

VICAR'S NOTES

Procedure: "The most difficult question which any assembly of Christians has to face is that pertaining to rules of procedure" says a recent Prism pamphlet on the Reform of Church Government. In the Church of England this difficulty is felt at all levels: in large bodies such as the Convocations and the Church Assembly, and in small groups like Church Councils. We ourselves cannot do much about the larger bodies, but at the parish level, within certain general regulations laid down for us, we are free to adopt our own methods. So every year, at the first meeting of the newly-elected Church Council, we consider carefully the lines on which we hope to work for the ensuing twelve months.

We got down to all this at our meeting in May. We felt that a number of committees was again necessary, but we did not just slavishly follow last year's pattern: we enlarged some, abolished others, and set up two new ones. We agreed that this year the Council as a whole should be the decision-making body on all matters of importance. The committees would go into these matters beforehand whenever possible, and then make recommendations to the Council about them. In the past it has often been not so much a matter of making recommendations as reporting decisions already taken, and the Council has been in danger of becoming a body whose main function was to put the rubber-stamp of approval in retrospect on actions already carried out. Under the new system every member of the Council will feel much more fully involved and responsible.

Decisions: But how should the Council make decisions? After a short or long discussion, and then by majority-vote? What if there should be a sizeable unconvinced minority—should the majority just override this and push its views on one side? Are parliamentary methods, or town council methods, the most satisfactory kinds for a body of Christians to use? Should we not always strive for unanimity in our decisions?

We considered the procedure of the Society of Friends: "Neither a majority nor a minority should allow itself in any way to overbear or to obstruct a meeting for Church affairs in its course towards a decision. We are unlikely to reach either truth or wisdom if one section imposes its will on another. We deprecate division in our meetings and desire unanimity. It is in the unity of common fellowship, we believe, that we shall most surely learn the will of God. We cherish, therefore, the tradition which excludes voting from our meetings" (In a book which has been published since the Council met—"The Quaker Contribution", by Harold Loukes, S.C.M. Press 9/6—there is a very interesting account of the way in which this method works in practice, and the conditions which need to be fulfilled if it is to achieve its purpose. It would be a good thing if as many as possible of us could read it.)

We felt that there might be something here for us, but we did not at this point of the meeting make up our minds about it, but went on to work through the agenda. But before long we came to a weighty matter where there was obviously a difference of opinion, though the majority of the Council clearly thought that one course was the sensible one. So as chairman I put the matter to the vote: yes, there was a substantial majority, but a minority worth counting—so I was asking people to raise their hands again, that a count might be made for purpose of record, when a member of the Council said: “In the light of what was suggested earlier, ought we to be deciding this by vote?”

Thus were we compelled to face the issue and make up our minds: were we going to follow the traditional method of deciding, or were we going to try as far as we could the Quaker method? After a long discussion, we arrived at unanimity about this: we would always try to reach a common mind, and do without voting. When unanimity was not immediately possible on a matter of importance, we should defer it for further consideration, rather than push it through because a majority was in favour. So we burnt our boats, and launched out on rafts into uncharted seas! The next year should be a very adventurous one for the Council!

THE HISTORY SOCIETY

“I wish I could find another book to stock on my own account that would sell as well as this.” So said Mr. Weston of Spinks as he received his sixth dozen of “The Birth and Growth of Hampton Hill” which his shop has been selling steadily ever since publication day. We are most grateful to him, Mr. & Mrs. Weston Senr. and to Mr. Tagg of the recently established second-hand book shop, for their unflagging and enthusiastic help on the sales side; to Mr. & Mrs. Rump at the Post Office for giving the book advance publicity in their window. Our thanks also to Mr. Loman of The Book Shop, Church Street, Teddington, and to Langton’s book shop, Church Street, Twickenham.

Sales are now entering their second wind, so to speak, people have been lending our book to their friends and now the friends are hurrying to buy the last copies. The Library waiting list has proved too long for some to wait and others, who were early on the list, having read the book are now becoming buyers—the best recommendation of all!

The Borough Librarian has ordered fifteen copies, and orders are coming in from all over the place—from Harrods in the West End to a request from Lytham St. Anne’s marked “Very Urgent.” We should love to know why!

The Church Authorities had hoped to have a substantial “stock pile” but this is dwindling fast. Initial enquiries into the cost of a second edition show that the expense is likely to be too great in the face of sales which must presently dwindle from a stream into a trickle, and thus it looks as if late comers will have to be disappointed.

Comments have been many and various. One elderly lady journeyed from Molesey to tell the Editor "The village was just like that—you've made it come alive again." We quote this remark with justifiable pride as this was precisely what the Society set out to do and it shows the measure of its success. A slightly double-edged remark came from another elderly lady who said, "There's nothing in it that I didn't know, and I'm nearly eighty, and my brother's older and knows a lot more than I and *that's all in it too.*" We did not know whether to apologise or to pat ourselves on the back!

One particularly generous tribute appeared in the news-sheet of The Church of the Sacred Heart and St. Margaret Mary. After describing "just a few of the fascinating glimpses of the history of our locality" the article goes on to say, "There are some features of the history which have more than mere interest. In the early days, when there can have been few, if any, Catholics living here, the magnificent work of the past vicars of St. James's is a fine example of a church in action, working in its social setting to improve conditions."

The Surrey Comet of May 1, 1965, under the heading "Locals write their own history" calls our effort "an excellent local history book . . . a unique achievement of far greater literary merit than one would expect from amateur authors lacking previous experience of writing and with no training in historical research . . . this parish chronicle is a most readable blend of facts, figures, dates and titbits of illuminating detail."

On the production side, a gentleman who said that he was himself a publisher approached the editor and said that he had bought a copy to see how it had been possible to produce such an ambitious volume for such a low price, and having seen it, he still did not know! (Each copy sells at 12s. 6d. and costs a little over 12s. 4d. to produce).

The greatest reward of the Society as a whole must be the pleasure their work has given to so many and the interest it has provoked and the fact that, as they hoped, it has indeed joined Church and Parish together in a common interest and has thus proved a not unworthy memento of St. James's first Centenary.

The Editor has been greatly rewarded by the good grace in which the various authors have accepted her amendments, suggestions, additions and alterations and by the many interesting contacts she has made whilst compiling the book. For instance, for about two years she has been a pen-friend of an elderly but enthusiastic lady of eighty who spent her childhood in the village but who now lives at Wimbledon and has many happy and interesting memories of which to tell. Her name is Miss Alice Coleshill and her family lived firstly in Myrtle and then in Wolsey Road—she would be very pleased to hear from any who may remember her. She lives alone and letters mean a lot to her.

The Editor's greatest tangible reward was the totally unexpected gift of a copy of the book, beautifully inscribed by Mr. Wigginton, with a poem by Jack Ford. It reads:

To Margery,
Who conjured up
The worthy ghosts of Hampton Hill,
And that they are remembered still—
Their labours logged—the good—the ill—
For us today and those that will come after—
Is due
To Margery.
And we who helped it now behove
To record both our thanks and love.

It is followed by the personal signatures of all those who had a part in the book. The Editor makes no excuse for quoting it here—she is very proud of it, and grateful!

M.O.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK IN THE HAMPTONS

Well, it was a wonderful week, wasn't it?

Commencing with the film "The Long March" at the Odeon, then that dignified stroll in Richmond Gutter, headed by the clergy, the Quiz at Hampton; all the posters in your windows; and thank God, the most glorious weather.

Those of you who parted the tide of shoppers in Richmond last Saturday to see "The Long March" retain no doubts of the value of Christian Aid Week. After seeing that film the only wonder is that every week is not Christian Aid Week.

A lively evening was spent among the children of Hampton answering questions on Christian Aid at the Methodist Church Hall. Teams for the Quiz came from Windmill Road, Kneller, Rectory, the Lady Eleanor Holles and Hampton Grammar Schools.

After Church on Sunday evening active helpers from all denominations congregated outside the Methodist Church in Percy Road for a short service to send them on their way in the following week. Old hymns were sung to new tunes with guitar accompaniment to keep wondering and wandering members of the congregation together.

Collectors went diligently to their allotted streets, and the Master Bakers of Kingston generously gave well over three thousand bread rolls to be sold for the cause in different parts of the area.

All this work was accomplished willingly by many, many un-named helpers, but Margaret Eustace must be mentioned here as the great moving spirit in the organisation of this week's activities.

And finally, let us all be grateful for this opportunity of helping other people in such pitiable conditions of life, for although, to our shame, there are many earthly reasons, there is not one heavenly reason why sixty per cent. of the world's population is without sufficient means of sustaining life.

L.B.

THE MOTHERS' UNION

On the evening of Monday, May 10, all roads appeared to lead to the Parish Hall where members of our M.U. Branch and Y.W. Group were hostesses to members from all over the Hampton Deanery.

Over 170 ladies were kept amused by the games which Mrs. Devo and Mrs. Olney had prepared and there was much laughter and chatter. After the serving of refreshments, voted by all present to be delicious, four members of All Saints' Hampton M.U. Branch occupied the stage. These ladies entertained us with lively presentations of musical mimes, their costumes and make-up being very effective.

All our guests seemed to think that our first attempt to entertain the Deanery had been most successful.

I am particularly grateful to all those who made cakes, sandwiches, savouries, served coffee and generally made themselves extremely useful behind the scenes. Special thanks are due to Mrs. Brooks and Mrs. Bellingham who organised the catering.

I should be glad to have the rest of the Overseas envelopes, issued during Lent, returned to me so that the money raised in this way may be paid in to the Overseas Fund as soon as possible.

I.V.R.

PERSONALIA

Barbara Rockliffe is to be married in Calgary, Alberta, on Saturday, June 26, 1965.

SOME DATES TO NOTE

- June 12.—10.0 a.m. M.R.I. "No Small Change" Conference at Sunbury; 10.30 a.m.—12 noon: Market Stall in aid of "Feed the Minds" Campaign—and every Saturday morning in June and July (Milton Hall, Hampton).
- .. 13.—Trinity Sunday. Services and other arrangements as usual.
- .. 14.—11.0 a.m. Editorial Board (52, Park Road). 8.0 p.m. Hampton Council of Churches' Prayer & Discussion Group (All Saints', Hampton).
- .. 18.—8.0 p.m. M.R.I. "No Small Change" Group (Vicarage).
- .. 20.—1st Sunday after Trinity. 5.15 p.m. Y.P.F. Service at Laurel Dene.
- .. 23.—3.0 p.m. Young Wives' Group: Garden Party for mothers and babies (Vicarage).

- .. 24.—St. John Baptist. 9.0 a.m. Holy Communion. 8.0 p.m. Church Council (W).
- .. 27.—2nd Sunday after Trinity. 5.15 p.m. Service at Laurel Dene.
- .. 29.—St. Peter. 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion. 8.0 p.m. M.R.I. “No Small Change” Conference (Church House, Westminster).
- June 30.—8.0 p.m. Young Wives’ Group: Open Forum (W).
- July 2.—8.30 p.m. Junior Confirmation Class (Vestry).
- .. 4.—3rd Sunday after Trinity.
- .. 7.—2.30 p.m. Mothers’ Union Service.

BAPTISMS

- May 23.—Linda Suzanne Bussey, 42, Ringwood Way.
- .. 23.—Kenneth Guy Lee-Emery, 3, Cranmer Court.
- .. 23.—Andrew Wayne Miller, 48, Uxbridge Road.

MARRIAGE

- May 1.—Geoffrey Joseph Eaton to Diana Elizabeth Robinson.

CHURCH ORGANISATIONS.

THE SOCIAL COMMITTEE organises functions throughout the year.

THE YOUNG WIVES’ GROUP meets last Wednesday evening in each month. (Chairman: Mrs. K. Brooks, 10, Links View Road. TED. Lock 2593)

THE MOTHERS’ UNION meets first Wednesday afternoon in each month. (Enrolling member: Mrs. I.V. Rockliffe, 40, Gloucester Road, Teddington. TED. Lock 4909)

THE YOUNG PEOPLE’S FELLOWSHIP meets after Evensong on Sundays,

SCOUTS: 3rd Hampton Hill Scout Group. (Group Scoutmaster: Mr. S. R. Childs, 60b, French Street, Sunbury. SUN. 4182)

GUIDES: 1st Hampton Hill Company (Captain: Miss Ruth Mills, 40, Oldfield Rd, Hampton. Mol. 6626). (Brown Owl: Mrs. D. M. Casey, 89, Connaught Rd, Teddington. TED. Lock 5041.

THE YOUTH CLUB meets at Windmill Road School on Friday evenings.

THE HISTORY SOCIETY: (Chairman: Mrs. M. Orton, 30, St James’s Rd, Mol 5868).