

END THIS DISASTER NOW

by
John Madeley

says UNICEF

UNITED NATIONS
 CHILDREN'S FUND

Every year the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, produces an annual report, "The State of the World's Children". Its report for 1993 is unusual in that it calls for a world-wide popular movement in support of ending "the greatest disaster in the world" — the fact that each day, every day of the year, an average of 35,000 children under the age of five are killed by diseases caused by malnutrition and poverty.

"No famine, no flood, no earthquake, no war, ever claimed the lives of 250,000 children in a single week", says UNICEF's executive-director James Grant in the report, "with today's knowledge, this tragedy is no longer necessary".

UNICEF is suggesting a "25 billion dollar bargain" to create a breakthrough in what it calls the last great obscenity. Meeting the needs of all the world's children for adequate nutrition, clean water, basic health care and primary education would cost an extra \$25 billion a year, (about £16 billion) estimates the report.

This sum of money would fund low-cost strategies to control major child killer diseases, such as measles, pneumonia, and diarrhoea, halve the rate of child malnutrition, and bring clean water and safe sanitation to all communities.

It would enable family planning services to be made available to all couples, and provide almost every child with a universal education. And the bottom line is that the extra money would save the lives of around 4 million children a year. "Nothing less is needed than a movement that will exert the same kind of pressure for children as has been brought to bear on the environment", says James Grant.

The report points to six ways to spend \$25 billion a year. The sum is less than Americans spend on cigarettes every six months, and less than Western Europeans spend on alcohol every 3 months.

Again, \$25 billion is less than business people in Japan spend on entertainment each year, and less than the support package for Russia agreed in 1992 by the group of 7 Western nations.

It is just a fraction more than the estimated cost of Hong Kong's new airport, and about as much as the developing world spends every six months to pay the wages of its soldiers.

And \$25 billion extra a year is what it would take, says Unicef, to "meet the most basic needs of all the world's children by the end of this decade". "The time has come to banish in shame the notion that the world cannot afford to meet the basic needs of almost every man, woman and child", says Grant.

Progress is already being made, he points out. Infant and child death rates have been cut by more than half over the last 50 years and the proportion of children starting school has risen from less than half to more than three-quarters.

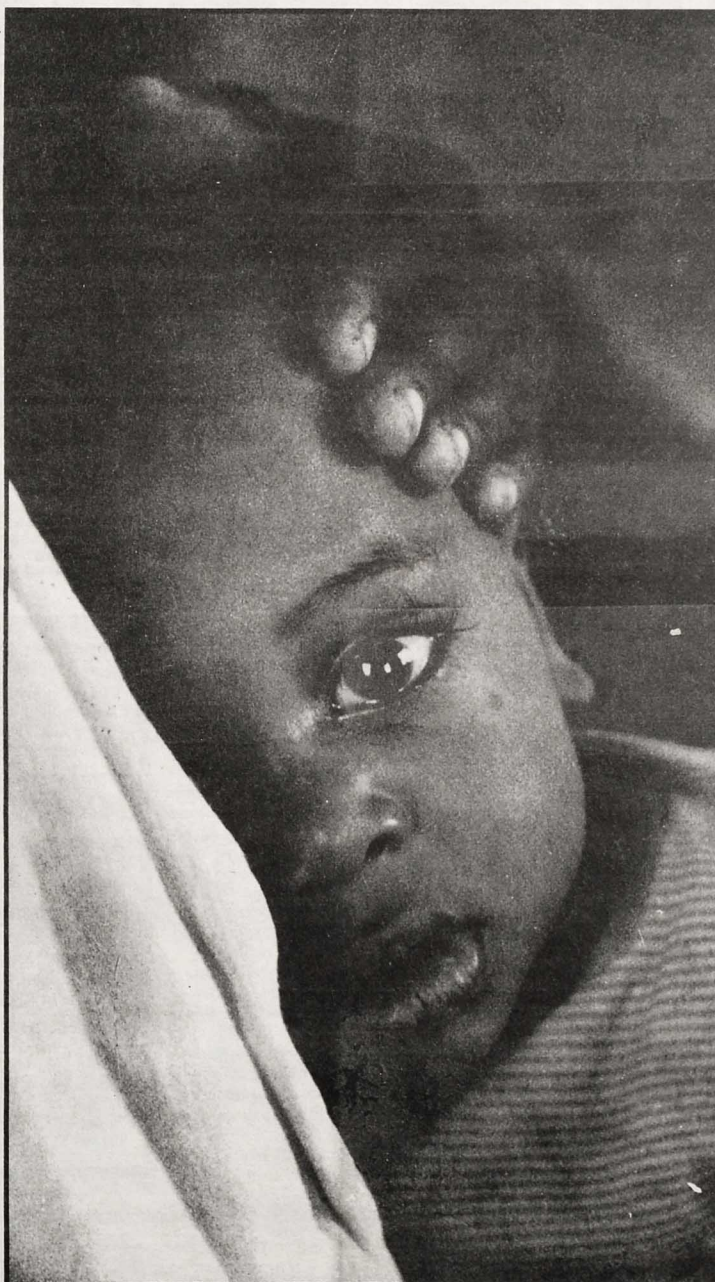
Over three-quarters of children in developing countries are now being immunised against preventable disease such as polio, measles and tetanus. A million children who would have been crippled by polio are now growing up normally. In total, the UNICEF report estimates that immunisation is saving over 3 million lives each year.

UNICEF is suggesting that two-thirds of the \$25 billion total could be met by developing countries themselves, with the rest coming in aid from Western countries, although in the case of Africa the proportion of outside help would need to be considerably higher.

The sum would be available, it says, if a fifth of all international aid and a fifth of government spending were allocated to meeting basic needs such as food, water, sanitation, basic health care, education and family planning.

"Amid the problems of a world bleeding from continuing wars and environmental wounds" says James Grant, "one of the greatest of all human aspirations is within reach — an end to the age-old evils of child malnutrition, preventable disease and widespread illiteracy".

UNICEF "The State of the World's Children 1993", Oxford University Press, price £4.00.



Photograph: Lars Astrom

The growing minds and bodies of the young can suffer permanent damage from even temporary deprivation. So if poverty is not to be perpetuated into the next generation, it is essential to protect the nutrition, health, and education of all young children.

UNICEF

D/EX 1758/30/2

TALKING POINT

by
The Rev. Nigel Hardcastle
Vicar of St. Barnabas'



THE SLEEP OF REASON BEGETS MONSTERS

In Bosnia, and far closer home, the sleep of reason still begets monsters just as it did in the days that Goya made his famous image.

Of course, reason can not alone create love and joy. On its own it is barren. Reason can be used for evil as well as good. What is the logical, efficient way to kill six million Jews? But equally, the very best motives beget monsters when reason sleeps. Civilised pagans burn Christians from the highest motives. They wanted to save Rome. There is anecdotal evidence to "prove" that Christians brings the plague and bad luck. When reason sleeps, Christians come at last to believe in magic and burn witches, only of course in order to save the witches as well as themselves. We rightly believe in Christ and his love as the source of everything, but even this can go horribly wrong if reason sleeps.

Irrational Fear

Perhaps you saw the programme about cleft lips and palates. In order to advance scientific understanding, a trip to Sri Lanka (Ceylon) was organised. You may remember the poor little girl with the deformed face. Her parents had been to the local astrologer. He told them she was a "bad omen". So her sad lot was made worse. By contrast, the western doctor of rational medicine cured her. Even before medicine could cure people like this, at least it could do them the service of saying, "There is a rational cause, even if we do not yet know it. There is no need for people to shun you".

Closer to Home

Before you condemn a foreign culture, however, ask a few questions. Can you blame systems of ideas that grew up before science for being irrational? Even today when we have so much scientific knowledge, people have an irrational reaction to the deformed, the handicapped and anyone who is different. I knew a church in Birmingham which objected to a home for people recovering from mental illness being built in their parish. Reason was no use against their fear. Evidence of what happened elsewhere did no good. Reason was asleep. The monsters of instinctive, irrational fear were awake. Only their inner voice could be heard.

Can't See Reason

We all have many animal instincts within us. Instincts for hunting and killing, instincts to gain attention, pleasure, to bond and to mate. Each in their proper place are good. When reason sleeps, they become monsters. We see friends or family messing up lives by obeying these inner voices. Everyone else knows that the new lover is a rotter and can see the end of the story in advance. The person involved, however, cannot see reason. They only hear the inner voices of ancient instincts. Marriages are destroyed for no good reason. Careers wasted.

Pastors use reason and emotional sensitivity to make their love effective. Some let the emotional sensitivity become so great that reason is forgotten. Am I hearing the voice of their need? Or the voice of my need to be needed? Or a fairy tale of rescuing maidens? Or am I really falling in love and calling it "counselling"? When reason sleeps, you only hear the voices. You cannot tell what they are. Even the caring vicar destroys when reason sleeps.

Violence with No Reason

On TV we see so much violence that has no reason good or bad. Why kill for a few pounds? or massacre in the market place? There is no reason. Reason sleeps, deep instincts to hunt and kill awake and monsters come to life.

We all have within us the inherited fear of the different. It may have advantages for the survival of animals that have no reason. It may, for example, cause them to avoid other animals with infectious diseases. We, however, are rational. We know amputated legs are not catching, and you cannot get Aids from shaking hands. Serbs and Croats are almost indistinguishable except by the type of script they use and the type of church they fail to attend. "Race" is a word whose meaning starts to disappear the more a scientist looks at it. Certainly no race is "dirty". "Racial cleansing" is a phrase whose meaning is against science and reason, let alone against God, love and justice.

Like Hitler, the irrational believer in astrology, they listen to the irrational inner voices of "blood, land, race and ethnic cleansing". The same irrational voices are in all our heads. For us too, the sleep of reason begets monsters.

Scapegoats

Search for scapegoats. The pound has been devalued. Blame the Germans. Don't relate it to a trade gap of a billion pounds a month. Don't analyse. Don't just read the Sun. Believe it. It's Jack Delors. It's the immigrants. Hasn't the weather been shocking since Major won the election. Buy some lucky heather or you'll have bad luck.

And then there is the final solution. Kill the different ones. Crucify him! Crucify him! Let reason sleep, and monsters mangle lives and devastate the world.

SUNDAY SERVICES

ANGLICAN

St Peter's

8.00am Holy Communion
9.15am Parish Communion
11.15am Matins
6.30pm Evensong

St John's

8.00am Holy Communion
10.00am Parish Communion
10.00am Sunday School

St Andrew's

8.00am Holy Communion
9.15am Family Eucharist
11.15am Holy Communion (not 3rd Sunday)
11.15am Matins (3rd Sunday)
6.30pm Evensong

St Barnabas'

8.00am Holy Communion
9.30am Family Communion (apart from 2nd Sunday)
9.30am Family Service (2nd Sunday only)

St Margaret's, Mapledurham

8.00am Holy Communion (1st Sunday)
11.00am Parish Communion

CAVERSHAM PARK CHURCH (Caversham Park Primary School)

11.00am Family Communion (1st and 3rd Sundays)
Morning Worship
2nd and 4th Sundays
Family Service (5th Sunday)

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST FREE CHURCH

10.30am and 6.30pm

NORTH CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

10.45am and 6.30pm

CAVERSHAM HILL CHAPEL

10.30am (in Chapel)
6.30pm (in Chapel)

CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

10.45am Worship at Mapledurham Pavilion

METHODIST

Caversham, Gosbrook Road
10.30am and 6.30pm

Caversham Heights

9.00am Holy Communion (1st Sunday)
11.00am and 6.30pm

ROMAN CATHOLIC

St Annes Saturday 5.30pm, Sunday 9.45am and 6.30pm

Our Lady of Caversham 8.30am and 11.15am

St Martin's School 9.15am Mass

Mapledurham House 6.00pm Mass (last Sunday)

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POST BAG

GRATITUDE

Dear Sirs,

I wish to thank the Library Staff, passers by and ambulance crew, for prompt help given and much kindness shown, after my recent unfortunate accident in the library.

Also my thanks to friends and neighbours for support and help since my return home. Slow progress is now being made.

Thank you all.

Yours etc.

(Mrs) V. Rimes

26 Hemdean Road
Caversham.

CAVERSHAM CLERGY

ANGLICAN

The Rev Richard Kingsbury, Caversham Rectory, Church Road. Tel: 479130.

(Parish Office: Monday-Thursday 9.30-12.30 Tel: 471703)

The Rev Bill Carpenter, St Andrews House, Harrogate Rd. Tel: 472788.

The Rev Nigel Hardcastle, 20 St. Barnabas Road. Tel: 478239.

The Rev Christine Allsopp, 25 Ilkley Road. Tel: 472070.
The Rev. Stephen Rowe, St. John's House, 9 South View Avenue. Tel: 471814

CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PROJECT

The Rev. Philip Abrey, 51 Galsworthy Drive, Caversham Park Village. Tel: 475152.

BAPTIST

The Rev Dennis Weller, 80 Balmore Drive. Tel: 478668.

METHODIST

The Rev David Moody, 72 Highmoor Road. Tel: 472223.

The Rev John Boakes, 9 Woodlands Grove, Caversham. Tel: 482530.

UNITED REFORMED

The Rev David Clark, 41 Highmoor Road. Tel: 471909.

CAVERSHAM HILL CHAPEL

The Rev Chris Justice, 119 Peppard Road. Tel: 474529.

CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

The Rev Michael Holmes, 13 Carlton Road. Tel: 474138.

ROMAN CATHOLIC

The Rev Thomas Meagher, The Presbytery, 2 South View Avenue. Tel: 471787.

(For Caversham Park Village)

The Rev J. Ellis, 18 Peppard Road, Sonning Common. Tel: 723418.

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The newspaper produced by members of the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Free Churches of Caversham and Mapledurham for the local community.

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All contributions for March issue should be sent to Church House, by noon on Wednesday 3 February.

All advertising copy should be sent to Mrs E. Maule, 18 Albert Road, Caversham by 1 February.

The dates for April will be Monday 1 March and Wednesday 3 March.

The Editors wish to make it clear that the views expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the board.

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ADVERTISERS
SORRY — NO
SPARE SPACE
AT PRESENT

RESIDENTS' VIEWPOINT

By Watchdog

DEAN'S FARM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Yet another green fields site seems set to disappear under bricks and mortar as the Borough Planning Committee considers, favourably it is understood, an application to build twenty-six houses and twenty-eight flats at Dean's Farm. At the time of writing, a final decision was still awaited.

It has been virtually inevitable that, since Dean's Farm ceased to be used for agriculture, it would finally be developed as part of the neighbouring urban area and far worse plans than the one under consideration have been put forward. Social housing is desperately needed in this town and the twenty-eight flats are to be devoted to this. Riverside walks and a picnic area where the public formerly had no access will be part of the package, and an added condition is that no further development will be permitted.

Dean's Farm itself will no longer stand in the splendid isolation in which generations of Reading people have seen it from across the river. The narrow residential roads of Lower Caversham, already heavily congested, will have to take yet more traffic from another fifty

dwellings as well as the heavy construction vehicles during building. The site is not very conveniently situated for public transport, shops, schools or other facilities, which is likely to mean car use whenever possible. It is also part of the Thames flood plain and liable to flooding. There is already talk of having to raise the houses above ground level.

All in all, this is scarcely the planning coup it has been heralded as, but it is not without some gains which will benefit local people. Nevertheless, it is yet another urban encroachment into the rural fringes of the town.

THE TALE OF BUGS BOTTOM

Meanwhile, that far famed green fields site, Bugs Bottom, continues to suffer the onslaught of mechanical equipment tearing out its structure. Road damage from heavy equipment is already apparent and the length of Kidmore Road in the vicinity of the access road is hazardous, particularly for vehicles and pedestrians emerging from the properties on the west side where there is no footpath. How long will it be before residents will feel forced to give up

part of their front gardens to provide a footpath because of a development they were totally opposed to from the very start?

One small thing to be pleased about was the news that the Channel 4 film 'A Tale of Bugs Bottom', part of the series 'In Our Back Yard', was awarded the Prix de Basle for the best educational programme in Europe. Filmed in 1991, the series showed how campaigns to ward off unsuitable development were conducted by local groups. Starting with a winter wedding at Checkendon church, the film followed a snowy walk to London to present a massive petition at the Houses of Parliament, and ended with a chilly walk by protestors through the valley on the first day of Spring. Because of the weather and the time of the year in which it was shot, the valley was never seen at its best, but the dedication of compulsory competitive tendering (CCT).

In her reply, Sylvie Pierce, Borough Chief Executive, says that whilst the problem coincided with CCT, it did not result from it. This is because, until then, Caversham Court and the Forbury Gardens had been maintained to a higher standard than the other open spaces in the town but, with the re-organisation, the opportunity was taken to adopt a common maintenance policy right across the town. It has meant that whilst standards in other parks have improved, in the case of Caversham Court and the Forbury gardens it has brought about a marked decline. She adds that the Borough is working with its contractors to halt and remedy this.

CANE END AND THE A4074

South Oxfordshire District Council has exhibited plans for the so-called Cane End by-pass, showing the various options open for overcoming what have become known as the thirteen bends of death, between the Pack Horse and the Fox. These were ironed out some years ago, but for those in a hurry to get from A to B (or could it be from one pub to another?) the road is still not straight enough and the old name sticks. Recently the placing of kerbs on the bends,

reflectors and the renewal of the cats' eyes have so improved night time visibility that any motorist with a scrap of common sense can easily distinguish the line of the road ahead. Is it worth spending large sums of money and destroying hedges and trees to straighten or by-pass a road so that the hare-brained can speed along it at an even faster rate? It would surely be better to assess the results of these latest improvements before taking steps that could even make the situation worse.

CAVERSHAM COURT

— A SPECIAL PLACE

A short time ago mention was made in this column of the deteriorating state of Caversham Court and the Forbury Gardens.

Caversham Resident's Association took this up with the Borough Council, making the point that it appeared to have coincided with the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering (CCT).

In her reply, Sylvie Pierce, Borough Chief Executive, says that whilst the problem coincided with CCT, it did not result from it. This is because, until then, Caversham Court and the Forbury Gardens had been maintained to a higher standard than the other open spaces in the town but, with the re-organisation, the opportunity was taken to adopt a common maintenance policy right across the town. It has meant that whilst standards in other parks have improved, in the case of Caversham Court and the Forbury gardens it has brought about a marked decline. She adds that the Borough is working with its contractors to halt and remedy this.

The idea of equal treatment may have seemed fair in the first place, but it took out of account the fact that Caversham Court and the Forbury were special places. Caversham Court has many listed features as the remaining garden of a former historic house occupying an exceptionally attractive site.

The fact that it was in snobby, elitist and privileged Caversham should not have had any effect on the decision. Probably it did not, as the Forbury in the town centre was also included. It also is special, occupying an historic site probably even earlier than the Abbey and being one of the earliest municipal gardens in the country, laid out in 1855.

Both these gardens deserve extra care as they are part of the town's heritage in a way that the other open spaces, valuable as they are, cannot be. They are visited, not just by local people, but by those from those all over the town. Caversham Residents' Association will be pursuing this matter further with the Council.

IS THIS A RECORD?

Meanwhile may I claim a record for my own much humbler garden? The first snowdrop put in an appearance on 28th December, the earliest I have ever had. It got frozen for its pains within hours, but has survived. By the time this appears Mapledurham's carpets of snowdrops should be out, as should be thousands along the tracks at Goring Heath.

TOOLS FOR SELF RELIANCE

Readers may be interested to know that old tools no longer required can be taken to the stable block at Caversham Court on the first Saturday morning of each month where an organisation known as Tools for Self-Reliance will be pleased to accept them. They are renovated and sent to developing countries where they can be put to good use by workers who have the skill to use them but not the resources to purchase new ones. This can often lead to an improvement in the whole economy of a village.

SWAG

The SWAG collections of waste paper at various sites across the town will cease in their present form after April. This is because the market price of waste paper has fallen so low that Severnside who, in conjunction with Reading Voluntary Action and Reading Borough Council, have been running the scheme, have found themselves sponsoring it as there was no profit in it, and have now announced their withdrawal.

After this, voluntary groups who previously benefited from the income by their participation, are being

asked to 'adopt-a-site', and the Borough Council will also be introducing ten extra recycling sites round the town for bottles, cans, textiles and possibly papers. The 'adopt-a-site' scheme will require regular commitment as it will entail general maintenance, but it could generate an income of £400-600 per annum per site.

The suggestion that the Albert Road playing field might be used as a recycling site did not gain much support for a variety of reasons. This column was simply sounding out public opinion: the suggestion did not originate from here as a correspondent in last month's Postbag apparently thought. Other sites have been suggested and the dates in the letter from the Cub-scout writer will be useful for those seeking alternative collection points.

It seems odd that with all the recycled paper goods on sale (all those Christmas cards were a recent example) and the demand for them, that the price for the raw material, supplied free, should be so low. But the ways of the market have always been strange. Financially profitable or not, re-using rather than throwing away must make better sense.

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THEY CAME BY NIGHT

On the night of New Year's Day 1722, a group of some ten men stealthily entered the new deerpark at Lord Cadogan's great mansion at Caversham. Each man had his face blackened. They were mounted and carried some sort of weapon, a few even fire-arms, and perhaps one at least had a whippet or greyhound trained in the chase. They were a group of poachers making a planned attack on his Lordship's fallow deer.

As they moved among the darkness of tree and bush they took the utmost care, for each realised what risk the raid involved. At worst, if caught, they would be hanged, at best deported to colonies overseas.

The blacking of the face for a night foray was common practice among poachers. It was recorded in medieval times and was in use as late as the eighteen hundreds, and was simply known as blacking. Those who resorted to this disguise were known as blacks.

From early time poaching had been pursued for various reasons. By the seventeen hundreds yet one more could be added to the list, for a new breed of manorial lords, such as Cadogan, with vast fortune and influence in high places, had arisen. Often these men were ruthless people, many having reached their position by riding rough shod over all who stood in the way of their success. Rightly or wrongly, there were those who hated them and banded together making planned raids on their estates, killing game, burning hunting lodges, breaking down park fences, harming cattle and breaching fish ponds.

"A bad, bold, blustering booby"

These people who formed these marauding parties were a mixed bunch which included lesser gentry, yeoman farmers, tradesmen, apprentices and labourers.

A local group, known as the Berkshire Blacks, had a wealthy farmer as its leader or "King". He was William Shorter, a Wokingham man, and no doubt he was thoroughly sickened at the sight of his crops being continually trampled over and eaten by deer from the forest of Windsor which had one forest walk at Easthampstead, close by Wokingham. "King" William would have been powerless to intervene. Any objection would have fallen on deaf ears.

There is no doubt that Lord Cadogan was as thoroughly disliked by the local Caversham people as he was in nearby Reading. Indeed, Bishop Atterburn, a contemporary, referred to him as "a big, bad, bold, blustering, blundering booby". Not only did he pull down the old manor which he purchased from the Kildares and erect a mansion on the lines of Blenheim Palace (belonging to his superior and friend, the Duke of Marlborough), he also turned about half the one thousand acres of estate into gardens, lawns and woods, with a great deer park of two hundred and forty acres. The terraces of the house extended for a quarter

of a mile. Avenues of trees were planted, canals dug and stocked with fish. Besides a menagerie there was a quail yard and pheasantry.

No evidence exists to show that cottagers were evicted or farmers lost their customary grazing rights in this massive exercise but there is little doubt that some homes got in the way of his Lordship's plans and some farmers lawfully turned out their cattle on land he wished to use. He, like many another, had no qualms about turning them out.

The raiders on that January night killed several fallow deer but the whole enterprise ended in disaster for the poachers. At least some of their number were captured. One of them, Thomas Willetts was still languishing in Oxford Gaol at the end of the following November awaiting deportation. He was so ill by that time that a plea for mercy was lodged. This was refused and whether he died in prison or on his way overseas, a desperately sick man, no one will ever know. Thomas may well have come from Caversham for a family called Willatts were millers in the village and spelling on old documents could easily have meant that there should have been an "a" in his surname instead of an "e". The pronunciation would have been very similar and people wrote down what they heard or thought they heard.

Robert Shorter, a brother of "King" William, was believed to have been the leader of the Blacks on that night. He ended his life in prison while William became an outlaw.

A further raid took place at Caversham Park on July 22, 1722. Lord Cadogan lost a total of sixteen fallow deer in the two attacks. No further forays are recorded but many a local man must have had a pheasant, hare or even yet another deer for the pot, from Cadogan's land.

M.K.



Courtesy — The Reading Museum, Reading Borough Council
'Sumer is icumen in', a famous round written down at Reading Abbey,
c. 1240. (Ernest Board RWA)

KNOW YOUR HERITAGE

Discover the history of Reading's great Abbey and gather more information about the ten priceless paintings still in isolation in Reading's Abbey Gateway, the personal gift of Dr H. Hurry of St John's College, Cambridge, to the citizens of Reading. Caversham Academy Art Centre Tutor Ted Burnell will tell the story of the rise and fall of the Abbey, also advanced pupils will show some of their work on Thursday, February 11th, 1993 at 7.30pm in Church House, Caversham. Admission is free.

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NOTES FROM NANJING AND BEYOND

No 8 BY HARRIET BAKER

June 21st. Our last couple of days in Nanjing flew by in a hectic rush of sorting, shopping, sending parcels, obliging with photo poses, receiving presents, and finally packing. It was sad having to say goodbye to so many friends — especially the Engineers, and it was touching to receive gifts and cards from the students saying "thank you". Junior 1 demanded that we come again next year and write to them all in the meantime — a mega task!

Now it is Monday June 22nd. and we are staying in the "free and unfettered" (and grotty) hotel in Tangkou, a village at the foot of the Huangshan mountains in Anhui province. The first day of our travels is nearly over and we got here after a horribly early start in Nanjing and a gruelling 11 hours bus journey over bumpy, muddy roads and along steeply winding lanes. The village itself is surrounded by terraced hillsides, and is a mad, haphazard place with incredibly loud cockerels and tractors. Anhui province is relatively poor and very rural and most of the fields are sodden, terraced and brilliantly green rice paddies. The terraces are incredibly neat and bordered by

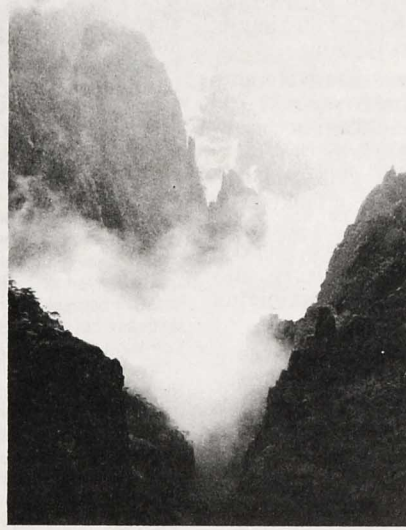
low banks which serve as footpaths, dams, and potato patches. They continue up the hill sides for quite a long way, becoming smaller and smaller as the slope steepens. There are farmers up to their knees in mud; women wearing straw hats planting out the rice or driving the water buffalo along with a bamboo switch. There are no fences or boundaries — only the low banks to keep the water in, and livestock and children run around as they like. Buffalo pull the wooden ploughs, and plenty of black pigs, and flocks of hens, ducks and geese enjoy the roadside scratching or watery fields. The houses are mainly rickety brick buildings with low roofs — tiled or thatched — sometimes whitewashed but with no window panes or doors, just openings. Many people have rigged up tarpaulins between the trees beside the road, as a shelter from which they sell their water melons. During the selling season they live beside their piles of melons, sleeping on simple bamboo beds. Some poorer families live in bamboo and thatch huts, raised above the muddy ground on stilts, and furnished

simply with a bamboo shelf for a bed.

The mountain of Huangshan (the Chinese call it the Yellow Mountain) is beautiful and we plan to climb the main peak the day after tomorrow, when hopefully the weather will have improved. We would like to spend a night at the top as the view at sunrise is reputed to be spectacular.

July 17th. No luck with the weather at Huangshan but we climbed it in spite of the rain. There are winding steps and a path all the way up so it's an easy climb but very steep and tiring on the legs. The Chinese tourists were amazing — no hiking boots, anoraks or Kendal Mint cake for them! Instead young and old alike climbed in plastic sandals or cloth shoes. Even more incredible were the porters who ran up and down the mountain carrying bamboo yokes laden with hotel bedding, crates of beer or fuel canisters. Some porters also carried people in bamboo chairs and the poor things were dripping with sweat and struggling under the weight of plump, rich tourists.

The views from the top were spectacular. Pillars and pinnacles of rock rose up out of the clouds. The rock is limestone, and small pine trees and mountain grass grow out of them. The valleys are steep and gorge-like, cut by waterfalls and streams. It was cold at the top so we hired huge fur-lined army coats and brewed ourselves a cup of tea on our Esbit travel stove. We stayed for the night as planned and got up at 4.00 a.m. to find the rain pouring down and no other fools up to "enjoy" the sunrise — which of course didn't happen. We watched the light change from blue-



Huangshan — Yellow Mountain, Anhui Province.



Mr Dou and family. Jingdozhen, Anmi Province. June 92. (We met Mr Dou on the train after leaving Huangshan and he invited us to stay the night. The family moved into the lean-to kitchen and gave us their bed)

black to grey and the swirling clouds, stark black peaks and beautiful bird song made it all worthwhile.

After Huangshan, Annabel and I had a long train journey to Fuzhou on the East coast. On the way we stayed for a night in Jingdezhen with a very friendly family. We had met Mr. Dou on the train and he invited us to his home — a couple of small rooms at the end of a narrow lane. His mother, wife and small son also lived there, all using one bed and so we felt very guilty using it whilst they slept in the other room which was a lean-to for cooking, washing etc. They were all up at 4.30 a.m., chopping wood, and fanning the the fire for hot

water and cooking — so we got up too. Mr Dou cooked us a delicious breakfast of rice porridge, spicy aubergine and fried bread sticks. His little 6 year old son was a bit taken aback to find two "big noses" in his bed in the morning but soon overcame his shyness and skipped around examining our toothpaste and cameras. We took his photograph for which he loved posing, and even put on some lipstick.

After meeting Dave and John in Xiamen, we all set off for Guilin — a long haul which we did in two stages. From Guilin we took a bus to Yangshuo — a really beautiful place where limestone hills

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turn to page 6

CHURCH RAISES £2,000 FOR BOSNIA IN TWO WEEKS

The concern with which people consider the conflict in Bosnia was clearly shown in the speed with which one church in Caversham collected over £2,000 in just over two weeks for the refugees in Bosnia.

Jane Arch and June Harper, of Caversham Heights Methodist Church, set rolling an appeal to raise £1,700 to send a relief lorry from Feed the Children in Caversham to Bosnia before the imminent snows of winter made the roads impassable. Feed the Children had been inundated with food and clothing, but lacked the funds to hire lorries to speed the loads to those in need. Jane and June, together with Joan Moody, planned events to raise the £1,700 to hire a lorry, and appealed for the support of the Caversham Heights Methodist members.

The immediate response from the church was a retiring collection of over £225 after morning service, followed by various events such as a mince pie evening at the manse, coffee mornings at homes in Goring, Sonning Common and Caversham Heights and ploughmans lunches at Caversham Heights and Sonning Common. The results of a raffle by the Chiltern Edge choir, a whip round by the Caversham Heights Society, the profit from a supper by the Wednesday Group, and even a collection which the members of the Stayawhile Luncheon club insisted on, as well as a donation from Stayawhile funds, all helped to swell the amount. Donations poured in (over £500) with £5, £10, and £20 notes, cheques up to £50 and an anonymous envelope bulging with £100.

Many gifts and much support of events were from neighbours and people along the road who, whilst not connected with the church, felt moved to give generously once they were aware of the appeal. It just shows how the tragedy in Bosnia has touched the hearts of people of England.

Within two weeks the target of £1,700 was soon passed and within three weeks the sum raised exceeded £2,500. In addition people have been down to the warehouses of Feed the Children on Vastern Road to help with the packing of boxes ready to load lorries for Bosnia.

The three ladies express their thanks for all those who have given so generously to the Feed the Children operations in Bosnia.

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CHRISTMAS AT LEE ABBEY

by
Leslie Maynerd

Lee Abbey is a Christian community in that beautiful part of North Devon described as where 'Exmoor meets the sea'. I would also describe it as a place where 'one meets God'. I have always been able to see God in creation, and for me Lee Abbey was a corner of Paradise. I had booked the beach chalet for the Christmas week for my family and my sister's family. I had heard so much about Lee Abbey and how beautiful it was and I thought the chalet seemed a good idea since it was self catering but we could join in with all the events going on in the main house. We seemed to have everything there, the sea, which was particularly striking to us as the chalet was situated right on the beach, perfect for the children; hills, stunning in their winter colours and we were so lucky that it was crisp bright weather because everything sparkled; rocks majestically cut into the landscape and, if anyone knows this area, Lee Abbey nestles in the Valley of the Rocks — a spectacular sight. Apart from the sea, water seems to be everywhere — gushing out of the rocks and down through the woods. The first morning we woke up thinking it was pouring with rain; it was a torrent of water cascading down the hill past our chalet into the sea, a fantastic sight and sound. Imagine waking up on Christmas morning to all that! God's creation. And the theme of the week — 'Emmanuel' of course, God with us.

The wonderful thing for me about being in a place like Lee Abbey for Christmas is that that message remained with us, not just up to

Christmas morning when normally after all the 'church' events are over one tends to switch to the other side of Christmas with its materialism — the presents, the dinner etc. I'm sure many can identify with the feeling that after the Christmas morning service, that's it for a while. At Lee Abbey we were immersed for the whole week in the thought of 'Emmanuel'. It started for us with the crib service on Christmas Eve — held in a barn complete with donkeys and sheep. All the children were invited to take part in the little play the youth leaders had organised and ours were thrilled to be a part of it. It was a beautiful service in a perfect setting although it was very cold! Nobody seemed to mind though. We did not attend the midnight mass as the crib service was late — 8.30, but the rest of the week was so full of other services, addresses, meditations that I for one did not mind. Also we had a beach chapel underneath the chalet so I spent times in there when I didn't feel it was right to desert the rest of the family for too long. We did of course have the presents, the dinner and all the good things that go with Christmas but they didn't detract from the real meaning of Christmas and they didn't take over from it. It was a very blessed time for all of us even though not all of the group were Christians. In a place like Lee Abbey you cannot fail to be touched in some way. That is what evangelism is all about — just bringing people into the presence of God and letting Him do the rest. It was a wonderful Christmas — I think we all agreed it was the best we'd ever had.

ST. SAVIOUR'S DROP-IN CENTRE

People in Caversham will have the chance to support the homeless of Reading and get two of their chosen antiques identified and valued by Simon Jones A.R.I.C.S. at an Antiques Road Show on Wednesday March 31st. Organised by St Margaret's

Church, Mapledurham, it will be held at 7.30 for 8pm in the Pavilion in Mapledurham Playing Fields off Upper Woodcote Road.

Everyone is welcome, so please make a note of this date in your diary. Further information in next month's Caversham Bridge.

ST. ANDREW'S FELLOWSHIP

St Andrew's Fellowship met in December in a specially festive mood to celebrate not only Christmas but the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation. Members were entertained by their friends, the Network Singers, introduced by their

Minister's wife, Mrs Moody. Carols were sung, interspersed with appropriate readings, and a very pleasant hour was passed, followed by tea or coffee and party food. The evening was a very happy and relaxed preparation for Christmas.

LETTERS FROM NANJING

from page 5

rise steeply out of completely flat paddy fields. It is a touristy place, swarming with foreign backpackers like us. The locals are friendly and provide everything that backpackers want — cheap accommodation, cheap bicycle hire, good food (muesli, yoghurt, banana pancakes, burgers, chips — YUM!), cheap beer, and cafes that stay open until 2.00 a.m. We stayed for 5 days and climbed hills, biked through villages, and ate supper with a wonderfully hospitable farming family. The meal

that they cooked for us was probably a week's food for them and although we felt guilty we could tell that they enjoyed the occasion as much as we did. All their friends and relatives came and joined in, including 12 small children who soon overcame their shyness and giggled, prodded and played games with us.

On one of the 5 days we hired rubber rings from the jetty on the Li river and floated down together for 2 hours. It was idyllic gorgeous scenery, beautiful dragonflies, water buffalo and cormorant fishermen. When it got too hot we just plopped

into the river ignoring the floating melon skins, sewage, and goodness knows what diseases. With frantic back-paddling we managed to stop at the next village of Fuli and returned to Yangshuo by bus. An excellent day.

July 18th. Now I am writing from Xishuangbanna in Yunnan province in S.W. China, very close to the Burmese border. But there is so much to tell you that it will have to come in the next letter!

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THE NEED FOR AID WOULD BE LESS WITH FAIRER TRADE

Caversham Bridge readers will be familiar with John Madeley's reports on his visits to developing countries. Now after the experience of 16 years travelling in some 40 less developed countries, he has set down his knowledge in a book entitled *Trade and the Poor: the impact of international trade on developing countries*, published by Intermediate Technology Publications at £10.95. He does so to meet a need: there is no up-to-date book on the subject.



In the compass of 209 pages the subject is analysed comprehensively and authoritatively. It starts with why countries trade, then looks successively at the effects of trade, trade in primary commodities, manufactured goods and services. There is a critical look at the activities of transnational companies both as agents of trade and as agents of death, as he describes it, through their use of pesticides, drugs, breast milk substitutes, and the consequences of dirty products and industries. The part played by money, the debt crisis and the policies of international monetary organisations are next considered. The role of the international trade organisations, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) are explained; the latter have now been through eight conferences in 29 years and the alternative explanations of the acronym — 'until the next conference try and delay' or 'under no circumstances take any decisions' seem very apt. In the final chapters alternative trading organisations, including Oxfam and Traidcraft, and trade between less developed countries and producer co-operation are dealt with. Three appendices cover six tables of statistics, expenditure on armaments (which accounts for one third of the debt owed by the developing countries) and a list of alternative trading organisations. Each chapter has an annotated bibliography and in addition there is an overall bibliography.

The book makes a forceful case for a fairer treatment of the developing countries which continue to be disadvantaged by the richer West, while at the same time suggesting to the developing countries that part of the solution is in their own hands, and urges greater co-operation and trade between developing countries and the expansion of alternative trade whereby the primary producer gets a greater share of the profits. Although the value of exports from the developing countries has shown large increases over the past 40 years these have been accompanied by similar increases in imports by those same countries, so that there is little difference between the two figures. This has to be set alongside the mounting figure of third world debt, which in 1990 was \$1280 billion. At the same time international aid and investment to the developing countries was \$85 billion, whereas \$143.5 billion was needed to service the debt. We are told that at the recent Earth Summit (The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro last June), Agenda 21, a scheme for sustainable development was agreed; between 1993 and the year 2000 this would require an expenditure of \$600 billion a year, of which the developing countries are expected to find \$475 billion. This is about half their earning from international trade and about a fifth of their combined gross national products. John Madeley makes the point that "unless there are changes in the international trading system that give developing countries a chance to earn more, it is unrealistic to imagine that they can raise such a sum". He makes a strong case for developing countries trading lower volumes of goods and services while aiming at higher returns. We need to appreciate that this cannot be without cost to the richer West.



John Madeley hopes that his book will be useful to economics and geography students at all levels, as well as all interested in the development of the third world and all who seek to understand how international trade affects developing countries. This is a book that should be widely read and its message understood, since clearly the future of the developing countries is through their local economies and trade, rather than aid. In one world we are increasingly interdependent; anything that helps our understanding of interdependence and its consequences, as this book does, is to be welcomed.

Owen Jewiss

THE LINK GROUP

The weeks before Christmas were, as always, a busy time for Link members. Toys brought along to various Churches were collected by them and distributed via Family Aid to needy families. In addition this year, a collection of wonderful large games and toys was donated by a local firm for distribution to organisations for handicapped and underprivileged children, and members helped with this.

The elderly people who came to the regular Link teas were entertained to a Christmas lunch party at Chairman Anthea Prescott's home.

At the end of November, members and their husbands, representing ten Churches in the area, held a party at the Bennetts' home, on the eighteenth anniversary of the Group's first meeting there. Mrs Bennett said that, from their initial interest in 1974 in helping mentally handicapped children, Simon Community residents (the forerunner of REAP), and elderly handicapped people, activities had snowballed. They had included involvement with homes for single mothers and babies, families at the women's Refuge and at the Family Aid centre, REAP, Partially Sighted, Cyrenians, the Richmond Fellowship, transfer of furniture and household goods to needy families, the setting up of the Pop-in centre and, most recently, a steering committee to investigate the possibility of a local Crossroads organisation. Personal contact in every instance meant that many friendships has been formed and Mrs Bennett stressed the importance of the last line of the Link Group prayer, "Help us to form a link of genuine friendship that crosses all barriers".



O. Jewiss

May Smith, on behalf of the Link Group, receiving a tricycle from Father Christmas outside St. Barnabas Hall while the other driver from Contact Couriers looks on.



O. Jewiss

The Working Party from the Link Group and the two representatives from Contact Couriers who delivered the toys with some of the toys inside St. Barnabas Hall.

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BIRDS AT RISK

As these words are being written, yet another avoidable, ecological disaster is taking place with great loss of life amongst wild creatures. I refer of course, to the wreck of the super-tanker 'Braer' which, within a few hours of the loss of power of its engines, in extremely high seas, was lying stranded upon a rocky ledge on the Shetland Isles coast.

At this very moment, the pounding which it has received during the first night in its watery grave, has split its hull resulting in a huge discharge of oil into the surrounding sea. Dead Shags, Long-tailed and Eider Ducks, and quantities of fish have already been washed ashore.

The channel between the Shetlands and Fair Isle has proved to be insufficient for the safe, through passage of such vessels in the severe weather conditions so often encountered in this area. Both islands are very important and ecologically sensitive for wild life in general.

During winter the Shetlands' otter population seek sanctuary with their young, in the seas along the coast, and are in imminent danger of extinction from this latest disaster.

Whatever the International Laws may be regarding the passage of oil-tankers, one cannot remain unaware of the threat which they potentially pose.

Mankind should, and in some instances does, endeavour to be guardian to its wild-life, yet one fears we still have a very long way to go before we are able to ensure a high degree of safety for it. Thus it is that although this latest tragedy cannot be related to the doorsteps of Caversham residents, one ought seriously to reflect that whilst the swans are being fed at Caversham Bridge and others of us are delightfully viewing the antics of Robin and Starling upon our back lawns, other species which very much need our help and thoughts, are at this moment dying on our own shores, due to man's mis-management and general apathy.

Many of us, I feel, would do well to study the lives of all of these creatures alongside which we daily share our lives, whether locally or farther afield, for assuredly, only through knowledge and understanding can we really become effective in their needs, and the safe-keeping of those which the Lord has Provided — and Is Good.

"SCOPS OWL"

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NEWS OF PAST CLERGY

We are grateful to John Grimwade — "our Gloucestershire correspondent" — who gives us news of past Caversham clergy.

The Rev. John Crowe, Team Rector of Dorchester, is also to be Rural Dean of Cuddesdon and Aston.

The Rev. Guy Armstrong has been awarded the OBE in the New Year's Honours for services to the community on the Isle of Wight.

Congratulations to them both.

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HELP FOR SOMALIA

Some of our local youngsters really are pretty marvellous. Kate Wiggins, aged 13, of Cromwell Road, and her friends Emma and Victoria Hillier, 10 and 13 respectively were so horrified at the pictures they saw on TV of starving Somalian children that, with the aid of their parents they set up a sale at Kate's garage shortly before Christmas, sparing no effort to advertise by taking notes round the local houses. Goods immediately poured in and at midday on 12th December the garage was a hive of activity. Between them they raised over £165 which was sent to OXFAM HQ. Later they hope to sell left-over items at a car boot sale and send anything more they make to the Somalia Fund.

When one thinks how many of us are wringing our hands over TV news pictures and bemoaning the fact that we feel so helpless, we are grateful for youngsters like this who, as they said, were so upset by the pictures and thinking how lucky they are themselves, that they determined to try do do something, however little about it. They deserve our congratulations and we look forward to hearing more of their activities in the future.

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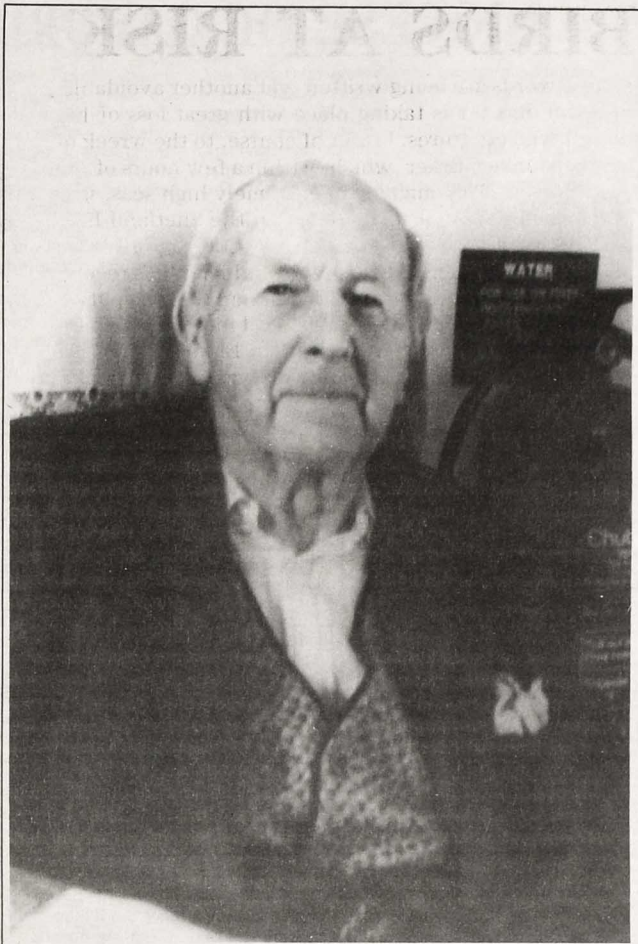
DR. PATRICK H.R. ANDERSON

A little late in doing so, we feel we can't let the occasion pass without saying a grateful thank you to Dr. Anderson for all the years he delivered the 'Bridge' before retiring to Summerfield Rest Home. No doubt he will already have been missed by his former customers.

Although coming a long way from his roots — he was the third child of a Scottish farmer and took an agricultural degree at Aberdeen University — he wasted no time getting to know the local people when he moved to Caversham some years ago and it wasn't long before he was going the rounds with the 'Bridge' and joining the luncheon club at Caversham Heights Methodist Church, where he is a regular worshipper. For good measure he visited other lunch clubs and became a familiar figure at the local Baptist Church.

Dr. Anderson is a very colourful character with a determination to keep Caversham in order; apparently not a scrap of paper ever came his way in local streets but what it was quickly picked up and placed firmly in a bin somewhere or other. But the stories about him are many and perhaps one day we shall be able to produce a fuller life of this gentleman who quickly deserted agriculture when he discovered the lady on whom he had set his sights didn't wish to become a farmer's wife. So he turned to medicine, spent many years in that field including work as a Public Health Officer; to him we probably owe the fact that his son became one of the most popular medical practitioners in the district.

So once again Dr. Anderson, many many thanks for all you have done for Caversham.



Dr. Patrick Anderson

— E.S. Archer

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DIOCESE OF OXFORD — 450 YEARS

Within a comparatively short time noteworthy events took place at Christ Church Cathedral Oxford. The first was the installation of the Rector as Honorary Canon of Christ Church, in recognition of his work as Parish Priest and Pastor in the Diocese. The second was a service of Thanksgiving for the foundation of the Oxford Diocese, four hundred and fifty years ago. Christopher Haigh writes in the preface of the Service booklet: 'The Creation of the Diocese of Oxford; on 1 September 1542 at Westminster, Henry VIII approved letters patent creating the cathedral and diocese of Oxford. The king declared his concern for true religion and the service of God, and established the former Augustinian abbey of Osney as the Cathedral Church of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Robert King, former abbot of Osney and a suffragan bishop, was named the first

bishop of Oxford and given modest properties; the archdeaconry of Oxford was severed from the diocese of Lincoln and placed under his jurisdiction. The town of Oxford was made a city, and the privileges of the University were safeguarded. From 1070 until 1542, Oxfordshire had been part of the cumbersome diocese of Lincoln, which covered eight and a half counties and stretched from the Thames to the Humber. Lincoln, with seventeen hundred and thirty-six parishes was an extreme but not a unique case; England had only seventeen dioceses, almost all far larger than dioceses in France or Italy or Spain. In 1528 Cardinal Wolsey had planned to reform the ecclesiastical structure dividing the country into compact and manageable dioceses — but he fell from power before anything was done. The tumultuous events of the 1530's — the king's divorce, the

break from papal authority, the suppression of monasteries, rebellion, sedition and the growth of religious division — showed the need for a closer supervision of parishes, and in 1539 Parliament gave the king power to erect new dioceses by his own decree. There were several blueprints for redrawing the ecclesiastical map of England, with eighteen or thirteen or eight new dioceses. Oxfordshire figured in all these plans, because of its distance from Lincoln and the need for oversight of the University. The demands of Henry VIII's defence budget defeated the grandest plans, and in 1540-42 the king endowed just six new cathedrals and sees. Oxford was the last, but Henry soon had second thoughts. In May 1545 the cathedral at Osney was suppressed, and in November 1546 the king established a new cathedral at Christ Church. The diocese created in 1542 survived unchanged,

until Berkshire and Buckinghamshire were joined to Oxford in 1836 and 1845. So neither the cathedral nor the diocese are now as Henry VIII had first intended them in 1542.'

Thanksgiving Service
 The Service was most impressive, music played by an organ scholar and sub organist. The first procession, led by the choir included acolytes, vergers, Cathedral Chaplains, Honorary Canons, the Dean of Windsor and two previous Bishops of Oxford. After a fanfare Her Majesty the Queen entered the Cathedral. The procession was led by the Archdeacons of Berkshire and Buckingham, followed by the Bishops of Reading, Dorchester and Buckingham, Canons of Christ Church, the Dean, the Lord Lieutenant for Oxfordshire, the Bishop of Oxford accompanying the Queen, Lady Martha Ponsonby, Lady in Waiting, the Bishop's Chaplain, the Keeper of

the Privy Purse, the Assistant, Private Secretary and the Equerry. Whilst Her Majesty proceeded to the sanctuary the choir sang 'O Clap your hands, all ye people' from Psalm 47 to the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams. The Service, which was non-eucharistic in character, was nevertheless every bit in keeping with the occasion. A witty and inspiring sermon from the Bishop of Oxford, prayers from the Suffragan Bishops, and most wonderful singing from the choir. After the service, outside in the quad, the sun brilliantly shining after the rain, gave the impression that God approved and was rejoicing too. The Queen, together with her entourage, walked shaking hands and chatting to those present. It was good to realise that we are part of the Oxford Diocese and a privilege to have been present at such an occasion.

W.A. Vincent



Caversham W.I.
 The December meeting of the Caversham Women's Institute took the form of a combined Christmas and birthday party.

Entertainment was provided by Reading Accordion Group, followed by a delicious shared supper. The president cut the cake and presents from the bran tub were shared. Mrs Lewis gave the vote of thanks.

ed and hopes for a return visit by Mr Archer to tell more of his interesting travels. A giant raffle was ably organised by Mrs P. Young and mince pies baked by the Committee were appreciated by members during tea. Christmas social evenings and lunches had been enjoyed by the Words and Music, Arts and Crafts and Ramblers Groups and the new programme for 1993/94 looks most interesting. Members were perturbed to learn of the difficulties of the "Feed The Children" charity based in Caversham and as a result of some hastily arranged coffee mornings and the generous donation by Mr Archer of his fee, the Guild was able to donate £115 to help their work. Many members attended the Berkshire Federation Carol Service in St Mary's in The Butts which was very well supported and enjoyed by all. The meeting ended with the Chairman wishing everyone a very happy Christmas and looking forward to seeing them again in the New Year.

able to contribute to various charities, including the Sue Ryder Home at Nettlebed, resulting from Coffee mornings etc. held during the year. Rambling and Scrabble continue during the winter. Mrs Stockhill would have a sherry and mincepie

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Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild
 Members of the Emmer Green Townswomen's guild met in December to enjoy a riveting talk and slide show on a visit to China by Mr and Mrs Archer. Their travels took them to unfamiliar places, beautiful temples and fascinating towns and villages. Mr Archer had a fund of knowledge about the people and places he had seen and had photographs of folk going about their daily business and of anything unusual that caught his imagination. China is still such a new and relatively unknown country to the Western tourist that everyone was engross-

ed and hopes for a return visit by Mr Archer to tell more of his interesting travels. A giant raffle was ably organised by Mrs P. Young and mince pies baked by the Committee were appreciated by members during tea. Christmas social evenings and lunches had been enjoyed by the Words and Music, Arts and Crafts and Ramblers Groups and the new programme for 1993/94 looks most interesting. Members were perturbed to learn of the difficulties of the "Feed The Children" charity based in Caversham and as a result of some hastily arranged coffee mornings and the generous donation by Mr Archer of his fee, the Guild was able to donate £115 to help their work. Many members attended the Berkshire Federation Carol Service in St Mary's in The Butts which was very well supported and enjoyed by all. The meeting ended with the Chairman wishing everyone a very happy Christmas and looking forward to seeing them again in the New Year.

Rosehill W.I.
 On December 2nd Rosehill combined the monthly meeting with a Christmas party. Mrs Stockhill welcomed members and told them they had been

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the CLUBS

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party at her home on 10th December. Mr P.G. Machin then gave a lively entertainment with recorded music from tapes, "These You have Loved". Members heard old songs and monologues which included Gracie Fields and Joyce Grenfell. Tea came afterwards with sandwiches and mincepies, and a taste of Christmas cake, made by Mrs Fry as she has done for many years. The competition was for a Christmas decoration. These were placed on the tables and voted for by members. The winner was Mrs Freeman.

Caversham Ladies Club

It was once again Christmas Party time and tables were looking very tempting. Mrs Brenda Strong vice chairman, opened the meeting in the absence of Mrs Harwood, Chairman, who had an accident at her home the previous evening, and was now in hospital. Before Club business was attended to, Mrs Strong said she had some bad news to tell members. Two of their members had died in the past

fortnight, Mrs Hilda Hunt and Mrs Dubonet. They had been members for many years and would be badly missed. A minute's silence was kept in sympathy and to their memory.

Club business was then concluded; afterwards grace was said and the committee (in their usual role at parties) waited on members. Carols were sung and it was a very happy atmosphere. Before cutting the cake a small present and Christmas card were given to each member.

Before closing the meeting members were reminded that the next meeting in January was their chance to air their opinions and anything else they were interested in.

Amongst many greetings to each other as members departed, the meeting brought 1992 to a happy ending for the Club and a looking forward to future gatherings.

STAR Reading Branch of the University of The Third Age

December Activities
Christmas was celebrated in fine style by fifty of its members with a delicious luncheon at the Arthur Legge Centre on December 15th. The Open Meeting was an occasion to enjoy the varied talents of

its members, particularly pieces read by the Writers' group. The Playreaders presented a seasonal act, there was a Dickens reading and some beautiful songs from Mrs May Eburne.

The Classical Music group were visited by Miss Martha Kingdon Ward. She gave an amusing and informative talk illustrated on the clarinet. The Writers each brought a piece on their most enjoyable day. The Travel group were much entertained by 'Tales of a Travel Guide'. Talks are generally strictly timed but members felt this could go on for ever.

New members are always welcome at STAR. Please ring the Membership Secretary, Mrs Grace McGregor, Reading 866037.

Caversham Community Association

The meeting on the 7th December gave any member who wished to do so, the opportunity to entertain their fellow members with items relating to Christmas. Olive Howard commenced with a reading from a book by the late Joyce Grenfell, which related the author's experience as a child at Christmastime in her aunt's house at Cliveden, Taplow. Maida Feast followed with a demonstration on the making of

chocolate peppermint creams, later the members were each given a sample of these delicious sweets. George Feast then recited a humorous poem by Pam Ayres. Margaret Cameron made two contributions, a Christmas quiz for the members to resolve and also read a poem giving a child's viewpoint of Christmastime. Beryl Latcham gave a demonstration of Christmas flower and foliage arrangements and explained a novel way of folding a serviette. Finally, Monica Sugget gave a reading on how good it would be if everyone practised the goodwill that is felt at Christmas all the year round. Monica then brought the meeting to a close with a prayer for a holy Christmas and blessings for all the members.

The New Elizabethan Singers entertained the club on the 14th December, led by their Musical Director Frank Terry. The all female choir wore attractive deep blue dresses with matching patterned wraps and captivated the audience with their excellent voices. The varied programme included songs to music by Edward Elgar and excerpts from The Mikado, My Fair Lady and the Sound of Music. Some lovely Christmas songs were sung before the break for refreshments. Mincepies were then provided for everyone. After the interval carols were sung with the audience participating. At the end of the evening the Chairman, Beryl

Latcham, thanked the singers, their director and accompanying pianist Rita Barnes, for a very good concert.

On the 21st December the Christmas party took place and was an enjoyable occasion. The tables were attractively arranged and the meal of beef, salad and baked potatoes followed by trifles and gateaux was appetising and appreciated by the members. The Shiffeld Handbell Ringers, with John Lawes their leader, provided the entertainment. Their skilful playing of Christmas songs and carols was applauded by the audience. John Lawes gave many amusing comments during the concert and joined some of his fellow musicians when they changed from bellringing to playing brass instruments. Patricia Spite came with the group and, accompanied by John Lawes at the piano, sang in her tuneful voice some popular Christmas songs. The Chairman thanked the entertainers for their very good performance. Later, the competition for a Christmas tree decoration was judged. Margaret Cameron won first prize, Wendy Colton was the second prizewinner. Finally Christmas cake, made by Maida Feast, was served with sherry or fruit juice to complete a successful party. The Chairman then thanked the committee and members, who had worked hard in arranging the supper, and concluded by wishing everyone a happy Christmas.

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ECUMENICAL LENT GROUPS 1993

Ash Wednesday falls on February 24th and thereafter Ecumenical House Groups will continue as in previous years. Your own church

will have lists of these groups which you may join by the time this paper is published. There are two courses on offer as detailed below. It

will be made clear beforehand which course each group will be following.

1) Finding your story

This course is edited by an Anglican priest, Melvyn Matthews, who "encourages us to see the Bible as a book of living memories, a book that contains our story." Finding your story presents the stories of five people who are living out key passages of scripture. Their contributions are divided into sessions:

1. John Bell of Iona Community - Living the creation
2. Rabbi Hugo Gryn - Living the Joseph story
3. Sister Carol CHN - Living the Beatitudes

4. Gerard Hughes SJ - Living Paul's Letter to the Romans

5. James Jones - Living the Gospel of Luke

A study guide is available (£2.95) plus a cassette.

NB It is strongly advised that participants obtain a copy of the Study Guide (Finding your Story, ed. Melvyn Matthews, publ. Darton, Longman & Todd, Price £2.95). They can be ordered from any bookshop but could take 2 weeks to arrive. Alternatively they can be obtained from CCBI Bookshop by return of post.

2) What is the Christian Hope?
In response to com-

ments from some participants last year this course is for those who found last year's course superficial and prefer a more traditional approach to bible study. It is planned to study what the early church believed about the Christian Hope. A list of suggested passages from scripture will be provided for leaders but no study guide.

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