

ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

The Secretary's Report

(concluded)

"Scheme K" under which the Vicar's stipend was augmented, ended in March 1954, and the Council accepted an offer of inclusion in a similar scheme under the London Diocesan Fund, the only difference being in administration. The Council has also agreed to assist, at least during 1955, with the new and very much higher assessment for the maintenance of the Vicarage.

The Council, whilst regretting the closing of the church outside hours of Divine Service, acknowledge the need for this to be done, in order to avoid improper use. The thanks of the Council are extended to a member of the church for organising escorted visits to the church tower and for donating the charges to the Renovation Fund.

The suggestion that a Bells Completion Fund should be re-introduced was considered by the Council to be inopportune at the present time.

New blue cassocks have been obtained for the members of the Men's and Boys' Choirs. New cassocks are also on order. The Council have undertaken the financial responsibility of providing outings for the choirboys. Approval has also been given to the Choir's joining the Royal School of Church Music.

The Council have six members (ex-officio) sitting on the Ruridecanal Conference and one of the Churchwardens has been appointed as a Trustee on the Hampton Charities.

The Council were represented at the Youth Conference at Twickenham and have been asked to provide stewards for the coming Missionary Exhibition also to be held at Twickenham.

The Council were helped in their decision to provide a Christmas Crib, by the raising by friends, of the money necessary to purchase a set of figures. The Crib was exhibited during Christmastide and Epiphany.

The Church Magazine has continued to be published monthly and copies of the London Churchman and the Church Illustrated have provided for those requiring them. A gift of bound copies of the Parish Magazine was received on behalf of the Church.

The Council was pleased to assist with the cost of training candidates for the Ministry, by devoting a collection on Trinity Sunday to the cause.

The Summer Fete, the Autumn Fair and a Gift Day considerably assisted the Church finances. Parish Socials, organised in conjunction with the Drama Group, with whose activities the Council has closely associated itself, and a Harvest Supper, were successful social functions. In many of these events the Catering Committee of the Council provided an essential service. The Council have also had the help of members of the Mothers' Union in specialised cleaning of the church, and of the Sanctuary Guild in the decoration of the church and in the care of the altar linen. Two gentlemen of the Council have undertaken the duties of general maintenance men of the church building and fittings.

The sick and needy of the parish have received gifts during the year and the major part of the Christmas collections were allocated to this cause.

In presenting this, my last report to the Church Meeting, I should like to express to all those with whom I have had the privilege of working, my very sincere thanks for their many kindnesses and ready help and co-operation and to the members of the church, my deep appreciation of their affection and regard.

Vicar's Report

Mr. Farrow has given a most comprehensive report of the past year from the point of view of the P.C.C.—and it really leaves me little to add, because that point of view is largely mine too. My aim as Vicar has been to work in the closest possible conjunction and co-operation with the Church

Council on all points, including matters which legally are still the concern and responsibility of the Incumbent alone, such as the ordering of worship and the conduct of Services. I have also been anxious that the Council should not concern itself only with the business and financial matters which loom so large in these days, and which are, of course, very important: I do not wish to belittle these in any way, and indeed a great deal of my own time has had to be given to them—the purchase of Wayside, for instance, has involved continuous correspondence for a long period. But the Council is not meant to stop here, but to rise to the height of its vocation, as laid down in the Measure of 1921: "It shall be the primary duty of the Council in every Parish to co-operate with the Incumbent in the initiation, conduct, and development of Church work both within the Parish and outside." The members of our Council have seen the point of this, and the co-operation last year was excellent. Much of this was due to Mr. Forrow, for many years Secretary of the Council, and I have already remarked on the words with which his report ends—implying that he too, feels he must now withdraw from the full weight and pressure of his work. He has served the whole Parish and Council magnificently and in addition has done much extremely valuable voluntary service outside the closer confines of the Church. There could be few who pack more into the day than he does, and yet he always has time to give to those—and they are many—who call on him for help and advice, and he manages things so well that he never appears overworked, and without inside knowledge, few would be aware of the heavy burdens he so cheerfully bears. We are very grateful to him, and it will be one of the first responsibilities of the next meeting of the Council to appoint a successor.

The increasing range and effectiveness of the Council's work also owes much to one who has left this Parish to-day and is shortly returning to New Zealand—Mr. Laurence Brown. He and his wife did not give their whole attention

to this Parish—they travelled far and wide and visited many different churches, and compared St. James's with what they found elsewhere, often to our disadvantage! Because they saw how much better things might be here, they were a great stimulus: they provided a much-needed challenge—they wouldn't let us rest content with things as they are, and they did a great deal to help us to work towards things as they might be.

(The Vicar then spoke of the book it was intended to give them, signed by members of the congregation, and inscribed by Mr. Wigington, to remind them of their close association with St. James's during their three years' stay in England. This book reached them just before they sailed, and their letter of thanks was written at sea. We hope to publish further news of them, and of their Parish in Wellington, from time to time)

The ideal before us, then, is I think, that of increasing our team-work and co-operation in all fields of the Church's activity, and knowing more fully what that activity should be. This means the attaining of a "common mind" which is also the mind of the Holy Spirit. We sometimes have to base our plans and policies upon a majority-vote, but this is only a second-best for the Church: the Quakers, for example, never do it—they work for a unanimity which they feel is in accord with the will of God, and the nearer we ourselves can come to this ideal the better. This will involve not only increasing team-work and prayer by the Council—it must be extended to the congregation as well. The Church of England may well have to take some of the principles of Congregationalism more fully into its system (and in some places this process has already gone a long way). This would involve, not only one solitary Annual Church Meeting, such as this, but much more frequent "Parish Meetings," as they are usually called, or alternatively perhaps meetings of small groups or "cells." We have not yet got to this stage here. But this common mind, this common purpose, is extremely important: the sense that the Church is

after something that really matters, and that we know what that is, and our part in bringing it about.

But the Church of England is not a "gathered Church," as for example, a Congregational church traditionally is—it cannot rightly cut itself off from the life around, and concern itself only with the needs of those who count themselves its members. Neither can it define its own membership too closely, and make rigid distinctions between 'those within' and 'those without.' Some parishes are now trying to work in this way, and the result is often to make the church itself much more efficient (all passengers and slackers are shed). But the cost is great—though an increasing number appear to think it should be paid. Often as a result there is a deep cleavage between the Church on the one side and the rest of the Parish on the other, and many people who might in the end have been won by gentler and more sympathetic methods are hardened into what well might be life-long hostility. We at any rate have felt that this rigorist line is not the right one for us here, but that the Parish Church has the privilege and duty to concern itself with the whole parish, and not just with the present members of its worshipping congregation. The Parish Church is concerned about the welfare of all who live within the parish boundaries, whether they ever darken the doors of its buildings or not. It has a mission to all—and its mission is not just narrowly evangelistic, or concerned only with getting them into the Church at all costs. The Church must regard its parishioners not chiefly as individuals to be argued with or to be preached at, still less as fish to be caught, but as people to be loved. True love will, of course, desire that they should come to know and love God and Christ, and enter fully into the rich inheritance which is theirs in the fellowship of the Church—but it realises that many people come to this only very gradually, and love which cares for them in other ways is often a necessary preparation. So we in this Church want to extend love and service of every

kind as far as we can—to all the quarters of this parish and beyond.

We took some further steps towards this last year, largely through the untiring labours of the Wider Church Commission, of which Mr. Farrow himself was secretary. So the Church took the initiative in the formation of the Old People's Welfare Committee, and has continued to work in close co-operation with it through its representatives on that committee, and through its Street Wardens, most of whom act as wardens for the Welfare Committee as well. We want no old person in the parish to feel lonely or uncared for, and hard work is going on to make this ideal a reality.

(It is hoped to give the substance of the concluding portion of the Vicar's Report next month.)

CLEANING AND DECORATION

The church was beautifully clean, and most skilfully decorated, for Easter—the result of much hard scrubbing, polishing, and planning by many people. This good work must go on—and a new rota for the provision of flowers and for weekly cleaning is being worked out. Men are needed as well—to mount ladders and go up to the heights!

Mrs. Lewis has been appointed by the Church Council to supervise and co-ordinate this valuable work. If you can provide flowers for one Sunday in the year, or help with the cleaning, please get in touch with her—50, St. James's Road. Tel.: Molesey 4292.

THE DRAMA GROUP

The Drama Group is putting on a production in the Parish Hall on Friday, June 3rd. Our last two plays have been religious ones and we are now producing something in lighter mood; it is a comedy by Parnell Bradbury called the "Judgement of Harris."

We have recently lost Mr. C. A. Tarrant who has been our very hard-working and enthusiastic secretary since the founding of the Group. We certainly miss him as secretary and also as an actor in the many parts he has taken. The members presented him with an oval mirror in appreciation of his services. He was married to Miss

Dorothy Wilson on April 2nd at St. Paul's, Hammersmith.

As a result of the A.G.M. a new committee was elected with Mrs. Rockliffe as President, Wing-Commander Laurie as Treasurer, Mr. M. Rooney as Secretary, and Misses J. Bassett, D. Cooper and D. Tarrant as members.

Please remember Friday, June 3rd, for the Play and turn up in force. Also we will be very glad to welcome new members at any time. M.R.

THE SCOUT GROUP

Last month the Annual General Parents' Meeting of the Scout Group was held, and a new Committee was formed for the coming year.

Over the Easter our Cubs have been very active. On Easter Monday a party of 1st Star Cubs and Scouts went for a hike to Oxshott. However, we had to walk further than we estimated, not being able to get in a bus.

On Saturday, the 16th April, part of "Our Show" was performed at the Old People's Welfare Committee Party. We had a good time giving it and were well appreciated.

Another outing was held on the 23rd at Oxshott again when the smaller boys had their turn. We had tea out and travelled, this time, by bus and train all the way.

Photos of the Pack and Troop can still be ordered, price 9d., at Pack and Troop meetings.

KIM.

THE GUIDE COMPANY

It is with great pleasure that I have to report that one of our Patrol Leaders, Sonia Baldwin, has gained her Queen's Guide Badge. As many readers will know already, this is the most exacting of all the badges a Guide can win and, in Sonia's case, it is particularly commendable because, as you will all know, the Company has been without a Guider since last July and, therefore, Sonia has had to do much of the work on her own, with such help as I have been able to offer on my weekly visits to the Guides in order to assist the Company. In

addition to holding her First Class and other Guide Badges, a girl gaining the Queen's Guide Badge has had to render some service to her own community, some service abroad, carry out three jobs assigned to her by her District Commissioner, be recommended by her Division Commissioner and then, the last hurdle, pass a "Be Prepared" Test. In the present instance, Sonia had, on one of the snowiest Saturdays of the winter, to be over to the other side of the County by eleven o'clock, and the test went on until after six in the evening. In congratulating Sonia, we offer her good wishes for continuing happiness and service in the Guide Movement and in this we feel the readers of "The Spire" will join.

G. M. WHISKER,
District Secretary.

BAPTISMS

Apr. 17.—Linda Dawn Westlake, 92, High Street.

„ 17.—Pamela Anne Ball, 60a, High Street, Whitton.

MARRIAGE

Apr. 23.—Brian Morris to Joyce Patricia Edwards.

BURIAL

Apr. 27.—Florence Orton, 12, Gloucester Road, aged 74 years (at Teddington).

SOME DATES TO NOTE

May 12.—7.45 Men's Society (Vicage).

May 13.—8.0 p.m. Renovation Committee (Vicarage).

May 19.—Ascension Day. 7.15 and 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion. 7.30 p.m. Evening Service. 8.15 p.m. Church Council (Vestry).

May 25.—8.0 p.m. Young Wives' Group (Hall).

May 29.—Whitsunday. 7.0, 8.0, 9.0 a.m., and 12.15 p.m. Holy Communion.

June 1.—3.0 p.m. Mothers' Union. Speaker: Miss Gough, C.E.Z.M.S.

June 3.—7.30 p.m. Magazine Distributors (Vicarage). 8.0 p.m. Drama Group: Play, 'The Judgment of Harris' (Hall).