died. Not much of a problem for us, but it would be if we really needed them to eat or sell. However, the dampness causes all sorts of exciting animal activity. The garden earth boils and erupts with huge flying ants. The birds and lizards dart around having a wonderful feast. Six-inch long millipedes appear from nowhere. A thing like a mongoose trots across the garden - we hope he likes the millipedes. The birds sing away beautifully all day. Perhaps they are just complaining of indigestion, but it sounds nice.

The new semester starts at the end of January. I have two new courses to give, one for some students I know, and another for some final-year students just returning from a year of industrial training. On the very rough benchmark of examination results my courses went reasonably well last semester. I am rather less well prepared this time, so I am hoping for the proverbial fair wind for the next five months.

It is very good to get the Spire and read the parish news each month. Sad news of Freda - as Alan said, one of the saints of the church. A great life of service.

Dick Wilde



Women's Forum - Teenage Reading

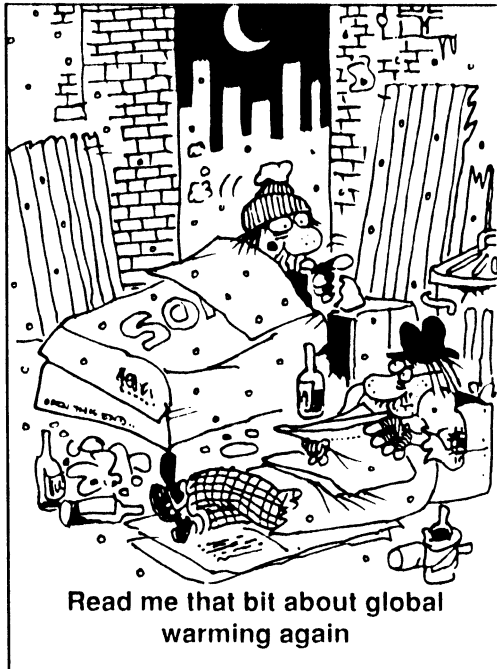
Do you know what teenagers are reading these days? Have you seen any of the current magazines for girls?

In January, the Women's Forum took a look at some of them. The older members were horrified, for the only topic was sex, even in the magazines aimed at the youngest age group. True, there were features on fashion and make-up, but the rest were on variations on 'How to get yourself a boy friend' and what to do with him next. There were some very explicit articles. It seems there are no equivalent magazines for boys.

This Bimbo culture seems poor preparation for careers and the world of work where these girls will eventually be claiming sex equality. Although on second thoughts perhaps the restless years of adolescence are just the time to come to terms with the stress on sex that assails us each day on TV, in adverts and so on. If youngsters could be encouraged to discuss the articles with parents, perhaps the magazines could be used to give an opening for discussion on subjects otherwise difficult to raise, and sex could be put into a proper perspective. This was rather the view of members who are involved with teenagers. To ban from the house something so readily available is to make the product seem more interesting.

Do we need another Mary Whitehouse?

Kath Brooks



The Grey Branch

Seven young people attended the "re-launch" meeting of the Grey Branch recently. We discussed what had been happening with the group so far and where they wanted it to go.

The group will be meeting in the Church Hall from now on, on Sunday evenings from 7.00pm to 9.00pm. What they mostly want is time to relax and chat before they start the week again, and table tennis, pool, music and silly games will play a large part in what could only loosely be called "the programme", serendipity being the rule. However, they also agree that it should have some Christian content, and time will be set aside for that too. The possibilities are endless, and we intend to be very democratic so that all ideas and opinions are considered.

So, if you are between 14 and 18, and would like to get to know others of your own age at St. James's, you can be sure of a very friendly welcome. Just turn up on Sunday evenings, or contact Elizabeth Gossage - 979 3793.

Please remember the group in your prayers over the coming weeks.

Elizabeth Gossage

Mothering Sunday Flowers

There will be a mass arrangement of daffodils in church on 26th March for Mothering Sunday. This will be in aid of the Marie Curie Foundation and plates will be at the back of the church for donations to this very worthy cause. We are grateful to the Hampton Hill Floral Art Club who will be doing the flower arranging.

Flower Festival, 1995

This is an advance notice of the Flower Festival which is to be held here in church over the Harvest Festival weekend, 30th September and 1st October. Again, the Hampton Hill Floral Art Club have agreed to stage the flowers for this event, for which we thank them in advance. The theme will be 'Feeding the World' and will be part of our celebration of Harvest Festival and the Fiftieth anniversary of Christian Aid.

We shall need to raise about £350 for the flowers - so donations please to Helen Taylor.

3rd Hampton Hill Brownies

The Brownies are holding their annual fund raiser in the Church Hall on Tuesday 4 April beginning at 6 pm. The theme of the evening is 'What I like about Brownies' and each brownie will be reading out a small piece about what they like about brownies. There will be a small entrance charge which will include a cup of coffee or tea and squash for the children. We also hope to have a raffle stall, a cake stall and a bring-and-buy stall. Everyone is welcome to come along and join us - all funds raised will go towards a big THANK YOU to the church for all the help and encouragement in letting the brownies come back home!

Lesley Brough

Around the Spire

Congratulations to David and Margaret Taylor on the birth of a new grandchild, Samuel, son of their youngest daughter Sandy and her husband Andrew. Sandy and Andrew already have a two-year old son Sebastian and are at the moment still living in Holland but hope to move back to the UK soon. Love and best wishes to all the family.

All good wishes too, to John and Thilika, Ramani's parents, as they celebrate their Ruby Wedding anniversary. We hope they have a very happy day on Sunday 17th February with as many family and friends as possible, and that they may have many more years of happiness together.

Baby Olivia Nettleton was recently Christened at a very happy service. Good wishes to her and her parents, Charles and Susannah.

Alan Taylor has had an operation on his shoulder after some months of considerable pain. We hope you will soon be able to move about again in comfort, Alan, and send you our love.

Monica Lockyer, a long time resident of St. James's Road, died suddenly after a quadruple heart by-pass operation. She had gone to hospital for a different operation, and her husband, Peter, and their many friends have been left stunned. Monica was a good friend of many and will be very much missed by them and by the local Conservative Association and the Hampton Hill Floral Art Club, in both of which she was very active.

A Thank You

'Thank you' all for the many cards and letters of comfort and sympathy, and for all the help and support that I have been offered, and have received, and to those who have remembered me in their prayers since my sudden bereavement. Thank you also for the donations received for the Down's Syndrome Association as a tribute to Ray. In all £250 has been received. Many thanks and God bless you all.

Mona Gow and Family

From the Registers - January

Baptism

15 Olivia Nettleton

66 Tudor Road, Hampton

Funerals

13 Harriet Barrett Threader

14 Gresham House, Teddington

Aged 87

16 Arthur Edward Wright

19 Wordsworth Road, Hampton

Aged 85

16 James Collins

32 Fairlight, Uxbridge Road

Aged 78



**MORE
SERVENT
IN
PRAYER**



**MORE
GENEROUS
IN WORKS OF
CHARITY**



**MORE
EAGER IN CELE
BRATING THE
MYSTERIES
BY WHICH WE
ARE REBORN**

Dates to Note

Mar.	1		Ash Wednesday
		14.30	Women's Forum, Alan Taylor on Lent, Church Hall
		20.00	Parish Communion with Imposition of Ashes
	3	07.00	Dawn Eucharist
		14.30	} Women's World Day of Prayer, St. James's Church
		20.00	
		19.30	} Cantanti Camerati, 'Just a Song at Twilight', York House, Twickenham
	4	14.30	
		19.30	
	5	18.30	Talk on the old Testament, the Vicar
		21.00	Compline
	6		Lent Study Groups start
		14.00	Editorial Board, 19 St. James's Road
	9	20.15	Stewardship Committee, 16 Cranmer Road
	10	07.00	Dawn Eucharist
	12	18.30	Talk on the Old Testament, the Vicar
		21.00	Compline
	15	20.00	Women's Forum, the Vicar on Lent, Church Hall
	17	07.00	Dawn Eucharist
	19	18.30	Talk on the Old Testament, the Vicar
		21.00	Compline
	20		St. Joseph of Nazareth
	23	20.00	P.C.C., Church Hall
	24	07.00	Dawn Eucharist
	25		The Annunciation
	26		Mothering Sunday
		18.30	Talk on the old Testament, the Vicar
		21.00	Compline
	31	07.00	Dawn Eucharist

Advance Notices

Apr.	2	21.00	Compline
	3	14.00	Editorial Board, 19 St. James's Road
	4	18.00	'What I like about Brownies', Church Hall
	5	14.30	Women's Forum, 'Meditation', Church Hall
	7	07.00	Dawn Eucharist
	8	19.30	Teddington Choral Society, Church
	9		Palm Sunday
		21.00	Compline
	14		Good Friday
	15		Easter Eve
	16		Easter Day
	19	20.00	Women's Forum, Church Hall
	30	11.00	Annual Parochial Church Meeting, Church Hall

} See next issue for full
arrangements for
Holy Week and Easter

COPY DATE FOR APRIL ISSUE: 12 MARCH