

FOUR

NOVEMBER 1974

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Bishop of Oxford returns home

FATHER WOOLLCOOMBE came to Sutton in 1922 after the death of Canon Turner. Two years later Kenneth was born. The Victorian Rectory stood nearly where the present house is, but it was surrounded by a much more spacious garden which stretched from West Street right up to the churchyard. What we now call Beech Tree Place was the Rectory Drive. This was the environment in which Kenneth learnt to crawl and toddle in the early stages of development towards the full and interesting life which he was just beginning.

Kenneth began his schooling at Homefield. He was several years senior to Colin Cowdrey, but almost a contemporary of the present headmaster of Westminster. He then went on to Sandroyd and Haileybury. Had it not been for the war he would have gone straight to Oxford. As it was he reached the age of eighteen in the darkest days of the struggle, and went into the Navy, becoming a sub-lieutenant (E).

At S.John's, Kenneth was one of the post-war generation of ex-service undergraduates, and after further training at Westcott House, Cambridge, he was ordained to serve his curacy in Grimsby. Soon he was back in Oxford as Chaplain and Tutor of his old college, and by the early sixties he was in New York as Professor of Dogmatic Theology. This was clear recognition of the quality of the man who had disappointed his friends by just missing a "First" at Oxford

Continued Overleaf

During almost the whole of this time Kenneth Woolloombe's home was still in Sutton. It wasn't until he was over thirty that his father moved to a smaller parish in the diocese of Peterborough. It was at S.Nicholas that he grew up in the faith, it was at S.Nicholas that he learned the nature of Christian commitment. He was no replica of his father; he grew up to his own understanding of Christ's claim upon us. Just as his Father was an outstanding example of that post-Tractarian generation that gave impetus to the great Anglo-Catholic Congresses, so Kenneth has shown the wisdom and ability to accept the best of radical and ecumenical thought without losing the vital faith he had been given.

Now he is Bishop of Oxford. At a conference in one of the colleges this autumn, he came to preside and preach at a Sung Eucharist. To one who had not known him it was a revealing encounter. He has a personal authority which is impressive, but this is cloaked by obvious reverence in worship. His preaching was scintillating.

On November 3 he is to visit his old church and home. He will preside at the Parish Communion at S.Nicholas that morning, and preach. Sutton will surely provide him with the affectionate welcome he deserves.

Alresford 1975

THE SECOND Four Churches Weekend at Alresford is next January, 10 to 12. David Gooch, who attended the first Weekend, writes . . .

"Winchester Diocesan House (Old Alresford Place) is an ideal setting; its beautiful surroundings provide the right atmosphere for folk to relax and participate fully in the proceedings. The Weekend is one of the few occasions in the year when we can really get to know one another. It's quite remarkable how the simple act of sharing a meal together breaks the barriers which tend to remain even during the joint discussion sessions in our various Church Halls. If last year's Weekend is any guide, this year's participants will have both a stimulating and enjoyable experience, and will understand their Four Churches' companions just that little bit better."

Places are limited—talk to your Minister if you would like to go.

FOUR Since its inception, January, 1973, regular readers of this magazine will be aware of the number of changes it has gone through as it seeks to evolve its own identity, and to reflect the vision of the Covenant and the variety of our churches. This edition is yet one more attempt to get the balance right, and the Editor would appreciate readers' comments—not necessarily for publication!

Personal View

I ONCE DESCRIBED our search for unity as an adventure . . . a chance to do something great for God in Sutton. But, outside story-books, adventures are usually hard work. Between the excitement of leaving basecamp and the euphoria and satisfaction of reaching the summit comes the long haul up the mountainside. And the fact that it might be Everest only makes the haul longer, with more slips and slides, false trails and general frustrations. The explorer often has to make a conscious effort to recall the vision which originally inspired him.

Now the meaning of this little parable is obvious I hope. We can see now that it is going to be a long job fulfilling the Covenant—longer maybe than we realised—and there is a danger that we are going to get tired, fed up with all the meetings, talks, changes and innovations—that we will lose the vision and start yearning for the comfort of the Good Old Days.

For God's sake (literally) we must not let this happen. Pains and difficulties must be faced and dealt with—they are inseparable from true growth and we do no good at all by dodging them.

In the three years I have been in Sutton there has been a steady growth of trust and "godly love" between our congregations and it is against this background that together we can face the pains, difficulties and disappointments. I feel very sad that economics seem likely to end our dream of one splendid new building, because I believe that this project would do more than anything else to bring us together. Without it the task will be that much harder.

Disappointment too at the apparent lack of a grassroots enthusiasm really taking hold among ordinary churchpeople. The idea that unity is being imposed from above is, however, mistaken, still around, even in my own church! Maybe this is because we Anglicans, being so very "odd" and in a three-to-one relationship, are afraid of being swamped. This could be a real danger. However, in humility, I firmly believe that the ethos and tradition of worship in which Anglicans share is of the main-stream and has a richness and beauty that I have sadly found missing in many Free Church services. (I say this as an unashamed "ecumania" and an ex-Baptist!) The problem here is greatest for us at the Eucharist of course. And I am sure from experiences of the "underground" church in Canada, from such places as Taize and from the whole liturgical movement that the future lies with this tradition, reformed and fired by ever greater devotion to our Lord. Small though we are, in Sutton terms, at S.Nicholas', we feel that we carry a great responsibility to preserve bal-

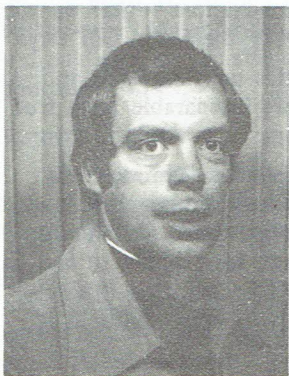
ance and to maintain the priceless catholic heritage in the United Church. So understand us when we seem awkward.

These great problems and others can only be solved by more trust and love—and by lots of prayer (and what a pity so few people trouble to come to the Thursday prayers).

But above all we need increased love of Our Lord who can take up our sufferings into His own in a continual offering to the Father. In this way all our agonisings are given point and value, because I know that ecumenism is a great movement of the Spirit and our prayer must always be for grace to perform our part and really do something great for God in Sutton.

—John Peet

John Peet



BROUGHT UP in South London, John was ordained in 1968 and served as full-time curate in a Battersea parish. However, for the last five years he has been a “priest-worker” with teaching as his paid main job. He came to S.Nicholas’ nearly three years ago and soon settled into the team there, with work among young people, the Scouts, Sunday School and Young Marrieds as his field. He even ventured onto the stage on one occasion with the Players. Now he is returning to the full-time parochial ministry at S.George’s, Perryhill, in South-east London, where I am sure we all wish him luck.

Men’s Fellowship

Remember that the Men’s Fellowship Centre meet at 2.45 p.m. on Friday afternoons in the Baptist John Clifford Hall. All men are welcome.

To the left . . . and right

The Sutton Baptist Church/URC tennis club Barn Dance will be held from 8 to 11 p.m. on Saturday, November 23 at the Public Hall, Chipstead Road, Banstead. The Caller will be Mabel Woollard and music will be provided by The Reelists. Tickets at £1.25 (refreshments included) from Sue Watts (Burgh Heath 50665), Carole Garrett (642 8913) or Glen and Geoff Link (642 0398).

Young Fours

ONCE there were 5—now there are forty-nine! — With new faces appearing almost every week! And if readers are wondering who or what this is all about, the answer is: “TEENS”, of course!

They're a thriving, enthusiastic and alert group of youngsters mainly from S.Nicholas and the Baptist church, but we have one or two Catholics as well! So, come on, Trinity—you must have lots of young people in that age group!

We meet alternate weeks in the Baptist Manse in Summerville Gardens, and on other Sundays we go wherever we're invited! Activities range from a members' evening to discussion and quiz sessions. We have speakers on a variety of subjects and occasionally a slides or film evening. And there's always coffee and talk and fun, against a background of records amplified decibels too high!

Every once in a while we hold a Saturday evening Disco, and the occasional theatre visit like the time we went to see “Jesus Christ Superstar”. There are two youth week-ends booked for 1975, one in March and another at the end of August.

Interested? Well, come and join us one Sunday evening after service—and find out for yourself! —Marilyn Powell

— And mid-week

On Wednesday nights there's a choice of mid-week programmes for the teens—homework permitting!

The “Inters Club”, which meets at Trinity from 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. for the 13 to 15 year olds. They play table tennis, drink coke, and listen to records.

The young people's “Christian Teach-In”, on the other hand is a house group for those who want to discuss the Bible and their faith. Their current venue is 27, Rosebery Road, Cheam; they meet from 8 to 9.30 p.m. concluding with refreshments; and

The *FOUR* Church Mice

What must you do before you obtain forgiveness of sin?

Sin!



Continued at the foot of page 9

Shared Life & Buildings

The four churches covenant with God and with each other to work and pray together with the aim of sharing life and buildings by Easter Day, 1980.

Sundays

United Evening services at 6.30 will be held this month at S.Nicholas. Communion will be observed on November 17 according to the Anglican tradition.

Forum

The William Davies Celebrity Concert will take place this year on Tuesday, November 12, in the Baptist Church at 8 p.m. Tickets are on sale from Committee Members, 50p each for adults; 25p for school-children. The proceeds will be donated to Capital Campaign (Cornwall) Spastics Society.

The local press notice on last year's Celebrity Concert described it as "a couple of hours of good musicianship, good humour and heart-warming charm. William Davies is a man of parts; he has played in town and around with the BBC for a long time and has the "know-how" when it comes to a concert of this kind. His gently informative introductions and humorous comments were as much a part of the show as his dynamic organ and piano playing, or his attractive and discreet accompaniments."

For what will most certainly be an enjoyable musical evening, we are sure that, as usual, the Church will be full. Get tickets for yourself and your friends **now**.

On Tuesday, November 26, the Guest Speaker at Forum will be the Revd David Ray, who will show a film on the Thamesmead Christian Community. Thamesmead is situated on the Riverside in south-east London, 12 miles downstream from Charing Cross. Already 10,000 people can call it home, and this is a growing number.

This will be an interesting evening, and we shall be pleased to see all our regular members as well as visitors, for whom the fee is 10p.

Ministers (in alphabetical order):

The Revd Gethin Abraham-Williams, M.A. (Baptist Church) 33, Summerville Gardens, Cheam	642 4719
The Revd Denis Creamer, B.Sc., (Methodist Minister, Trinity Church) 35, Arundel Road, Cheam	642 1701
The Revd Charles Heycock (Associate Minister, Baptist Church) 54, Tabor Gardens, Cheam	643 4254

Council Report

Hopes and Fears

The Churches' Leaders' Meeting at the beginning of October reflected clearly the problem of leadership facing the Four Churches right now. Of course, we do not lack able people to lead us; the problem is rather that of defining where we wish to be led. We all hope that we can live up to the challenge and aspirations of our covenant, we all fear the sacrifices and discipline that will be asked of us as we try to move forward. The call to our leaders is consequently confused. Some cry "Too fast", others "Too slow"; but speed is not the real issue. Experiments like ours move forward at their own pace. The F.C.C. has no powers; it responds to initiatives from the churches and these are implemented when a broad acceptance is forthcoming. The Churches set their own pace. No, the problem is direction; the need for a vision of our goals. The vision of an "Ecumenical Cathedral" has receded for the time being and something must take its place. The Four Churches Game will give us all an opportunity to put forward new ideas and make clearer where we wish to be led.

One idea which seems to be increasingly discussed is the need for some Four Churches' Project which can capture our imagination and energies. Some see this in the mission of the Church expressed through the work of N.A.G., others suggest more specifically an aspect of Youth Work, yet others the provision of homes for the elderly. Some such project has one tremendous advantage: in concentrating on the needs of others we forget our fears and work together to express our hopes for Unity in a practical way. Think it over.

Communication

A plea for news! Please don't be shy in telling others, through *FOUR*, of what your club or society is doing. It was very clear at the leaders' meeting that we all want to know more of what is happening in the other Churches. Communication in our experiment is vital.

—Peter Sills

The Revd John Higgins, M.A., (Rector, S.Nicholas Church) The Rectory, Sutton	642 3499
The Revd Mark Hill, B.A. (Assistant Curate, S.Nicholas Church) 12, Clyde Road, Sutton	643 3938
The Revd Stephen Orchard, M.A., Ph.D., (URC Minister, Trinity Church) 6, Chalgrove Road, Sutton	642 1527

News Round-up

Unified Appeal

This title is new to the URC in Sutton, but is the banner under which what we used to call the Home and Overseas Churches Fund now functions. It is not properly speaking an appeal, since we have an obligation to finance the central expenditure of the whole URC and its missions. The District have asked us to raise £820 as our contribution next year. The Southern Province raises more than any other, and the Croydon District raises the most of any District in the Province, but URC Sutton is far from being the most heavily assessed church in the District, even if at times it feels like it.

Election Day

Residents of the Baptist home, Wellesley Lodge in Worcester Road, had more than the election to liven them up on October 10. It was also the 10th anniversary of the opening of their home. Two days later the Mayor of the borough was received by Leslie Angel, Chairman of the Larcombe Housing Association which runs the home, when he called to join in the short ceremony and service of re-dedication conducted by the Minister.

Ann Brown

Ann Brown would have a good claim to have made maximum possible use of her long vacation. She and a fellow student set off for the States in July. They did not linger in New York, but soon found employment as waitresses in Atlanta, Georgia. Here they managed to save money to cover the expenses for the rest of the trip, and to enjoy the new experience in the meantime. Eventually Ann and her friend were ready to become tourists. They took in Mexico City, Los Angeles and Canada before arriving back in the UK! Ann is now studying medicine at Bristol University. Before that she was at Sutton High School, and played a prominent part in the youth activities of S.Nicholas church. She remains very faithful in her Christian commitment through one of the chaplaincies at the university. She was twenty-one on October 7, and had a wonderful party to celebrate the fact.

John Raw

John Raw of Sutton Baptist, creator of our popular cartoon feature, the Four Church Mice, recently had some of his watercolours and oils displayed at the Museum Gallery, Bourne Hall, Ewell. Sharing the three-week exhibition with Geoffrey Edgeler, Mary Turnbull's brother-in-law, the local press review praised their imaginative and lively work. Both artists are sons of the manse.

Spreading the Bible

How many Bibles have you in your home? Do you know that there are people who have none—and also some are lent one page to read and pass on with great care. Therefore the work of The British & Foreign Bible Society is something all Christians should support. It was founded in 1804 and is one of the ninety-three members of The United Bible Societies family. What it does, put simply, is to make it possible for people all over the world to read the Bible, or parts of it, in their own language. To achieve this the problems of translation (sometimes of a language hitherto never written down), selling at under cost price, so that even the very poor can buy, and wide distribution have to be overcome. How can we help? We can pray for those engaged in the work, make a contribution towards the costs and read about this worldwide task in “Word in Action”, the Society’s periodical. A visit to The Bible House in Queen Victoria Street, London, will help one to realise the magnitude of the work.

Gilbert and Sullivan

An evening of Gilbert and Sullivan will be given on Thursday, November 28 in Sutton Public Hall by Cheam Operatic Society, Producer the Revd J. Gilbert, Musical Director, David Harding. The performance will begin at 8 p.m. (Box Office open at 15 p.m.). Ticket price 30p. The proceeds will be in aid of Sutton Wel-Care Association.

Jennifer Hawker

Jennifer Hawker of Sutton Baptist recently returned after two years’ Voluntary Service Overseas. She’s been teaching forty seven-year-olds in a deprived and backward part of West India—against the pressure of parents who don’t believe education is of any use. She has vivid memories of the warm sea and hot weather—and of the sharp distinction between rich holiday visitors and the deprived natives.

If the cap fits

The Croydon District of the URC meets in modern premises in East Croydon, in a room enlivened by the displays of Junior Church material around the walls. These are often an education in themselves, but last month the children scored an unexpected point by leaving on the board, in front of which sat the District Officers, a single caption, “Donkeys”.

And mid-week

Continued from the foot of page 5

their November programme is: “The gift of the Spirit” (6th); “Explaining Jesus to people” (13th); “How the Church grows” (20th); with an informal evening to round off the month on the 20th.

Focus on Faith

DESPITE repeated statements to the contrary, one does have the impression that one of the main motives for Unity of the Four Churches is that we all like to worship in a building that is full; and what is so wrong in that?

It has always been assumed that we cannot justify the retention of our existing buildings; I do not share this view. If our Churches were to be renewed, revitalised, then they would be unable to cope with all the people waiting to get in to worship.

Jesus told the disciples to go to the upper room and wait for the Holy Spirit to come upon them, so that they would then be empowered to be His witnesses. I believe that the reason the Church is in retreat is that in the main part, it is not a witnessing Church. By this I do not mean that we each have to "button-hole" somebody to ask them if they have been saved; but nevertheless we should each one be able to give an account of the hope that is in us, as the opportunity arises.

Everyday Contacts

The commission that Jesus was given at the beginning of His ministry (Luke 4¹⁸) He gave to the Church. In the beginning the Church did the same things as He did. He promised that they would do even greater things than He had.

He told them to preach the Gospel, heal the sick, comfort the broken-hearted and set free those that are bound (e.g. fear, guilt). Just as they met people with these needs, so do we in our everyday contacts.

These gifts of the Holy Spirit are motivated by Love and confirm the Gospel of Salvation. Only the Christian Church can help people in this way, and then only if the Holy Spirit is in complete charge of every area of Church life and mission.

This may seem strange to those that believe scientific materialism has all the answers; but with the authority of Scripture and the knowledge that many Churches of all denominations have proved these truths for themselves, we can have every confidence that this is the Will of God.

No Church can prosper without vision. With this message and the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfil it, what limitless possibilities open up that the Love of Christ might be manifested in Sutton.

Feminine Four

June Vincent of Trinity writes . . .

In December 1951 a few ladies met in the Church Parlour for the purpose of starting a regular evening meeting which would provide “an opportunity for younger women to meet socially and to discuss matters in which they are interested.”

“Young Wives’ Evening” was the result, which became the Trinity Methodist Young Women’s Club in July 1952. In May 1962 it was renamed Trinity Methodist Women’s Club. It remained so until eighteen months ago, when the Women’s Circle of the United Reformed Church joined the club, and the name was changed again to Trinity Church Women’s Club, which now has a membership of ladies of a very wide age range.

The annual subscription was increased to 50p from September 1974—a sign of the times maybe, but this was the first increase for fourteen years, and still includes a cup of coffee and a biscuit!

Over the years, the aims of the Club, as in the Constitution, have remained the same: The Club exists to promote Christian Fellowship among women of the Church and neighbourhood. To discuss matters affecting our home and national life. To provide cultural interests.

Highlights

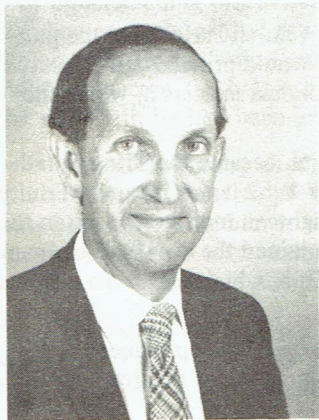
Obviously many particularly memorable evenings have been enjoyed, but one highlight was on December 4, 1972, when the Club celebrated its 21st birthday. About 130 people, including several founder-members and past Ministers and their wives, met in Trinity Hall for a very happy social evening and buffet supper.

Looking back through old programmes, it is interesting to see how certain topics seem to remain popular and appear time and time again. Subjects such as flower arranging, other people’s jobs, fashion shows and charitable organisations are among those that usually attract a larger audience.

The programme this year includes a demonstration of cookery skills, Japanese flower-arranging, “Honourable Play” by the popular Greta Raikes and her friends, and a talk by a senior tennis referee. During each year the Club supports several charities—some by regular donation, others by the proceeds of a “Good as New” Stall held at each meeting, and a Bring-and-Buy Stall at Christmas. We meet in the Church Parlour on alternate Monday evenings and any lady who would like to join us as a visitor or a member will be very welcome.

Close Up

The first of a series of profiles on leading figures in the four churches.



LESLIE WROE is essentially a man of firm convictions with a gift and a concern for people.

Whether it's in his job with the Metropolitan Public Health Division of the Thames Water Authority, where he's Assistant Divisional Manager, or at Trinity Methodist, where he's the current Senior Society Steward, he is as much taken up with people's problems as he is with pollution or church government.

An engineering graduate of the University of London, and a member both of the Civil and Municipal Institutes of Engineering, his work is the operation and maintenance of Greater London's sewerage system

—a job he admits he finds fascinating! It involves liaison with forty-five borough and district councils from the industrial to the rural extreme, and it brings him into contact with all sorts of folk, from the men who do the rather miserable jobs underground to members of the general public apprehensive about flooding. For recreation he indulges in gardening, badminton and amateur photographs.

Though he is not the type of man to force his convictions on others, he has firm views about his faith. "Without belief in God and Christ", he says, "the church would fall apart". Asked for his opinion on the Covenant, he answered without hesitation, "It must go through, but," he added characteristically, "we must take exceptional care to ensure that we carry every member of the congregation with us". The church's role, he says, is to work for the benefit of humanity.

Now a stalwart of the Methodist church, he and his wife, Stella, were both confirmed in the Anglican tradition. They were married at St Peter's, Southsea, Portsmouth; and on August 20 this year celebrated their Silver Wedding Anniversary. They have two sons: John, who has just graduated at Cambridge and gone into satellite communications for the Post Office, and Graham, who is a pupil at Greenshaw.

They live in Chiltern Road, next door to Sutton General Hospital where the advantages of the outlook are offset in the autumn, by a windfall of needles from the pine trees in the hospital grounds!