

Leisure is huge business. Many countries, including our own, thrive on tourism to the tune of billions of pounds per annum. Holidays are no longer just a question of packing the picnic basket, but are planned and pored over for months. Of course, it's not surprising that people want to escape from the pressures of regular working days to enjoy something quite different. For us in suburbia just the fact of not having to fight through the traffic or crush on the tube can be a major relaxant.

The bible doesn't know much about holidays! It does talk a lot though about holy days. The Law, as in the first five books of the Old Testament, made plain for Judaism, just which days are to be observed as holy days or feasts. Three feasts in particular are laid down in the Book of Exodus. Two are related to the natural order of the creation - one at Harvest, the feast of first fruits. the other was at the end of the year when all has been gathered in. The third and most significant is the feast of Unleavened Bread - for the people had been commanded to eat unleavened bread at the time in which they were led out of slavery in Egypt. The other, more frequent, feast was of course the sabbath - the seventh day and the seventh year.

The point in all these commandments was not the detailed keeping of them but to ask why they are there at all. The sabbath, Harvest of First Fruits, the In-gathering and the feast of Unleavened Bread all speak of dependence upon God in creation. We are made in God's image and likeness, we are inheritors of the bounty of creation and need re-creation.

And if that is true then perhaps we ought indeed to take our leisure seriously. I am concerned that we place enormous stress on family and personal life by the pressures of work; 'The Keep Sunday Special' campaign was surely right in that we need one day a week to break from our ordinary routine. We need holidays - which can be just as restful at home or away in order to restore the image of God in us. We are, after all, to share in the work and joy of creation - but to do that our bodies and minds also need a break.

Wherever and however you spend the month of August - do something different, enjoy yourself, take time out for yourself and your family and friends. It is not a luxury, but a necessity of being human. Allow your holiday truly to be a holy day - and we will all benefit.

Brian Leathard

*"God has changed all our sunsets
to sunrise."*

S Clement of Alexandria 2nd-3rd C



The Swearing In Of The Churchwardens

St Paul's Church, Onslow Square

It was on an unexpectedly fine evening on June 6th last, that Brian and I joined Ruth, Margaret and other Churchwardens and their supporters from churches in the Archdeaconry of Middlesex in St Paul's Church, Onslow Square where the Churchwardens were to 'undergo the VISITATION' of the Venerable Timothy Raphael, Archdeacon. Thank goodness we had already come across the Archdeacon, or the whole occasion might have seemed overwhelmingly grand. Instead, with his characteristic strong, quiet warmth and dry humour, he welcomed everyone to St Paul's, and gave an inspiring, detailed and interesting talk about the important, unseen job of the Churchwarden, one of whose duties is to care for the fabric of the church; to act as stewards, ensuring that the structure is passed on to future generations in as good or better condition than that in which it was inherited.

The structure of our host church, St Paul's, exists only thanks to a last minute reprieve from redundancy and demolition and it is a fascinating church to be in. It was fully some while before I realised that there is no altar as such, no intricately carved pews or pulpit, no grand choir stalls, no cool echoing flagstone floor (or if there was, it was covered in wall to wall carpet), no aisles, just a large, light, airy arena, with bare stone walls, carefully maintained, and chairs put round in semi-circular rows. Hardly any interior structure at all, and yet it had the air of a warm, friendly, lovingly cared for meeting place.

Archdeacon Timothy Raphael likened the parish church to a beacon that would shine out to the parish around it, to a transmitter and receiver, a vessel, container and meeting place for the people. He made it very clear that he was totally accessible to help the Churchwardens, and his love and concern for them was palpable, saying that they could telephone him at any time should they need help with any problem.

After Timothy Raphael's talk, the Registrar got down to the business of swearing in the Churchwardens - some of whom had been churchwardens for many years and were welcomed as old friends by the Archdeacon. Margaret and Ruth stood with the others and swore a simple, solemn and powerful oath, required by law, to 'faithfully and diligently perform the duties of their office'.

We all left the church, sad to think that this had been Archdeacon Timothy Raphael's last Visitation; who will take up his warm, humorous and caring mantle?

Judith Winstanley

The Church Commissioners and Us

The Church Commissioners, who manage the financial assets of the Church, have been heavily criticised during the past two years. Last February they produced a press release, made public in May, giving an account of their stewardship; they admit that some mistakes have been made.

The Commissioners' task is to generate income from the assets, and also to try to invest in such a way that the assets will grow in value. There are two common ways to do this.

One way is to invest in company shares, which not only pay dividends, but may also increase in value as the company prospers. Another way is to buy property, which generates rents as income, and also may increase in value. Neither of these methods is entirely safe, there is no completely safe way to both generate income and increase capital at the same time. However, the Commissioners must use this sort of method for investment if their capital is not to dwindle by inflation. They therefore employ experts in investment to advise them.

There is an old maxim: 'the higher the return, the higher the risk'. In the late 1980s, when property looked as though it would never cease gaining value, the Commissioners were advised to borrow money to finance some attractive-looking development schemes. Needless to say the schemes were of good quality and public spirited, for instance the Metro Centre in Gateshead has been successful and profitable. However, later developments were less successful, and some of the expert advice given was greatly over-optimistic. The slump in property values followed. In 1989 the Commissioners' assets were valued at about £3 billion, now they are worth about £2.2 billion.

The Archbishop has taken this very seriously. He appointed independent consultants to examine the investment record, they produced 'The Lambeth Report', which has recommended structures to monitor closely the work of the Commissioners in future. In spite of this extra care, administration costs will actually be reduced. Of the misjudgement the Commissioners write: 'We have apologised to the Church through the General Synod. We want to apologise to you and your parishioners. We hope that you will help us to pass this on'.

What effect will this have on us? The Commissioners have no external income. They use their skills and the Church's assets to generate income for us, and over the past years they have contributed a large part of the necessary costs of the Church, such as clergy pay and pensions. Not only is their working capital now reduced, but reduced interest rates lower the return on that capital. This means that they have much less to give us now. Last year the Commissioners provided about 20% of the funding of our Diocese. They warn that they cannot maintain this level of support. Amongst other new demands on our parish income, we are likely to have to take more responsibility for funding both clergy pay and pensions in future.

Dick Wilde

The Flower Show and Christian Aid

The Hampton Court Flower Show was a great success, judging by the number of people who attended (even at £14 a ticket!) and the amount of traffic it generated.

However, as we all know, success can be measured by different standards - furthering a message may be seen as one. Those of you who went to the show and saw the very imaginative Christian Aid stand will be interested to hear that in the few days of the show, 18,000 people entered their competition and 27,000 information cards were distributed (I don't know how many bars of Maya chocolate were consumed!).

The three main areas Christian Aid concentrated their message on were Café Direct, bananas and fairly-traded chocolate from Green and Black. If only a fraction of the people who visited the stand get the message, it will have been successful.

Helen Taylor

Glad to be Gay?

This title for the well attended Women's Forum meeting in June provided the basis for a lively interesting debate. Those present represented a wide range of ages and everyone had something to contribute to the discussion.

After a few minutes of prayer, the discussion began on the relevance of the topic for Christians. It soon became evident that homosexuality is very relevant as there is still much prejudice in society today against 'gay' people and we, as Christians, have a duty to do what we can, when we can, to counter this.

Some difficult questions arose during the discussion on how people would feel about having a 'gay' vicar; on whether permanent homosexual relationships should receive a church blessing; on the position of children in relation to 'gay' couples. There was a diversion at this point to single-parent families and how children are affected by their home situation, whatever it may be. The chairperson brought the discussion back to the main topic and the question of Biblical references to homosexuality was raised. There were various views on these, but the eventual consensus was that the Bible does not anywhere condemn 'gay' people. The legal position of homosexuals was addressed, also the equal opportunities issue, particularly in relation to certain kinds of employment. Some people present were able to quote sad instances of discrimination or fear of it, which had destroyed people's lives. The problem of AIDS was raised and although it is more prevalent among homosexuals in the Western World, evidently in the world as a whole AIDS is just as common among heterosexuals.

In summing up the feeling of the meeting it was stated that every human being is a child of God and we at St. James's should welcome everyone who comes to our church.

Wendy Baker

St. Paul's Cathedral

After a great deal of careful thought, discussion and advice, it was decided some time ago to charge visitors for admission to St. Paul's Cathedral. The charges are helping to put the Cathedral finances on a sounder footing.

However, the parish now has a small number of passes which may be borrowed to enable parishioners to visit the Cathedral free of charge with family and friends. As the Bishop writes, 'This means that each visitor from the Diocese can offer a gift voluntarily towards the work and upkeep of Sir Christopher Wren's great building!' It is expected that that people will still pay to visit the Galleries.

Please apply to the Vicar if you wish to use a pass.



The Vicar's a Woman!

That's the situation now at All Saints', South Oxhey, near Watford, and moreover she is known to us as Ann Douglas (née Stuart). What is more - there is no church (at least not a usable one), so the whole set-up is very different from the norm. But at a very happy and lively service on Friday 8th July the Bishop of Hertford and the Archdeacon of St. Albans inducted Ann (in the Church Hall) into her new parish.

All Saints' Church was built in the 1950's to serve a huge LCC housing estate. The estate merges into the surrounding countryside and is now a mature town but the church building is suffering from a series of structural ills that make it unsafe to use. The chief problem is the use of blue asbestos in the construction, but it also has other major problems. The parish have been worshipping for the last two years in a totally inadequate Church Hall. It was packed to capacity on Friday evening, and uncomfortably hot and airless. As a hall it is fine, but not as a church.

Ann's first priority is to find out how the Diocese hopes to resolve the matter - to repair it would be very expensive but to demolish it and re-build would also be a major undertaking. Meanwhile local people who would normally wish, for example, to be married, in the parish church are turning to the non-conformist churches because 'we don't want to get married in a church hall': an unenviable dilemma.

Ann and Graham, Fiona and Zoe have worked hard re-decorating the vicarage which looks very clean and fresh. Between the church and the vicarage stands a gem of a building, a private chapel built in 1612 by Sir James Altham and now, since 1976, in the care of the Redundant Churches Fund. Standing, as the whole site does, on a grassy hill, it gives the place a more distinguished air than it would otherwise have.

Refreshments were served in a nearby School Hall and the welcome Ann received and the enthusiastic way she responded augur well for the future of All Saints' and its parishioners under their new woman Vicar!

Helen Taylor

The Parish Prom



Tickets are available for the Promenade Concert on Wednesday 17th August. They are for balcony seats, priced £9.50. Please sign the list in church or contact Ruth Mills or Judith Winstanley on 977 5165. If anyone is planning to go by car and can offer lifts - either to the Albert Hall or as far as Richmond Station, please let us know - likewise anyone who would like to go but needs a lift.

The programme is Beethoven's 5th Symphony and Mozart's Mass in C minor.

The Early Church 11 Events Before Constantine

In the third century there was something of a revival of paganism. Stoicism, preaching a virtuous life and fortitude in suffering, died out, its principles appropriated by the Christian Church; the Emperor Marcus Aurelius was its last notable adherent.

Earlier persecutions usually depended on local factors, but by the third century the personal attitude of the emperor mainly determined the fortunes of the Church.

The coins of the emperor Philip the Arab (244-9) were stamped ROMA AETERNA - Eternal Rome, celebrating a thousand years of greatness. Unfortunately the Goths invaded Italy and attacked Rome in 248, and raised doubts either about the efficacy of the old gods, or about the diligence of their worship. The Christians abstained from Philip's celebrations and became unpopular. The emperor Decius (249-251) ordered that everyone should obtain a certificate declaring he had sacrificed to the old gods. Many Christians lapsed, under threat of death. The bishops of Rome, Antioch, and Jerusalem were martyred, and the see of Rome was vacant from January 250 to March 251, when two rivals, Cornelius and Novatian were elected. Cyprian of Carthage had gone into hiding during the Decian persecutions, and on his return found his authority challenged, particularly by those Christians who had been thrown into prison, and were believed to be possessed by the Holy Spirit. A rival bishop was elected, and Cyprian responded with a tract, 'On the Unity of the Church', declaring that the Church cannot, by its nature, be divided; Christ entrusted 'the power of the keys' (remission of sins) to Peter first, then to all the apostles. They were all of equal rank, but by giving the power to Peter first, He showed that the Church cannot be other than one; to forsake the bishop (i.e. Cyprian) is to forsake the Church. 'He cannot have God for his Father who does not have the Church for his mother'.

Stuart Ward

The New Church Hall

**Might your Group or Organisation wish to make
regular use of the New Hall?**

**If so, please contact Mona Gow (941 4723)
as soon as possible.**

Jays Picnic

The idea of a picnic was mooted at one of the Sunday School Teachers' monthly meetings in the spring. The date was fixed; the venue sorted and a rough (very rough) order of events agreed, all we had to do was pray for fine weather. We couldn't have been luckier, the sun shone in all its glory.

On the morning of the tenth I have to admit I was a little concerned as I had said at one Sunday School session to the children to bring their Grannies, brothers and sisters or any one else who was visiting - all were very welcome - so one little bright spark had asked her mother where they were going to get a Granny from as 'Lou had said they must bring one' ! The same morning one child asked if I was providing the food or were they to bring their own? You can imagine my relief that there were neither kidnapped Grannies nor foodless picnickers.

There were over forty of us, as young as 18 months and as old as (sorry, as young as) seventy. Alan organised a great game of rounders for those of us who pretended we were still at school. The rules were a bit lax at times and at other times rather stiff - I think it depended on whose team you were in. For the hardy there was also a game of cricket but at that stage most of us had become spectators.

There was a lot to do for all tastes. A group went to the river bank where many dragonflies and damsel flies were seen as well as a majestic heron which paid us several visits. And some read the Sunday papers as they sat under the shade of the spreading chestnut trees.

It was a really super afternoon where everyone just enjoyed being together, but the quotation of the picnic was from little Kim who asked me 'why is Jesus wearing shorts and a T-shirt?'

Lou Coaker

A Tribute to Ron Metcalfe

After 18 years caring for the Canadian war graves and keeping them in an immaculate condition, Ron Metcalfe has finally decided that the time has come to take a break. He has worked very hard to keep them neat and tidy, and this has been much appreciated by many people.

Each grave had a rose tree and, on Remembrance Sunday, each grave had its cross and poppy.

Photographs of the graves taken on a Remembrance Sunday were sent to Canada a few years ago. The daughter of Colonel Reid, the oldest man buried there, read about the graves at the time of the Joe Boyle dispute and she asked if her father was one of the soldiers. She sent money for the purchase of the beautiful maple tree which stands by his cross.

Thank you Ron for all your hard work over the years.

Margaret Robinson

Stewardship

Giving under the Stewardship Scheme for the twelve months which ended at the end of June was £32,271. This compared with £30,821 during the preceding twelve months - a welcome but modest increase of rather less than 5%. As members of the scheme will know from the letter they received in April, we are aiming to increase our income from Stewardship giving by 15% during the present year.

As readers will have seen from his article in our last issue, Dick and Mary Wilde are off to Zimbabwe for a year or two. Dick has been our Recorder or Assistant Recorder for many years and we shall miss him greatly. Ron Bridges continues as Recorder and we welcome Ann Peterken as Assistant Recorder.

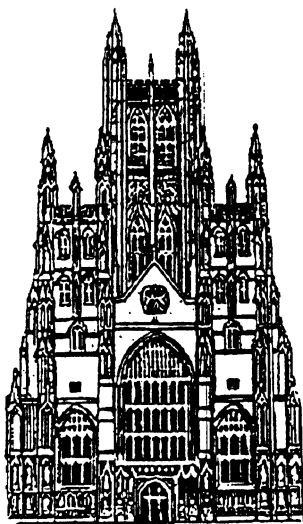
A Visit to Canterbury

A visit to Canterbury Cathedral and the City of Canterbury is being planned for

Saturday 24th September.

Our Vicar is to take a service for us in the Jesus Chapel of the Crypt, and there will be a guided tour of the cathedral.

Details are available from David Lloyd (979 2964), but do book the date now.



Book of Remembrance

Not everyone may be aware of the Book of Remembrance which is on a table in the church between the pulpit and the vestry. In it are recorded the names of parishioners who have died arranged in twelve sections corresponding to the months of the year. Entries are made according to the dates of death, and a page for the current month is always left open so that those whose names are on that page may be remembered in this way. New entries may be arranged by contacting Freda Moses on 979 6819, as noted on the inside of the cover of this magazine, and she will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Would you like to sing at the Albert Hall?



The Children's Society are having a sponsored sing at the Albert Hall on Sunday 18th September. It is being presented by 'Concerts from Scratch' and is called 'The Really Big Chorus in a Concert of Handel Favourites'. Rehearsals will be at 2pm and the performance at 7.30pm. The conductor will be Sir David Willcocks.

A quarter of the ticket sales will go to the Society and three quarters of the programme sales. For singers the cost is £24, for members of the audience from £4.50 to £21 (for seats in a box). If anyone would like either to sing or to go as a spectator, please get in touch with Helen Taylor (979 7042). It would be very nice if we could have a box (twelve people) and lots of singers!

Around the Spire

Len Orton is now home again after many weeks, apart from one short break, in hospital, where he has been treated for infections and diabetes. Jim Nevill has also been in hospital and is now home again after having an operation. We wish them both well.

The total Christian Aid Week collection for the Hampton Council of Churches area was £7,100, of which, as previously reported, we collected in the parish the very reasonable sum of £1,600.

We are sorry that Harshad, Ajit and Mayur Patel are giving up Hamptons Supermarket in the High Street, and wish them well in the future.

From the Registers - June

Baptisms

5	Rebecca Jane Freeman-Rice	21 Lambourn Close, Hanworth
11	George Thomas Bradley	59 Nightingale Road, Hampton
19	Jack Robert Baker	51 Kings Road, Teddington
	Max William James Hewitt	5 Edward Road
	Jack Andrew Sparrow	7 Seymour Road
	James Stephen Taylor	3 Beech Grove, New Malden
26	Ryan David Alfred Cox	44 Bishops Grove

Marriages

11	Graham Owen Francis and Lynn Nuthall
25	Grant John Clifford and Natasha Anne Kittelsen

Funerals

8	Alice Collins	6 Longford Close	Aged 82
24	Robert Carribine	53 Bishops Grove	Aged 74
28	Berthe Ware	1 Eastbank Road	Aged 97

Dates to note

Aug.	6		The Transfiguration of our Lord
	8	14.00	Editorial Board, 19 St. James's Road
	17		Parish Prom, Albert Hall
	24		St. Bartholomew the Apostle



Advance Notices

Sep.	18	19.30	'The Really Big Chorus', Albert Hall
	20	20.00	PCC
	24		Visit to Canterbury
	27	20.15	Stewardship Committee, 16 Cranmer Road.
Oct.	1		Harvest Supper
	2		Harvest Festival
	11		Confirmation at St. James's
	13		PCC
	20 - 30		Holy Land pilgrimage (Details from the Vicar)

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Churchill's famous words sound rather like many a family holiday:

'We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills.'

* * * * *

A holiday is when you pack seven suitcases, three small children, a mother-in-law, two dogs, and say, 'It's good to get away from it all'.