

I'm very suspicious about statistics relating to church attendance. I suppose this is partly due to a colleague (in another Diocese of course) who had little time for accurate record keeping. He simply added extra to the previous year's register, and every ten years removed '10' and started again. I certainly do not believe that the Kingdom of God is defined in statistical terms - however, keeping accurate records and looking at trends, strengths and weaknesses, can help our strategic thinking and planning, as the church, the Body of Christ. In a recent issue of the journal *Theology* there was a fascinating article on "The Observance of Easter in Post-War Britain". The article, by Clive Field, surveyed the percentage of adult Britons correctly answering questions about the Easter story. I summarise some of his results below:

Question	% Answering Correctly
What happened on Palm Sunday?	35%
What was Gethsemane?	35%
What happened on Good Friday?	60%
Who betrayed Jesus?	64%
What was Calvary?	50%
What happened on Easter Day?	66%

During the period since 1945 there has been a major fall in the number of those surveyed who are able to answer such questions correctly. Put the other way round, 1/3 of those questioned cannot relate the Easter Day events, 2/3 cannot relate the Palm Sunday events, and 2/5 do not know about Good Friday.

I suppose what particularly saddens me is that these days and events, which are central to the entire Christian story, are no longer common currency in our society. What has happened? And more particularly, what has happened in the Church that we have singularly failed in bringing the message of Christ's passion, death and resurrection to our neighbours?

Some may blame the lack of sound teaching, the clergy (of course), lack of glitzy church advertising or communication. Yes, perhaps all of these are factors to be scrutinised, but in my heart of hearts I don't think any of these, individually or together, really provide the reason.

In the end it comes back to us as the Body of Christ - each one of us, and as the whole Church. Do we live our lives that they proclaim Jesus Christ, crucified and risen? And I don't mean do we take every opportunity to "preach" at people, but do we really live, work or play alongside our neighbours with integrity - living through the trials, betrayals and crucifixions of life with the steadfastness of our resurrection faith? Unless our lives, like Christ's life, proclaim the undying, unstoppable, unending love of God in every part, then it's not surprising the message gets confused.

It's not easy to live out the Easter Faith - but why should it be? It wasn't exactly easy for Jesus of Nazareth. As a journalist taking a straw poll at Chessington World of Adventures called it in 1995, Easter seems to be "all chicks and going out". It's up to us to make it about the centrality of God's boundless love for all

creation.

Our lives must echo the song of the cross and the resurrection in creating healing, courage where there is fear, reconciliation where there is division, through the love which is prepared to be spent utterly on the crosses of our world.

Brian Leathard

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER 1998

5th April		
Palm Sunday	09.30	Procession of Palms and Parish Communion
	19.30	Meditation in Sight and Sound for Holy Week
	21.00	Compline
Monday	21.00	Compline
Tuesday	21.00	Compline
Wednesday	21.00	Compline
Maundy Thursday	09.15	Morning Prayer
	20.00	Celebration of the Last Supper and Washing of the Feet
Good Friday	09.15	Morning Prayer
	11.00	Churches Together around Hampton Open Air Service at Little Sainsbury's
	12.00	Three Hour Meditation
	15.00	
to	19.30	Messiah from Scratch All singers and listeners welcome. Admission £5 for Christian Aid. Janet Morley will be present.
Holy Saturday	09.15	Morning Prayer
	20.00	Lighting of The New Fire
Easter Day	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Parish Communion



THE KNEELERS' PROJECT

After a very successful launch, we are now a group of about thirty people and our aim is to make fifty kneelers by the year 2000 to celebrate the Millennium at St. James. Our efforts will not cease then, of course! We may even produce two hundred in about twenty years time, as did a neighbouring church, St. Nicholas at Thames Ditton, which we visited to view their handiwork.

Our Committee has started the preliminary planning and is considering, colours, designs, purchase of materials and other important matters. They will also be able to give instruction and opportunity to practice for those whose skills are less evident than their enthusiasm!

The date of our next meeting will be given in the weekly notices, and we will make sure that everyone is informed. If you would like to join the group, whatever the standard of your needlework, please do ring either Elizabeth Gossage on 979 3793 or Margaret Taylor on 977 1342.

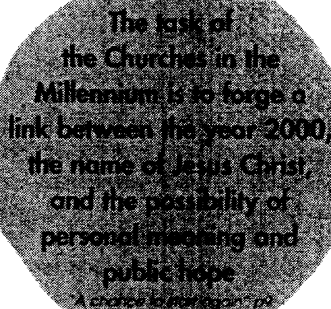
TWO THOUSAND YEARS SINCE WHAT?

Churches Together in England have plenty of ideas for how churches can celebrate the Millennium. You only have to read the papers to know that, for most people, the Millennium has nothing to do with Jesus. We have our work cut out finding ways to remind people of what it is all about! It's not just the Dome!

Churches Together have a New Start theme - **A New Start for the World's Poor - A New Start at Home - A New Start With God.**

Thanks to Ann Peterken, we are already supporting Jubilee 2000 and many of us have signed the petition. You may like to travel to Birmingham on 16th May to support the Campaign and join in the human chain around the G8 Summit being held there that day to symbolise the chains of debt burdening the world's poorest countries. The first instalment of the petition is to be handed in, but this is the largest petition ever, and we can still collect signatures until the remainder is handed in in 1999.

A New Start at Home is, paradoxically, more difficult. It would be nice to start some sort of community project which would benefit the people of Hampton Hill for the future. May be this could be tied in with a proposal for the Borough's Unitary Development Plan which the PCC will be considering soon. As today's young people will be the citizens of the third Millennium, perhaps a New Start with God could begin with them - we have long discussed the need for a stipendiary youth worker in the area, or may be we should work more closely with the local schools.

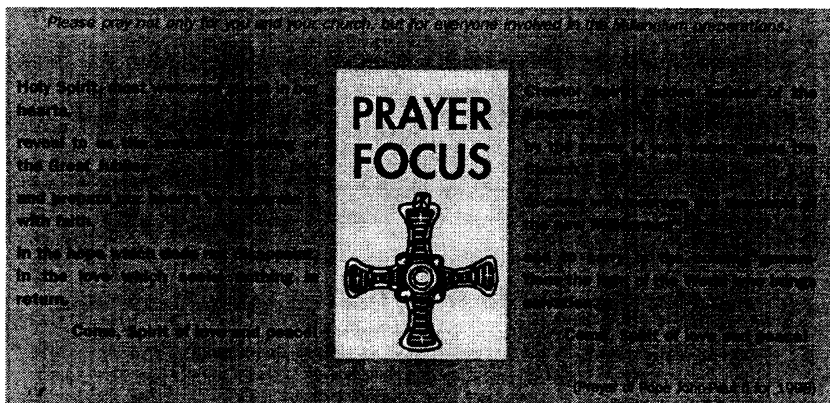


The task of
the Churches in the
Millennium is to forge a
link between the year 2000,
the name of Jesus Christ,
and the possibility of
personal meaning and
public hope
A choice is never again 1999

There are many such ideas in *Millennium News*, the Churches Together's publication for March 1998. The Millennium is under two years away, and so shouldn't we be discussing these ideas now?

A final suggestion - a churches' gift to every home! It is hoped that in December 1999 churches will distribute a special commemorative candle to every household. In the midst of beacons, fireworks and spectaculars, the candles will provide a moment for quiet reflection. They will carry the text of a special "Millennium Affirmation", a resolution for the whole community to say together.

Elizabeth Gossage



Christian Aid

We believe in life before death

RISING INTEREST

(a look at International Debt and the growing strength of the **JUBILEE 2000** movement)

Saturday 18th April 10.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
St. James's Church Hall

Speaker: Matthew Lockwood from Christian Aid

Further details: Brian Leathard 0181 979 2069
Gray Featherstone 0171 496 1690

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK - MAY 10TH TO 16TH 1998

Could you be a Collector?

There will be a briefing for all Christian Aid Collectors after this meeting on Saturday 18th April. Please come along, hear the speakers, and stay for a short briefing. If you haven't collected for Christian Aid before, but would like to do so, either just come along or contact Margaret Taylor on 977 1342.

Christian Aid Week May 10-16, 1998



More than 300,000 people collect and organise events for Christian Aid Week each year across the UK and Ireland. They raise nearly £10 million.

Could you be a collector?

"The first time I knock on a door, when I start a house-to-house collection, I hold my breath. But after that it's easy."

Freda March, Christian Aid supporter, Wales

"Do you mean to say that in Christian Aid Week, respectable church people in your country go out onto the streets to beg on behalf of the world's poor?"

Director of projects funded by Christian Aid in Santiago, Chile

"Christian Aid is its supporters. Every pound you give, every hour you spare, is having an impact on another person's life somewhere in this small world. There's so much to do, but together we're doing it."

Dr Rukmini Rao, Deccan Development Society, a local organisation in India funded by Christian Aid

FAITH AND FUND MANAGEMENT

Fund managers construct portfolios of securities to meet the investment needs of individuals, families or institutions such as pension funds or charities. They must balance prospective return against risk. There is a broad trade-off between high returns with high risks, and low returns with low risks - if you are ever offered a product which offers high returns for low risk, you should be very suspicious. Generally equities are riskier than bonds, and bonds are riskier than cash.

Clients must define their objectives, and these sometimes have to be teased out by the fund manager. In any event a fund manager is obliged to take lower risks than a prudent person would accept when investing on their own behalf. Risk can be reduced by diversification, by not putting all your eggs in one basket.

I left university in 1978 and my first job was with the Crown Agents. At the time this was still an unincorporated emanation of the Royal prerogative (which meant it could not be sued!) with a rather tarnished reputation dating back to the Fringe Banking Crisis of the early 1970's. The Agents offered a unique training in my chosen profession, since graduates were thrown in at the deep end and either sank or swam. In 1983 Brunei reluctantly accepted independence and the Sultan decided to withdraw his very substantial account, which constituted the entire equity portfolio managed by the Agents. I was by this time a specialist in Japanese shares, and did not want to become a fixed income (bond) manager, so I left to join the investment department of Baring Brothers. A decision I have never regretted despite the vicissitudes which led to the company being acquired by ING from the Baring Foundation, which had until then been one of the largest grant giving charities in Britain.

As a fund manager my faith is important in reminding me not to exploit a position of power. My decisions not just about which stock to buy or sell, but which stock broker to use, make me the target of a pretty concerted campaign of flattery. The obverse side of this is that many brokers are put at the receiving end of some pretty arrogant behaviour by some fund managers.

One also has to be careful not to confuse a bull market with genius!

John Gossage

THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

will be held after Parish Communion

on

SUNDAY 26TH APRIL 1998

**The meeting will be followed by a
Bring and Share Lunch**

ALL WELCOME

THE DIOCESE OF LONDON BUDGET FOR 1998

The diocese of London Budget for 1998 was published in February. Before you skip on to the next article with a yawn, you may actually find some interesting facts therein. For instance, does it surprise you to know that the Diocese is living beyond its means by some £840,000? This is with an average increase per church member of 3.5p for every £1 already given (in line with inflation). The Bishops have called for us to move towards giving 5p for every £1 of our income, but we each have to decide what to give after prayer and consideration, and we are urged to review our giving constantly, to be realistic, generous and sacrificial, reflecting God's generosity to us. It may be some comfort to know that average church attendance is up by 1%, so the load will be spread just a little more easily!

1998 Budget

Where does the money come from?

In every £1

Church Commissioners 5p

77p Parishes

Other 18p
(Rents, interest, Reserves)



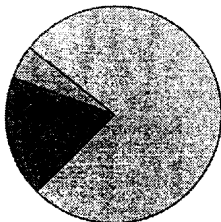
Total: £1.00

£ million

Church Commissioners
0.70m

10.45m Parishes

Other 2.31m
(Rents, Interest)



Total: £13.46m

Where does it go?

In every £1

Statutory Responsibilities 1p

Board for Schools 2p

Social Responsibility 2p

Administration 6p

Parish Support 3p

National Church Responsibilities 3p

83p Paying and
supporting the clergy



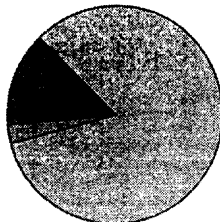
Total: £1.00

£ million

Parish Support 1.95m

National Church
Responsibilities 0.40m

11.95m Paying and
supporting the clergy



For every 94p of income, we are spending £1.

Total: £14.30m

ORDER! ORDER!

It is the nature of time that 5 years can seem like 5 minutes or five decades! It is like that when I think about my term as churchwarden. Now I am asked by the Spire editors to reflect on that time.

In some ways it was just as I expected - assorted meetings to attend, the treasurer thrusting cheques under my nose to be signed, all sorts of people saying, "may I do xxxx in the church?" and so-on. I knew that several of the churchwardens' tasks are deputised to others, and I have been very pleased to leave the sidespersons' rota and supervision to Eila, the inspection and maintenance of the fabric of our buildings to Jack and the members of the Properties Committee, the organising of the cleaning to Margaret and I have been much relieved to be able to forget about church finance, knowing that it is in the entirely trustworthy and efficient hands of John, the Finance committee and the Stewardship Committee.

So. If all those people are running the church, what does a churchwarden do? Well, my answer to potential churchwardens is "If you see something around the church that makes you think 'Someone should do something about that' the someone is you!" Hence, I have been known to be - very tentatively - up ladders changing light bulbs or clearing gutters, showing people of all ages and for all sorts of reasons around the church, assisting people to break into their own flats and so on. No great surprise in that, but I do remember early in my term of office that Margaret and Brian and I chuckled over the list of duties of the churchwarden and the traditional mark of office of the churchwardens - their staves for keeping order in church - All part of the reflection of the fact that the office goes back to mediaeval times when congregations might become disorderly. In fact, that has been the toughest part of the job! Dealing with the odd adult incapable of behaving in an acceptable way and trying to reconcile the inclusion of a growing young congregation, inevitably noisy, and faithful older people seeking instruction and prayer in our morning Communion Service.

It has been a wonderful experience and I thank all those who have made it such a pleasure, many of whom I have got to know better and now number among my friends. An especial thank you to Margaret, my fellow warden for four years, and Dick, my fellow warden for the last year (arriving just at the right moment to please the new Archdeacon with an exemplary "Church Properties Register" - NO MEAN FEAT!) and, of course, Judith whose encouragement and support are essential.

Ruth Mills





On Thursday 26th February, the Archdeacon paid his Triennial Visitation to St. James's. He is required to visit each church and churchyard in the Diocese every three years to check on the fabric, fixtures, records and registers which, with Brian and the Church Wardens he duly did. He ended his day by reporting to the PCC, and you will be pleased to hear that he found us all in order, and that he was particularly impressed with Dick's Church Property Register!!

We are sorry to hear that Hal Severn's Sister, Valerie has recently died and we remember Hal and Eila in our prayers. Please also pray for Betty Rowett, Pip's mother, who has once again become seriously ill. Chrissy has returned home after her stay in hospital. We send our good wishes for a speedy recovery to Councillor Liz Quelch who has recently had an operation, and so was unable to take part as a member of the panel for the Women's Forum Any Questions evening.

Speaking of the Women's Forum, we should like to thank them very much for a wonderful evening at their Dinner Party in February. The food was delicious, the hall looked very elegant and Jack Gostling entertained us with a potted history of the Properties Committee peppered with some not-so "persilised" jokes! If you couldn't make it, we're told they might repeat the occasion next year.

Congratulations to Rod and Kalina Hodgkinson on the birth of their daughter Amelia Jane Krystyna, a sister to Grace, on Sunday 15th February, to Margaret and Tony Laurance's daughter Johanna who has given birth to a second daughter, Molly and to Margaret and David Taylor on the safe arrival of their 11th grandchild.

QUIZ

Saturday 25th April
at 7.30 p.m.
St. James's Church Hall
Tickets £4.00
Includes light refreshments

RENEWAL OF MARRIAGE VOWS

a service for all

at 4.00 p.m. on Sunday 7th June

*to be followed by a
Champagne Reception
in the Church Hall*



FROM THE FEBRUARY REGISTERS

Baptisms

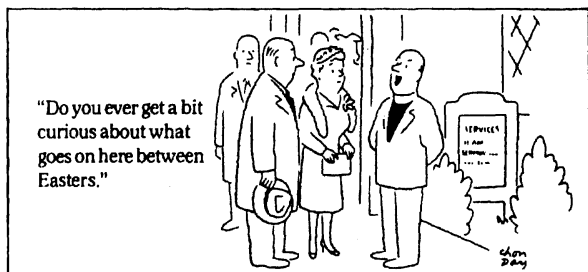
- 3 Nichola Louise Collins, 76 Twining Avenue, Twickenham
28 Jessica Emily Golden, 15 Towfield Court, Hanworth

Funerals

- 6 Mary Cowan Shepherd, 4a Wellington Gardens, Twickenham 81
20 Thelma King (formerly of Cross Street, Hampton Hill) 60
27 Anne Ennis Lloyd, Marling Court 97

DATES TO NOTE IN APRIL

- 3 & 4 **Church Spring Clean** Can you help? Materials provided Labour needed! See list in church or contact Jack 979 3748.
- 4 **Women's Forum** host a **Lenten Soup Lunch**
Church Hall 12 noon - 2.00 p.m. All Welcome. All proceeds to charity
- 5 **Palm Sunday** See notice in the front of this edition for all Holy Week and Easter Service Times. You are very welcome at our services
- 9 Maundy Thursday
10 Good Friday
11 Easter Eve
12 **EASTER DAY**
18 Christian Aid & Jubilee 2000. Rising Interest A meeting from 10.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. on Unpayable Third World Debt. Church Hall. All welcome
- 21 Anselm, Abp of Canterbury 1109
23 George, Patron Saint of England 4th century
25 St. Mark the Evangelist Parish Quiz Night 7.30 p.m. Church Hall
26 11 a.m. after Parish Communion Annual Parochial Church Meeting followed by a Bring & Share Lunch
29 Catherine of Siena, Mystic 1380



COPY DATE FOR MAY MAGAZINE: 6th APRIL