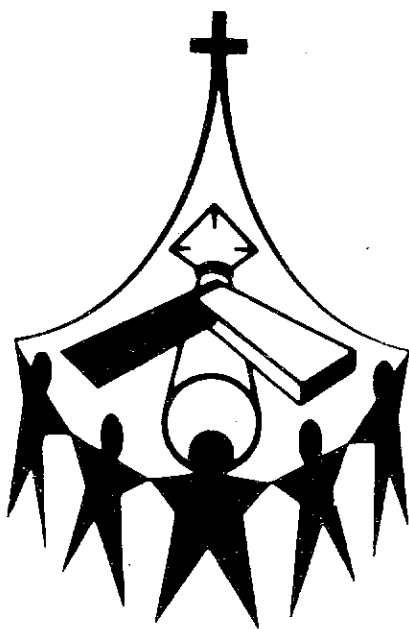


The
Parish Magazine
of
St. Thomas, Brampton,
St. John's, Walton,
St. Peter's Holymoorside.



VOLUME 12: NO 2
FEB'88/MAR'88
PRICE: 20 PENCE

SPEARHEAD



From the Rector

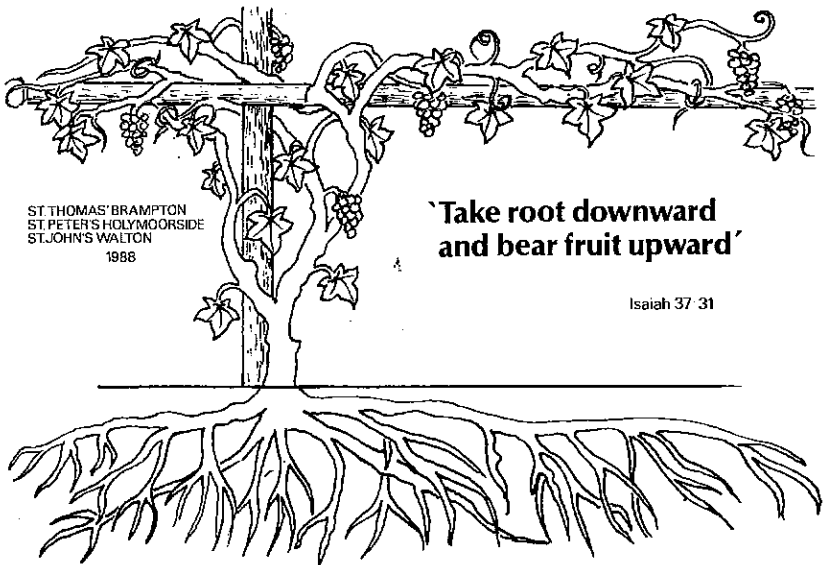
There seems to be a mood of optimism at all three Churches. 1987 was a good year for us in an unspectacular sort of way. I detect a new expectation of growth and a new joy in worship. I even think I notice a willingness for things to change from time to time - and that isn't usual in the C. of E.!

We are reaching out in different ways. The love of Jesus continually pushes us out, especially in concern and action for the poor - the materially poor and the spiritually poor.

There is a real possibility that we will need to extend our buildings soon - to accommodate more people and to extend the range of what we do. Sunday Club at St. Thomas' is especially cramped and badly provided for at present.

Bit by bit, God seems to be helping us to think big. He is a **big** God and He has **big** plans for our Churches - but we've got to get them right. Our own plans, our own ideas won't do. We need to do a lot of listening to God.

These thoughts lead me to a text for 1988



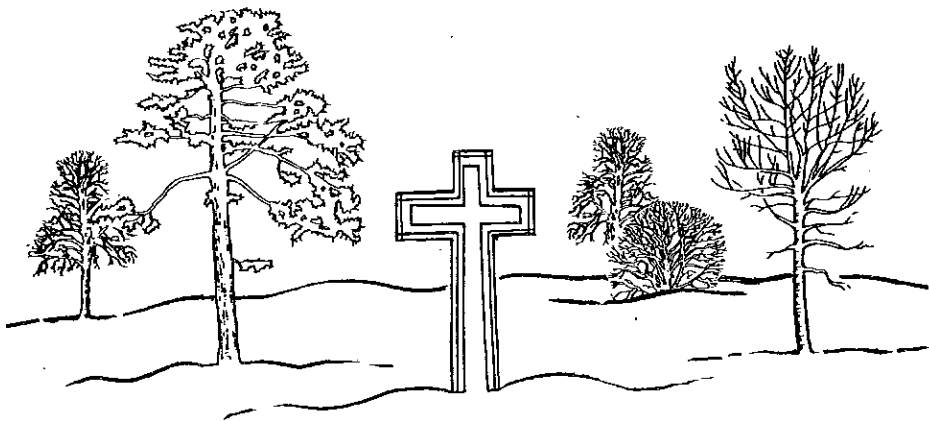
ST THOMAS' BRAMPTON
ST PETER'S HOLYMOORSIDE
ST JOHN'S WALTON
1988

**'Take root downward
and bear fruit upward'**

Isaiah 37 31

Visible growth and development is the fruit. But there is no fruit of any kind without healthy and substantial roots. Roots by their very nature are invisible. But they are the means by which strength and life, and fruit, are received.

So our number one priority for 1988 is to grow roots to our faith, roots that dig deep down into the love of God. Until we are "rooted and grounded in love" (as the Apostle Paul put it - Eph. 3:17) we cannot "bear fruit upward". This means time with God, learning how to pray, how to listen to Him, how to understand His word, how to worship Him, how to be truly strong - and fruitful.



KEN SCOTT

We were sad to learn of Ken Scott's death at the beginning of December. Receiving no salary beyond his pension, he was our senior curate based in Holymoorside until his retirement in February 1986. He and Sylvia moved to a little cottage in Wiltshire and were planning a trip to their daughter in New Zealand, followed by the celebration of their Golden Wedding, despite Ken's major operation for lung cancer followed by a second stroke.

We send Sylvia our fondest love - we have many memories of them both. I valued Ken's friendship during my first six months in the parish and remember his unfailing humour, wise advice and deep care for the folk at St. Peter's. I was pleased to have been able to attend the funeral on 10th December in order to thank God most sincerely for Ken, and to assure Sylvia in person, of the love and prayers of hundreds of her friends.

Christopher Hitt

CHRISTMAS AT ST. PETER'S

We celebrated Christmas in style. Our Carol Service singing was, as always, ably led by members of the Holymoorside Choral Society who sang four items unaccompanied, the theme was 'Letting go'. The Midnight Eucharist provided a fitting introduction to Christmas Day. On Christmas morning Family Communion was an extremely happy occasion when children and adults opened presents as we celebrated God's gift of Jesus. A new introduction to our Christmas celebrations was the Christingle Service, which closed with children filling the church with lighted Christingles. We were pleased to welcome the United Reformed Church Sunday School to this service and hope we shall be working together more closely in 1988.



LENT AND EASTER AT ST. PETER'S

Throughout Lent our United Bible study will meet every Wednesday at 7.30 p.m. The theme - 'A Bird's Eye View of the Old Testament'. We shall learn by considering the prayers of its great men and women - Abraham, Moses, Hannah, David, Elijah and Jeremiah. Please join us. Details of venues in each of the three churches.

Join us for the Sunday services in Lent and Easter; especially note these dates . . .

March 13th 11a.m. United Family Service for Mothering Sunday at Holymoorside United Reformed Church.

March 20th 9.30 a.m. Eucharist and Confirmation to be taken by Henry the Bishop of Repton - the first visit to St. Peter's by a bishop for many, many years and the climax of our Fundamentals Course.

April 3rd Easter Day. Evening Service at 6 p.m. will take the form of an Easter Songs of Praise. Music will be led by members of Holymoorside Choral Society.

April 10th 9.30 a.m. Eucharist and Annual General Meeting.

NOT TOO SERIOUSLY

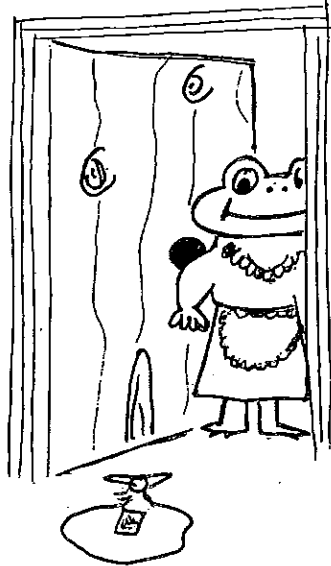
FREDDY CROAK'S LIFE

One day at the home of the Croaks, Mrs. Croak heard a knock on the front door. She slowly hopped over to the door and opened it. She could see nothing. Then a white bundle caught her eye. It was lying on the ground in front of her. She bent down closer. She could see that a note was fastened to it. She called Mr. Croak to the door. He was puffing his pipe happily.

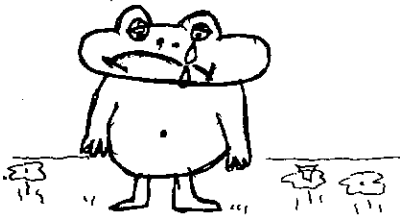
Mrs. Croak picked up the bundle and took it inside. She placed it on the table. Mr. Croak began to read the note aloud.

"Dear Mr. and Mrs. Croak,

Please take care of Freddy". It was not signed. Mrs. Croak untied the knot in the cloth, and spread it out flat on the table. Laid on it was a baby frog. Mr. Croak's pipe dropped from his mouth. Mrs. Croak had already grabbed Freddy and had begun hugging him. Mr. Croak hopped into the back room and fetched an old pram out (Mr. Croak collected all sorts of old things).



Baby Croak soon fell to sleep. Days and days flew by which led to years. Freddy grew older and older. The Croak's house was too small for Freddy to stay there any longer. He had to go and find his own job and a home of his own. On the 10th of June he said goodbye to Mrs. and Mrs. Croak and set out to the vast ponds of Frogdom. Everyday Freddy hopped around on lily-pads, but there were no frogs around anywhere. He was lost. Freddy began to feel scared for the first time in his life. He lay down on a lily-pad and fell to sleep. In his dream he dreamt about Mr. and Mrs. Croak and how happy he was at home.



The sun rose high and Freddy's dreams ended.

Freddy had his breakfast, then packed up all his property, and carried on with his journey. That day he jumped on thirty two lily-pads with no chance of finding a job or a home or anyone to be friends with him. He was cold and miserable.



Just when he thought he was all alone and nobody cared about him he heard a gentle voice. It was God.

God told Freddy that if he would trust in him Freddy would have a job, a home and lots of friends. Freddy straight away said he would trust in God and fell asleep. The next morning Freddy was so excited that he forgot to eat his breakfast. He hopped happily from one lily-pad to another.

Freddy looked around and saw a welcoming building in front of him. He approached it happily. He hopped through some big doors. He soon discovered it was a church. Freddy decided that the church was his new home. After a week's training Freddy had the job of being a vicar. He was very happy and often Freddy wrote to Mr. and Mrs. Croak. So they all lived happily ever after.

Watch out Christopher.
Not bad for an eight-year old parishioner, eh!
Any more contributions? Editor.



February 14th is St. Valentine's Day, the day for lovers, as Shakespeare reminds us in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

However it is John Donne, the poet and preacher who lived in the same century as Shakespeare, who tells us that Valentine was associated with more than romantic love.

When a lady Elizabeth married Count Palatino on February 14th, John Donne wrote, "Hail, Bishop Valentine, whose day this is, All the air is thy Diocese."

Valentine may or may not have been Bishop in the New Testament sense of the word, but if legend is true, he was more widely known as a preacher. He was arrested during the reign of Claudius II to be imprisoned because of his loyalty to Jesus Christ.

The Imperial guard tried everything to make him lose his faith; he was flogged and stoned but nothing would move his open, joyful love for Jesus.

His commitment to Jesus so impressed his jailor that he brought his blind daughter to the prison so that Valentine could stretch his hands through the prison bars and pray for her. She received her sight and also became a disciple of Jesus.

Claudius decided that nothing would more Valentine's faith, so he officially decreed that he should be executed.

On the night before he was to be beheaded, Valentine wrote to his new convert. It was an ordinary letter encouraging her to pray, to witness and to be faithful to the Lord. It concluded with three words. "From your Valentine". The date was February 14th, 270.

February 14th is an important day because it speaks of a love that will never be reflected in the millions of cards that lovers will receive tomorrow. St. Valentine's Day is a reminder of the unwavering love that a disciple of Jesus had for his Master at a time of persecution.

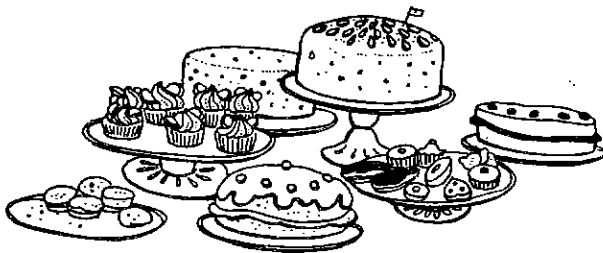
Well done, Tear Fund, for arranging a concert last year, in Westminster Central Hall to reflect "God's love in a broken world". That is a move in the right direction for St. Valentine's Day.

Ian Barclay.

Reprinted from the Church of England Newspaper

VALENTINES





"THINK ON THESE THINGS"

Like many people, I do not normally take much notice of the statistics which are published each year by various earnest bodies, and which can always be turned around to suit a particular point of view.

However, one piece of information which really made me stop and think, mainly in disbelief, was the fact that 25% of the food in Britain is wasted and thrown away. Impossible, I thought, in righteous indignation! I don't waste food!

But I began to remember all the bits and pieces which I turn out of the bread bin/store cupboard/fridge/freezer etc, and felt very ashamed. Yes, I do waste good food, I cook too much and don't fancy the leftovers, and I must try to stop.

The Christmas orgy is behind us, and Lent is approaching, with the chance for some really useful self-discipline.

Fine yourself for any waste, and collect the money for one of the famine relief programmes, then at least some good will come out of our irresponsible ways.

Another horrifying statistic is the amount of money spent on pets. Now I know that pets bring a huge supply of love and affection to their owners, and can ease the burden of loneliness for many people - I do have pets myself. We must think carefully however, and ask if we can justify the explosion of rabbits, gerbils, hamsters, dogs, cats etc., which could be prevented by responsible ownership. Many children are soon tired of looking after a pet bought in an impulsive, sentimental moment, although I know many children are very loving, caring owners.

Its over to **you** - please think carefully about the world's priorities, and not only think, but act on these things.



**"There is not enough darkness
in all the world to put out the
light of one small candle."**



Christ is our Peace

One of the congregation, Mrs. Judy Brown presented a little candle to St. Thomas' with this letter from Wylde Green United Reformed Church, Sutton Coldfield. The Working Committee after considerable discussion and thought, have decided that the candle will not be lit every service to avoid loss of significance, but it will be lit about once a month.



**WYLDE GREEN UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
Britwell Road Sutton Coldfield**

A CANDLE FOR PEACE

In 1986, a group of American Christians went on a visit to the churches of Russia. After a service in a Russian Orthodox church, an old woman pushed a three rouble note into the hand of an American minister, Dr. Blair Monie, gave him a Russian hug, and asked him to use the money to buy a candle and light it at every service in his church as a symbol of PEACE.

That note represented a lot of money for the old woman. Fortunately an interpreter heard the Russian words and translated them for Dr. Monie. His church, the First Presbyterian Church, York, Pennsylvania, readily agreed to use the money to buy a candle in a glass holder, keep it on the communion table, and light it at every service of worship.



OUR PAGE

FORTY DAYS

The word Lent comes from 'lenct', the Saxon word for spring. Lent before Easter is like Advent before Christmas, a time to get ready.

Lent is when we remember that Jesus prepared himself for beginning his ministry by 40 days of fasting and prayer. You can read about it in your Bible: Matthew 4, verses 1-11, Mark 1, verses 12-13 and Luke 4, verses 1-13.

The 40 days of Lent give us time to quietly think about Easter and to prepare ourselves for it.

It was traditional not to eat certain food during Lent and all this food had to be eaten up before Lent started. That is why we have pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, to use up the eggs and fats you weren't supposed to eat during Lent.

Many towns still have pancake races - you may see pictures of them on television on Shrove Tuesday which is on February 16th this year.



'My Mum says giving up washing for Lent doesn't count.'

Brain-scrambler

How can you change this

IO IO IO

to 950 using just one line?

Answer at the foot of the page.



When it's cold outside, why not stay in and make some delicious

CHOCOLATE CRAZY PAVING

You will need:

- 60 gms (2oz.) margarine
- 1 tablespoon golden syrup
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons caster sugar
- 85gr (3oz) cream crackers (crushed)
- 110gr (4oz) plain chocolate

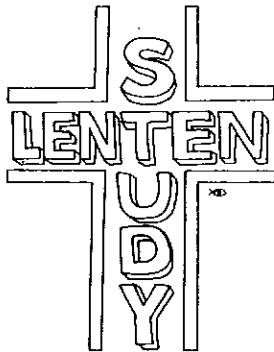
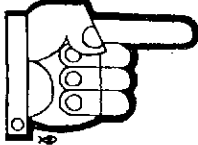
Grease and line a 7" (18cm) square tin. Melt the margarine, syrup, cocoa and sugar together in a saucepan. Remove from the heat and stir in the crackers. Mix well and press the mixture firmly into the prepared tin. Melt the chocolate in a pudding basin over hot water.

Spread the chocolate over the top of the 'crazy paving' and leave it to set in a cool place. Cut into 12 slices.

Draw the one line you're allowed across the middle 'I' - to turn it into a '+'. Now you have '10 to 10'. On the clock, this is 9.50. Get it?!

Answer to Brain-scrambler:

LOOK
HERE



LENT '88

LENT BEGINS ON FEBRUARY 17th !

What an opportunity to let the roots of our faith strengthen and grow. There will be special Communion Services to 'launch Lent' at 7.30pm at St. Peter's and St. John's; and 7.45pm at St. Thomas'.

Each Wednesday evening at St. Thomas' there will be a LENT COURSE about PRAYER. It will start at 7.45 p.m. and members are invited to make every effort to attend.

THESE WILL BE SPECIAL

13th March Mothering Sunday

27th March Palm Sunday

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

details will be published in the next edition of Spearhead, to be published on Friday 25th March.

ON THE BOX

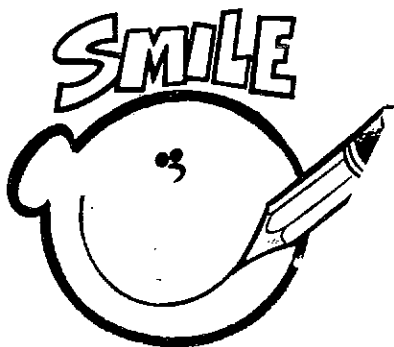
WATCH THEM REBUILD BUCKHAVEN

ITV's ENCOUNTER Programme on Sunday afternoon, February 14th, will feature Unemployment. The programme has made a visit to Buckhaven on the East coast of Scotland, where the churches' response to local high unemployment is transforming the town.

Dealing with the ups and downs of life, and working as a community, is not new to the people of this town which grew out fishing and coal. Like the time the fisherman brought an

ancient little church down the coast from St. Andrews and the 'townspeople reassembled it stone by stone.

Now they are reassembling much of their town! The harbour, the church, a light-ship, are among the things being rebuilt and put to new uses, by men and women employed under the Manpower Services Commission Community Programme, on a scheme sponsored and managed by the churches.



THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS had been told the story of the infant Moses. The teacher ended dramatically, 'Now whom do you suppose the Egyptian princess found to care for the little boy found in the bulrushes?'

Without hesitation came the answer: 'A babysitter.'

*NOTICE IN CHURCH VESTIBULE:
'Churchyard maintenance is becoming increasingly difficult, and it will be appreciated if parishioners will cut the grass around their own graves.'*

THE TWO BRICKIES

Answer:

Starting about 25, it can be seen that Tom must have been 28 when Bob was born.

As . . .

When Bob was 2, there would be three bricks in his wall, and Tom would lay 30 onto his, and

When Bob was 8, there would be 36 bricks in his wall, and Tom would lay the same number onto his, and

When Tom was 63, he would lay 63 bricks on his wall, and there would be 630 bricks in Bob's wall

so Bob would be 35, when his father died.

STOP

rushing so fast
worrying so much
doing so many things

LOOK

at Jesus Christ
in the Church
in the New Testament
in the lives of others
in your own heart
in the Holy Communion

LISTEN

for God to speak —
in Church services
in your meditations
in your inner soul
in the opportunities life offers you

THEN

with new-found peace
you can serve Him,
others and yourself better

*William Paul Brands
Quoted in 'The Anglican Digest'*



THE YOUNG PEOPLE in our church decided to raise money by having a car wash. However, on the morning the car wash was to be held, it was pouring with rain. The vicar saved the day by putting up this sign:

**God's Co-operative Car Wash.
We Wash — He Rinses.**

The venture was a great success.