

I shall never forget the first time I went to prison. Three things remain in my mind. The first is the smell; warm, dank air mixed with stale food, unwashed bodies and urine. The second was the noise; in a Victorian prison building the noise is almost overpowering, prisoners and warders on metal walkways, keys, radios and shouting. The third was the frightening feeling of being locked in; my own control of my movements was gone. I could move from landing to landing, block to block only when someone else allowed me. Yes, I was there only to visit a remand prisoner. When ready to leave, and hour later, the doors were unlocked for me and my ears rang with the silence and my lungs filled with the fresh air. For those of us who have never been through the criminal justice system it is impossible to imagine what it must feel like or to gauge the effect it has on family, friends or job.

It has long been taken as a test of a society's true health to consider the way in which it treats the weak, the vulnerable, the refugee and the criminal. In the Old Testament we all too often think only of "an eye for an eye" while forgetting the demands of "justice with mercy" or the establishment of the cities of refuge as places to which people could flee for protection. The prophets often reminded both the rulers and the people that they would be judged not by the solemnity of their ritual, but according to the way in which they acted and cared for those at the edges of society. Zechariah reminds his hearers:

Render true judgement
show kindness and mercy each to his brother
do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the alien or the poor.

Christ's own life has, as its very hallmark, a loving forgiveness. But there is nothing namby-pamby about it. The woman caught in adultery was publicly recognised for her offence. Zaccheus, in handing back money to those he had swindled, paid both compensation and restitution in his public acknowledgement of his wrongdoing.

Until the late Middle Ages churches acted as places of refuge in our country. As a boy I remember, with astonishment, holding the worn lion-headed knocker on the door of Durham Cathedral while being told of those, centuries before me, who, literally, held on to it for dear life, at this place of refuge. No longer do churches have any legal status as places of refuge, but still they are being so used. However the Church, you and I, has a responsibility to work within our society as leaven in the lump, to remind and challenge our community of the responsibility we owe the prisoner, the refugee, the vulnerable and the marginalised.

The news of pregnant and sick women prisoners being shackled in hospital in our city in 1996 raises questions about our morality. So too does the talk of balancing freedom of speech against the commercial interests of the armaments industry in the case of a Saudi refugee legally settled here. Equally the churches have been vociferous in opposition to current plans to remove benefit entitlement from refugees seeking asylum after they have entered Britain.

I am not being party political. I am not being simplistic. These are complex and hugely difficult areas for any society to regulate. Those who are, and those who work among, refugees, the displaced, the homeless as well as in the criminal justice system find themselves under enormous pressure. So remember them in your prayers, as you read your newspaper or watch the news on TV. But remember also, as Lent approaches, that when Jesus taught his followers to pray he said.

Forgive us our sins,
as we have already forgiven those who sin against us.

Brian Leathard

Thames Valley Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society

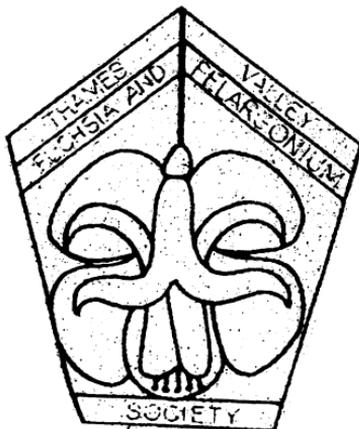
Beginning in March, the Thames Valley Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society will be meeting regularly in the Church Hall. With the exception of August, December and January they will meet on the first, second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. The first and fourth Wednesday are allocated to Fuchsias and Pelargoniums respectively whilst on the second they have guest speaker.

The Society was formed in 1967 in Heston, by Bernard Rawlins and friends. Bernard went on to become President of the British Fuchsia Society. The object of the Society is to encourage interest in the cultivation of fuchsias and pelargoniums in all their forms and to this end they provide advice and disseminate information. Many members have progressed materially in the showing and hybridisation of these plants.

Many people will be familiar with the society's annual shows held at Squires Garden Centre and anyone who is interested is invited to come along to the meetings without any obligation to join the society, you will be most welcome.

Jim Dodge

P.S. Mr. Dodge is the Society's Membership Secretary and can be contacted on 0181 890 5534.



New Year Thoughts 1996

As I started out on January 1st 1996 on a further year in companionship with "New Day Light", that invaluable little publication of the Bible Reading Fellowship, I tried to remember how many years it has been part of my life. The writers, naturally changing as the years have rolled by, have been choosing Bible passages for me to read and then sharing their thoughts and experiences, helping me to understand and appreciate the deep reality and teaching of God's word. It must be over fifty years now that I have been receiving this daily nourishment.

This year, a momentous one for me in several ways, the readings chosen to start it were from the Book of Joshua. The Lord calls Joshua to make a journey into a new land - an abundant land. Joshua hears God's voice and listens to His instructions. It won't be easy, there will be difficulties to overcome, battles to be fought, but God PROMISES Joshua: "I will be with you. I will not fail you or forsake you - only be strong and very courageous."

The commentator points out that God is calling Joshua into a partnership with Him, with God as the senior partner. The Life of Faith has to be a partnership. We don't enter into a partnership as a rule without choosing to do so. God created us free to make choices.

Years ago during Lent I resolved - just for Lent - to follow the discipline of reading the Bible everyday and of meditating on what I had read just for a short time, helped by the thoughts of the enlightened B.R.F. commentaries. At the end of the six weeks of Lent I was hooked.

For many years since then, from youth to age, I have relied on God's promises. "Come, and I WILL refresh you", "Seek and you SHALL find", "Knock, and it shall be opened to you", "Those that wait on the Lord SHALL renew their strength", "My strength is made perfect in YOUR weakness". And now today - "I will be with you. I will not fail you or forsake you". So roll on 1996.

Margery Orton

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY.....

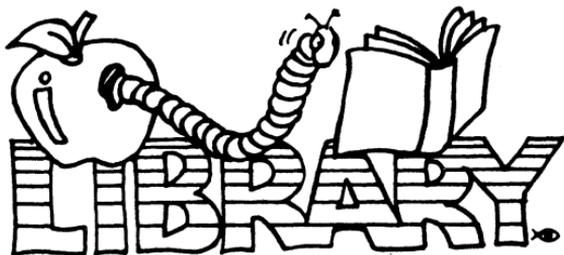
AUCTION OF PROMISES!

PROCEEDS TO SPEAR.

Sun 3rd March, after church

MORE DETAILS WILL FOLLOW...

YOUTH CLUB



Hampton

Hill

Library

The season for spending cosy evenings by the fire is here so why not enjoy the hours with a book, or compact disc borrowed from you local library? The Hampton Hill Branch is in Windmill Road just off the High Street. The library offers a range of novels from classical to modern, thrillers, romances, spy stories, family sagas, spine chilling tales of horror, space fiction and tales of fantasy. In non-fiction there is biography, and travel, gardening and games, hobbies and history, science and psychology. There are hardbacks and paperbacks and large print items. Music lovers can hire compact discs of classical music, pop, jazz or blues, and for those who are housebound books can be delivered to your home on the first Wednesday of the month.

The children's library caters for tinies up to teens with picture books and stories for all ages, and a range of non-fiction books that will help with hobbies and homework. For those who want to listen there are story tapes, and videos for young viewers. The teenage study room has a range of encyclopaedias, and dictionaries. Pre-school children can come to story time which is held every Monday from 2.30 - 3.00pm.

Managers Sheila and Linda and their staff will be happy to assist you or leave you to browse. If you cannot find what you want on the shelves it can usually be obtained either from one of the larger libraries in the borough or from further afield. For those who want to plan outings we have a range of leaflets that advertise events in the borough and surrounding areas.

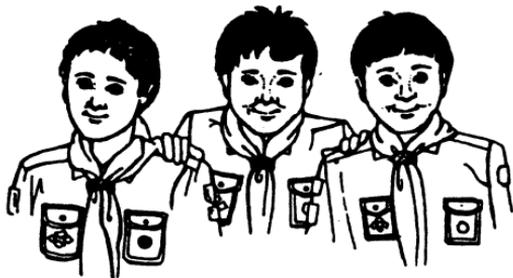
The library is open from 10.00 - 6.00 Monday and Friday, 10.00-5.00 on Tuesday, 10.00-8.00 on Wednesday and 9.00-5.00 on Saturdays. We close for lunch from 12.30-1.30 and all day Thursday. Why not pay us a visit next time you are in the High Street?

Sheila Bligh

News from the

3rd HAMPTON HILL

SCOUT GROUP



You may have seen us already and not realised what we were. You've probably seen us in church on the first Sunday each month, a few uniforms with our scarves on, parading our colours yes that's us, we are the Third Hampton Hill Scout Group.

We are a healthy thriving group running four sections currently. The youngest of these is my group, the Beavers. Beavers is for boys aged between 6 and 8 years. I always run with the maximum number of 24 boys invested. As you may have guessed I have a huge waiting list and I strongly advise anyone who wants their son to join, to get their name down very early indeed. Once already 6 I cannot accept their names. Priority is given to those who attend St. James's and brothers of those already invested. I'm currently looking for someone to help me on a regular basis for the odd occasion I'm unable to attend.

After their 8th birthday, the Beavers swim up to Cubs. The Cub pack is run by John Neilson (Tikkiwana) and Linda Morris (Akela). They also run a very large pack and so you can see the importance of getting your name down early!

At ten and a half, the boys move on to Scouts and are here joined by the girls! Venture scouts follow on from there. I'll write more about these sections in due course.

We have two dates for your diary. The first is a Barn Dance at St. Francis de Sales church hall on the 3rd February. This is a great evening with a bar, food and a really good caller. For more information and tickets, call Marion Moody on 941 2243 (41 Edward Road).

The second date is a Jumble Sale right here at St. James's in the church hall on Saturday 24th February from 10.30 till about 1pm. There will be tea and cakes on sale too. This is the perfect opportunity to get rid of those unwanted Christmas presents, so if you have any jumble please call me and I'll come and pick it up.

Simba (A.K.A. Paul Fitchett)

941 7186

A Student Again

I am achieving a life-long ambition by taking a course at University. I went straight from school into Nurse Training, although I had always wanted to study Classics at University. I quite enjoyed my Nurse Training and have had some excellent jobs but have never felt that Nursing was quite 'me'. As time passed I decided to do what I had originally planned - study for a degree. After careful consideration, I chose Theology in preference to Classics, and applied through UCAS with all the school leavers. It was strange going to interviews with all the seventeen year olds, but now I have started the course I don't feel out of place at all, as it is quite common for mature people to return to study. Generally the mixed age groups work well together, and all the students are treated exactly the same by the college staff.

Of course, leaving aside all the practicalities of getting on with one's fellow students, one must not forget the reason for being at University - the work! I feel certain that all students can think of hundreds of reasons why they can't possibly study "today", but I find have to cope with the whole family's 'off' days as well as my own. On top of this the shopping still needs doing, the children still want friends home to tea . . . and so it goes on. Unlike a paid job which I would go out to and come home from, studying is always looming and I always have a perfect excuse not to do it! So far I am keeping my head above water on both fronts with lots of help from my dear husband, who has done all the ironing since September, and will be doing so until June 1997. The children think I'm mad but that is nothing new.

It is not easy to adapt to the new pressures, but I feel that if it was easy then it would not be so worthwhile, and I feel very privileged as I cycle across Bushy Park to St. Mary's University College each day. I know that if I had not taken this chance, I would have regretted it.

Alison Hampton

Childrens Corner

The next major event of the year is of course Easter. But, before that we have the 40 days of Lent. This year, Lent starts on the 21st February. The day before the start of Lent is Shrove Tuesday, also known as Pancake Day. This is the day when people would finish eating everything that they would not be having during Lent and we remember this by having pancakes as a special treat. Lent starts the following day, Ash Wednesday and traditionally we try to give up something that we don't really need in our lives. Below are a few suggestions of what you may like to give up, but first you will have to unscramble the words:

H C L E C T A O O

E S T W S E

R P S S C I

A L A O C C O C

E N D E O L M A

K E S A C

Here are a few things that you could have instead: they are much better for you as well.

N A S B A N A

T W A R E

L I K M

E P S L A P

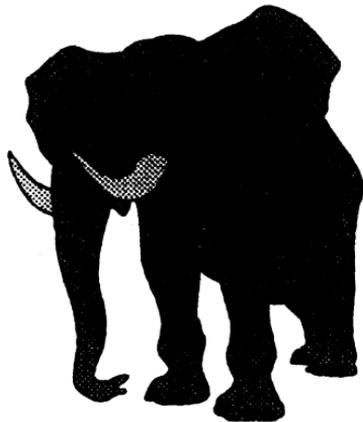
R G E N O A S

A D A L S

P.S. If you want to enter a design for the Easter magazine cover you have until February 12th to give it to me - Carol Bailey, 75 St. James's Avenue or to Helen Taylor or to Brian.

Stumpy's Tale

It was only a brief encounter, but I'll never forget Stumpy. Has he survived? I hope so . . . Stumpy is a baby elephant, the first I saw on a working trip to Zimbabwe, that provided moments of magic, life and death drama, and an insight into the private lives of the greatest of land animals.



I was in a boat on Lake Kariba when Stumpy appeared on the shore with his mother. Slowly they made their way down to drink - one huge female and one small, and very lucky baby. He had tangled with a lion: it had cost him his tail, but happily, not his life.

Over the next three weeks I was to see and study many more elephants, but that vision of Stumpy and his wonderfully protective mother will stay with me for ever. They were so close they filled my camera frame, ears flapping, trunks siphoning up water to pour down their throats and in his excitement Stumpy spilling most of his. Finding water is the high spot of an elephant's day, as it is for all African creatures in the ceaseless battle for survival against the odds.

For me this was the experience of a life-time. No holiday safari, but a working trip studying, close up, the giants that I'd only seen in wildlife parks and zoos. I'd joined Earthwatch, an international charity that spans the world and gives amateurs the chance to work alongside experts in a tough but stimulating task. Our mission was to study the numerous herds that roam the Hwange National Park, an area plagued by drought and with only half its water pumps in working order.

These are some extracts from my diary

The elephants arrive quietly, like ghosts. One moment there is nothing and then they are all there, rushing to the water. They move almost as one, yet so silently, babies hidden by huge adults. Several herds appear, big bulls join some of the female groups, teenagers dash into the water, rolling and play-fighting, babies lose their mums, mums mislay their babies. Some teenagers rush round making trouble and charge at any antelope, giraffe or wildebeest that gets in their way. It's one great family together. Sounds familiar? It should because elephants have a social structure very similar to our own. Theirs is a matriarchal society, and although we can teach them nothing, we can learn much from them - such as caring for our young.

". . . several hippos lying in the sun; the elephants seem very wary of them, guiding their inquisitive babies clear with their trunks. Suddenly a baby rushes towards them, ears and trunk flying, a terrible risk. Hippos lurch to their feet, but then fortunately other young elephants join in the mayhem. Baby rejoins mother; the hippos make it to the lake".

But then came further drama. Chased by a wild dog, an exhausted impala dived into the lake. The hippos rushed him, the water churned, I looked away. Later, in the

moonlight, a huge lion strolled down and drank from the bloodied waters. That was nature in the raw, but there was much routine work for me; studying eating habits, identifying and counting herds and individuals, analysing dung - a familiar enough task with a pet donkey back in Hampton Hill!

I hope in some way it will help the elephants, they need all the help they can get. Leaving them was a big wrench. Flying home, I looked down on two great bulls, flapping their ears to cool off in the sunset - or perhaps they were waving goodbye

Trunknote: Earthwatch Europe, Belyre Court, 57 Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6HJ.

Joanne Parkin

Around the Spire

The Parish Christmas Party went with a swing. The theme was Royalty and several people entered into the spirit by coming dressed as noble personages (or not so noble in some cases!). The food and decor were imaginative and the entertainment lively, a good time was had by all, as they say. Thank you to everyone who contributed to such a successful evening.

Two more evening social events coming up shortly are both Barn Dances. The first is being held by the Scout Group at St. francis de Sales Church Hall on February 3rd - details from Marion Moody 941 2243. The second is under the auspices of the RNLI local committee and is to be held at Broom Road School on February 10th at 7.30pm. Tickets are £8.50 to include supper and can be obtained from Jill Denton - 287 7438.

Another date for your Diary - the Annual Lecture of the WCRP (World Conference for Religion and Peace) on February 27th at 7.30pm. The Lecture is being held at the Ismaili Centre (opposite the V & A) and the speaker will be Dr Michael Safier of the Development Planning Unit at University College, London. His talk is called "Living together or Dying Apart", and will raise some issues about the increasing urbanisation of the world in general and the problems that this brings. This promises to be a very interesting talk and living in an increasingly urban culture is one which we should all be concerned about.

As ever over the Christmas period we all receive letters from friends that we seldom correspond with the rest of the year, so news is always welcome. In a letter from Susan and Nicholas Chubb they told us their family news. Andrew and Maxine presented then with their first grandchild on August 30th, Katie Louise. Andrew is now Head of Modern Languages at Arden School in Solihull. Sarah is now engaged to Tim and they are hoping to get married in the summer. They hope to live in York. Naomi and Jonathan are living in Newark and Naomi is teaching in a small village school nearby. Nicholas himself is now getting involved with other faiths in Peterborough as well as his usual Hospital Chaplains job. The whole family are well and settled, nice to hear from them.

A couple of hundred organ pipes are now on site awaiting installation. The money to pay for this work is being raised by various means, watch this space!

Roy and Cath Brookes daughter, Barbara, recently married, congratulations to her and her husband. Roy is in hospital but hopes to be home soon. Betty Stewart had an

accident recently and broke her arm after tripping over a paving slab - it did not however stop her preaching last Sunday, our love to you Betty. May French continues to make good progress after her operation. At present she is staying with her daughter until she feels well enough to return home, she thanks everyone who has visited her or written. Please remember the sick and those receiving treatment for addictions of one sort or another, also the recently bereaved, in your prayers.

Everyone who saw the new Christmas Crib in church must have admired it, setting off the splendid Crib figures that we have to their full advantage. Many, many thanks to Ann and Mike Crawford for such a splendid effort and for all the various other small repairs that Mike has undertaken.

Thank you too, to all the people who decorated the Church for Christmas or in any way contributed to the festive atmosphere and made the Church so welcoming.



1996

Ash Wednesday - 21st February at 8pm - Parish Communion and Imposition of Ashes

Each Sunday in Lent at 9pm - Compline - short service of night prayer

Sunday Evenings in Lent at 6.30pm - VOICES OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

- | | |
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| Feb. 25th | REVD. PHYLLIS BATES
Priest-in-Charge, St. Paul, Hammersmith |
| Mar. 3rd | Sr. DENZIL, CSA
Community of St. Andrew |
| Mar. 10th | REVD. ULLA MARBERG
Dean of Women's Ministry, Kensington Area |
| Mar. 17th | <i>To be announced</i> |
| Mar. 24th | REVD. CANON HELEN CUNLIFFE
Residentiary Canon, Southwark Cathedral |

LENT HOUSE GROUPS: *Sign up on the List in Church.*

We shall be using, together with our sisters and brothers from the Hampton Council of Churches, a course designed by Churches Together in Hampshire entitled "God at Work: Where is God on a Monday Morning". The course runs for five weeks. Take time in Lent to listen, learn and speak with others who may have the same questions, similar fears, equal hopes as you have.

Dates to Note

- Feb: 1st The Bishop of London visits Hampton Deanery
Deanery Eucharist at All Hallows, Chertsey Road 8pm
Everyone welcome to this service
- 2nd Presentation of Christ in the Temple - Candlemas
- 2nd - 4th Parish Weekend at Fairmile Court
- 3rd Saints and Martyrs of Europe
Scout Group Barn Dance
- 5th Editorial Board 2pm, 68 Park Road
- 7th Deanery Synod at Holy Trinity, Twickenham 8pm
Archdeacon of Middlesex on Diocese Structure Review
- 8th Clergy Fraternal at St. James - 10.30am
- 11th Youth Club - Promises Action in aid of SPEAR
after Parish Communion
- 12th Hall Committee Meeting - upstairs room - 8pm
- 13th Deanery Chapter - All Saints Hampton 10.30am
- 20th Shrove Tuesday
- 21st Ash Wednesday - Parish Communion 8pm
- 24th Scout Group Jumble Sale - Hall - 10.30am
- 26th PCC Meeting - 8pm
- 27th George Herbert 1633 - Priest, Pastor and Poet
- Mar. 1st Women's World Day of Prayer
Services at 2pm and 8pm St. Theodore's Church, Hampton

From the Registers

FUNERALS NOVEMBER

30th Walter James 56 Wolsey Road Aged 90

FUNERALS DECEMBER

14th Ivy Mary Alleway 12 Hanworth Road Aged 82
27th John Albert Nicholson 55 Wolsey Road Aged 65

COPY DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE: FEBRUARY 11th