

KENN NEWS AND VIEWS

ised buildings and clergy for small communities such as Kenn, then let us not delude ourselves by starting a roof appeal, but begin planning for a real community centre that could be used as a church.

Richard GAUNT

A copy of this letter was sent to the Revd. John CRUSE whose reply is printed below. In addition to giving permission for this letter to be printed, John provided a copy of the letter on a computer disc to save my fingers - thank you very much.

Dear Richard,

Thanks for the copy of your letter to the Kenn Village Magazine; this letter is my initial response.

Firstly, I am glad that you, as a member of the "non-churchgoing majority" in Kenn, are raising the topics and questions you do. They are those that have been exercising me a good deal over the past few weeks. They raise profound issues about the future and status of the church building in Kenn.

The main issue, it seems to me, is this; in a few years the church might need some c.£20,000 spent on its roof. In the normal course of events, this would lead to the setting up of a restoration appeal - or whatever other name could be chosen - and those involved would hurl themselves into organising fund-raising events that would eventually reach the target. There can be hardly a church in the country that has not done this at some time or other. In these appeals, the general good-will of the wider community is assumed - many people, if not church-goers themselves, are happy to contribute towards the cost of repair of the building. However, for us in Kenn this type of appeal has coincided with the realisation that the Church is facing

financial difficulties at national as well as the local level. It is clear that the present level of weekly giving by the congregation and those on the fringes of Church membership is not sufficient to enable us to be certain of the continued existence of a Church functioning here in Kenn.

This leads me to ask three questions: 1) If we go for raising £20,000, are we doing it for a building that we can no longer honestly afford? 2) Is it possible to raise the levels of giving to cover the shortfall and keep up with future increases in expenditure? 3) Is it honest to expect non-churchgoers help raise money for the continued existence of a living Church that those who go have so obviously failed to provide?

As answer to question 2) I would say that it is possible, but only just. There is a group within the parish who are busy number-crunching, using the figures provided by the Diocese and Carl Gowing, our Treasurer. It has become obvious to us that a good deal of the publicity issued has been unnecessarily pessimistic, that an increase of £1 per member per week would enable us to just cover our costs projected forward to 1995 at least. The more we can persuade people to increase their giving by, obviously, the more secure we can feel; these figures give us no cause to rest on our laurels. We are not taking a rosy view - there are too many sharp financial brains in the group to allow of that - but taking a fairly realistic view on the figures as we now have and understand them. Kenn & Kingston have a greater way to travel due to their lower numbers, but giving has increased in Kenn since we started telling people how serious the situation was, and it is not an utterly impossible task. The possibility of hanging in the morning does indeed concentrate the mind wonderfully. We have to assume,

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THE FUTURE OF KENN CHURCH

As most people now know the roof of the church is in need of extensive repair and a committee has been set up to raise money to undertake the work.

As most people realise it is no use spending up to £20,000 to put the roof in good order if parishioners are not prepared to contribute to the weekly running expenses to keep it going on a sound financial basis.

At the present time there is a large shortfall in the amount of money being given against what it costs to run the church. This shortfall is at present being made-up by the giving at St Mary's Church Yatton and clearly this situation can't continue. If Kenn church is to stay open to meet the needs of the people who live here, it is up to those people to find the money to keep it going.

I have great faith in the people of this village and am certain that the money for the restoration and the general running expenses will be forthcoming. I am not prepared to go down in history as being one of the people who in the late years of the 20th century let the church in Kenn fall into disrepair, after the people of this village have struggled to maintain it for some 900 years or perhaps longer: as there may have been a Saxon church here before that.

Over the years the people of Kenn have raised large amounts of money for church and charity as has happened in many other small villages.

About 1860 the church here in Kenn was rebuilt from the window-sills up at a cost of approximately £1000. Wages at that time were about 7 or 8 shillings per week.

In more modern times around 1928 church people got together to improve the interior of the church. The curtains

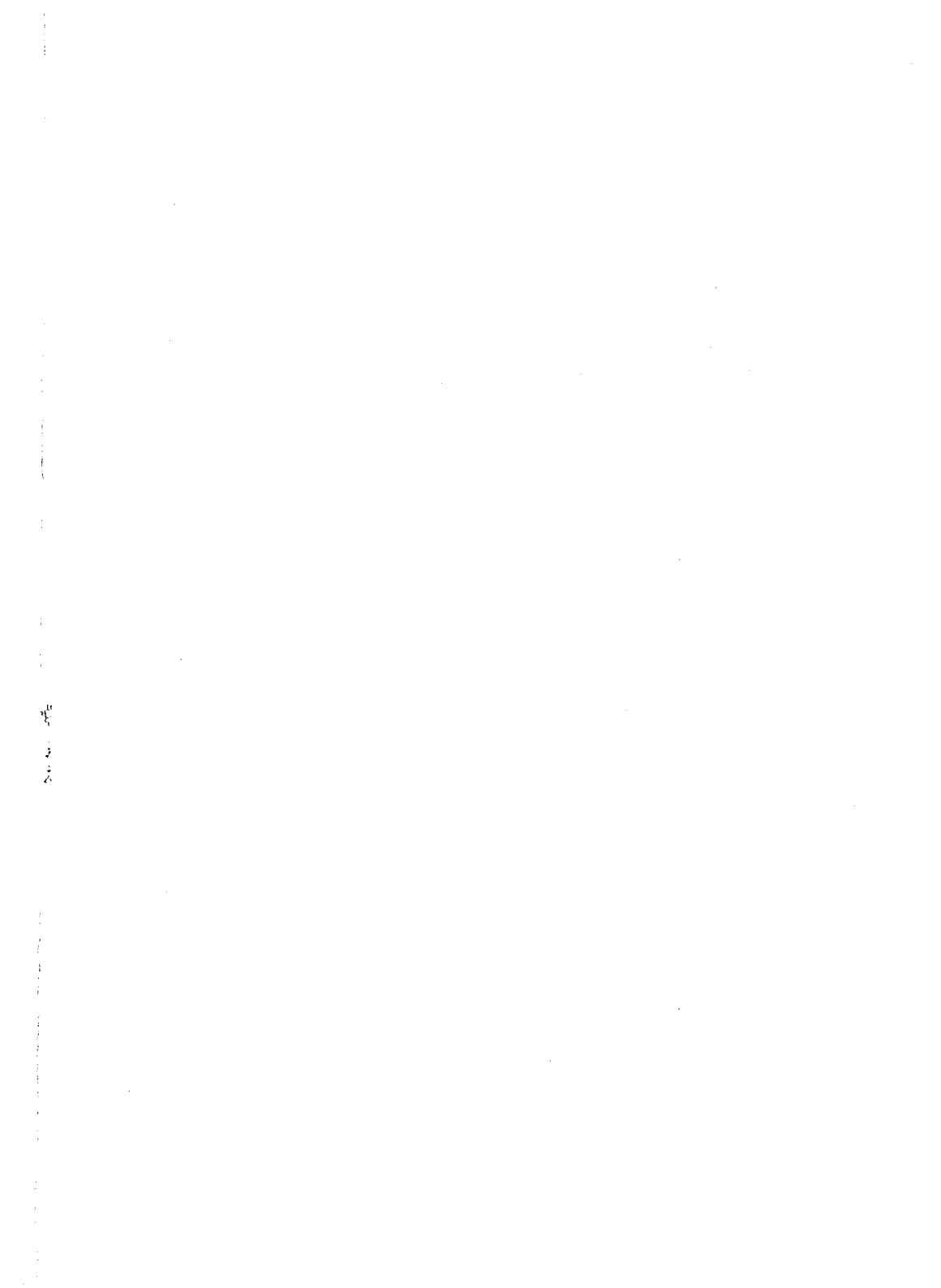
that still hang on either side of the altar were made by Mrs Lucy Baker, Lucy's mother. The cost of the material was £12 per yard. New altar frontals were bought at costs of between £10 and £40. A new red carpet was purchased to fit between the choir-stalls and coconut matting was laid along the whole length of the nave. This was when workers wages were about £1.50 per week.

During the last war large amounts of money were raised for the Red Cross and the war effort generally - this was a time of great national pride. In the early years of the war Britain stood alone against the evils of the Nazis and their allies when wage were £2.50 per week. Some people had great problems of their own at that time. Several houses had much damage caused to them by German bombs. The church did not escape as there was a lot of damage done to the east window by a bomb which fell in the field immediately behind Mendip View.

About 45 years ago the people here raised enough money to have the northern side of the roof stripped down and repaired. This work was done by Jack Tarr builders of Clevedon.

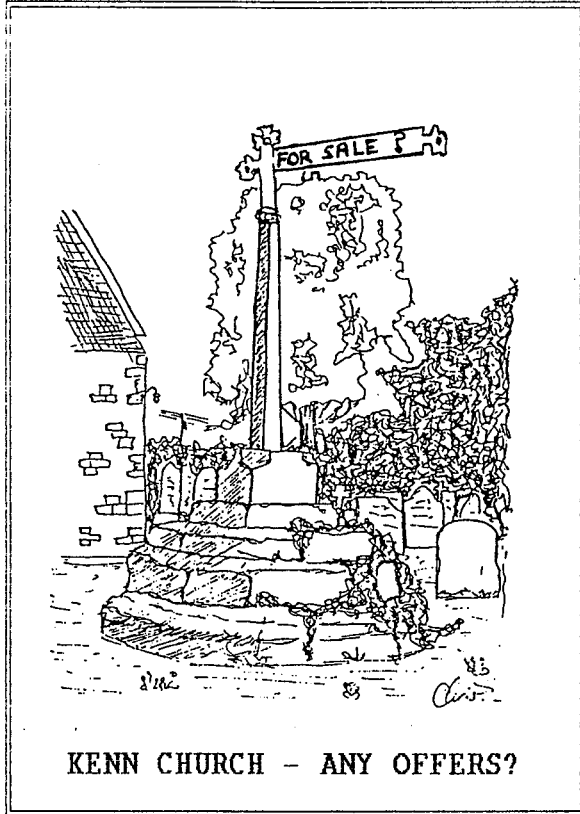
If the people of Kenn have persevered to raise money like this in times when they were poor, I consider it should be easy for them to do so in this time of comparative affluence, despite the recession.

RAY NAISH



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APRIL 1993 ISSUE 57



KENN CHURCH - ANY OFFERS?

EDITORS

SHEILA NAISH 0934 838357

KATE DENMEAD 879747

PRINTER :- MARGARET STOWELL TYPIST :- RICHARD GAUNT

KENN NEWS AND VIEWS

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

Many apologies to Avril and Justine Flower for several incorrect entries in last month's magazine- Sorry.

We are always sorry when things are not always typed correctly. Sometimes it has been given to us incorrectly and at other times it is just human error. We try to be accurate but please bear with us when we do slip up. We're only human! We're also only volunteers and your magazine is after all a freebie, not a weekly or national professional magazine.

BIG ED, LITTLE ED AND THE THREE FINGERED TYPIST.

HOWEVER....we have decided to banish our typist to foreign parts for 3 weeks. He's been dispatched to Australia - where all our convicts and sinners have traditionally been sent - to a place called BUMBRY! where we hope he'll learn a thing or two before returning afresh and ready to type the magazine minus his "Typists Thoughts" added as after-thoughts when we cannot reply. Many thanks to Simon Pascoe who has typed this month's magazine for us.

SHEILA

BIRTHDAYS

- 1st - Claire Stowell
- 3rd - Antoni Papisolomontos
- - Avril Flower
- 5th - Robin Taylor
- 6th - Andrea Waters
- 8th - Emma Fenwick
- 10th - Mary Lamb
- - Anna Edwards
- 11th - Kate Denmead (countdown begins here)
- 21st - Barbara Middleton
- 22nd - Liz Jaehme

- 23rd - Mary Wilcox
- 24th - Margaret Stowell
- 28th - Theresa Waters
- 29th - Miles Naish

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

- 10th - Ray and Jean Naish

NAISH'S NOTES

CONGRATULATIONS to Jill and Matthew Butland on the safe arrival of their baby son; first grandchild for Ben Morris.

IN HOSPITAL Wally Moore is back in hospital and we send all our best wishes to him.

DRIVING SUCCESS Well done Julian Wilcox on passing his driving test.

MOTHERS DAY Thank you for the lovely posies of flowers given to each mother and grandmother in Church on Mothering Sunday.

SHEILA

SNIPPETS

On March 8th a party of fifteen handicapped people were entertained to tea at Kenn Court. My grateful thanks to Miss Baker Mrs Ayres Mrs Denmead Mrs Ings Mrs Lamb Mrs Surridge and Mrs Whitehead for their help.

Toby Gale has been moved from Weston Hospital to the Belmont Nursing Home in Clevedon.

Thanks to Mrs Jean Ings for opening the Church for early morning Communion.

A flowering cherry tree has been planted on the Village Green in memory of Mr Ronald Prew. The tree was given by Mrs Prew and her family.

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CONGREGATIONAL MEETING - John Cruse thanked all those who had helped to keep our Church going through the year especially Mary Holmes and the choir, Julia Bush and Wendy Papasolomontos and the Sunday Club, the cleaners and decorators.

John Cruse noted that the new sound equipment had proved very useful and felt that this was a thriving small church. Efforts are in hand to raise £20,000 to repair the Church roof. He thanked everyone on behalf of the other clergy in the team.

John Griffin echoed the thanks expressed to the Churchwardens and the meeting closed at 11.45am

COMMENT! - you will notice that only 14 adults attended these meetings from approximately 250 Kenn residents who are entitled to take part; with just one apology.

KENN CHURCH

A PLEA FROM A NOT SO REGULAR CHURCHGOER BUT AN IMPASSIONED VILLAGER

Parishoners are being asked to make regular contributions to Church Funds. This, sadly is happening throughout the country, where too many churches have to be sold or closed because dwindling congregations have not generated enough money to meet their upkeep and running costs. Once closed they rarely reopen as places of worship. A part of our heritage and what should be as vital a part of our village as the pub or the shop disappears forever. When it does, you will usually find among these bemoaning its loss, the people who never quite got round to going to Church or putting their hands in their pockets.

It is obvious that the regular churchgoers in Kenn are unable to generate enough

funds for the day to day upkeep of Kenn Church. The Church is badly in need of repairs to its roof which will cost thousands. Can anyone in Kenn envisage our village without the Church open? Where will our children get married, our grandchildren christened? Where will we have a service when we die; where will we be buried?

Many of us do not attend regularly on a Sunday for one reason or another but we can still help. We could all give a bit more than we do. Our villagers and their friends are always dipping into their pockets to support fund-raising events and very successfully from the figures printed in the magazine each year.

Please support the forthcoming fund-raising events.

If you cannot or do not want to attend these functions or do not want to attend church on a regular basis, then covenant schemes, envelope giving, even a mention in a will, will all be welcomed; any donation given, large or small will help. A small regular amount is better than nothing. Think about it. What can you do NOW to help? Something surely. Will you miss the church if it's not there when you need it? We all need it someday.

Right now **IT NEEDS US.**

ANON

(**TYPIST** - thank you whoever you are; firstly you have saved me from having to type out my own thoughts, secondly and more seriously you have highlighted that the problems facing the church in Kenn are of concern to the village as a whole, not just to those who choose to attend church regularly. Let us hope we all remember that!)

KENN NEWS AND VIEWS

CHURCH RESTORATION FUND

Dear Editors,

As a member of the non-churchgoing majority in this village I would like to make a few personal comments on the restoration fund. I do this with some trepidation given the ready response "What's it to do with you? You couldn't be bothered to attend the meetings", but I think there should be a wider discussion of the implications of setting up this fund on village charity giving, now some £3 000 annually.

If I offend I apologise, but the only options are not raising the money or letting the church become "a romantic ruin", a phrase that does considerable disservice to the work of the Redundant Churches Commission in maintaining these buildings, and may mislead the casual reader. If we do not restore the roof the outside appearance will be unchanged and it could still be used for a few services a year. So we are discussing not the physical building but the spirit of the church beneath its roof.

There seem to me to be two linked issues, but that they can be separated.

Firstly the failure to provide sufficient funds to run the church on a day to day basis - the revenue issue. I recognise that the main problem is the Church Commissioners' failures to invest soundly, and that this problem is not unique to Yatton Moor. However, surely the solution must lie within the Parish; both an increase in giving from current givers and an active programme to increase the number of givers being needed. The sums involved are large now, and will increase far above the rate of inflation until 1995, when the full costs of clergy salaries falls on the Parishes. Until an ability to run the church soundly is demonstrated, I can see no purpose in restoring the roof.

Secondly the problem of the roof - the capital issue. It is my understanding that the roof is currently sound but that major work (some £ 20 000) will be needed in the next ten years. In other words there is no great urgency. To achieve this sum from within the village implies a total take of more than the present charity fund-raising efforts of Kenn.

My concern over this restoration appeal is that it will divert, and perhaps eventually take totally as the magnitude of the task becomes apparent, the charity giving from this village. I view this prospect with dismay, and fear that it will lead to divisions in the village given the peripheral nature of the church in present-day village life.

I propose, therefore, that the restoration appeal raises no funds for two years. In that period the following three questions are addressed and answered:

1 Can the giving be increased or costs reduced to put the Parish on a sound financial footing? The giving appeals seem to ask more from those already giving, surely an expansion of the giving base would be more effective.

2 Does the Rector expect the present church in Kenn to be needed and still viable in ten years time, or would a new Community Centre/Church be a more suitable alternative?

3 The major criticisms of the local church are the inadequate community profile and failure to evangelise effectively. Can an attempt to be made to rectify these, or am I mis-informed?

If in two years time these questions have been resolved I am sure that a revitalised and popular church would have fewer problems in raising the money for the roof, as it could then have the support of the whole village. If, however, the Church cannot afford to provide special-

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DIARY DATES

- 1st - Floral Arrangement Class 7.30pm
- 5th - Annual Parish Council Meeting 8pm
- 14th - W.I. Craft Evening 7.30pm
- 15th - Floral Arrangement Class 7.30pm
- 21st - Jumble Sale in aid of W.I Funds 7pm
- 23rd - Quiz Night
- 24th - Barn Dance
- 30th - Wine and Cheese Party

KENN WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

The President, Mrs Dyer welcomed two new members to the March meeting. Best wishes for a speedy recovery were sent to members who are unwell.

Final arrangements were made for the skittles evening on 29th March. There is a projected visit to Moorlynch vineyard later in the year. Unfortunately no one was able to attend the Spring Council Meeting in Bath this year. A delegate for the IGM in London will be chosen at the next meeting.

The Federation is asking Institutes to lobby their M.P's on the privatisation of railways and the possible imposition of VAT on further education courses. Members were unable to agree on the subject of privatisation.

Mrs Blake was asking for sponsorship in her bid to climb Ben Nevis in aid of cystic fibrosis. Tickets were on sale for a Barn Dance on 24th April to raise money for hearing dogs for the deaf.

The April meeting will take the form of a craft evening and members were asked to bring examples of their work and demonstrate their skills if possible.

Mrs Pat Davies gave a superbly presen-

ted and illustrated talk on Tasmania with a B feature showing roadside flowers in Spain. She was thanked by Mrs Bubb. The competition for something Australian was won by Mrs Aldrich, gold Mrs Prew, silver and Mrs Jackson, green. There will be no competition in April.

CHURCH MEETINGS

THE VESTRY MEETING of St John the Evangelist Kenn held in Church after Family Service - Sunday 7th March

Present- Revd. John Cruse in the chair.

Parishioners- Mesdames R Bell L Dark J Fenwick A Gaunt H Jenkins C Leaman J Naish W Papolomontos J Pascoe J Stevens and M Stowell. Messrs J Griffin J Hanson R Naish

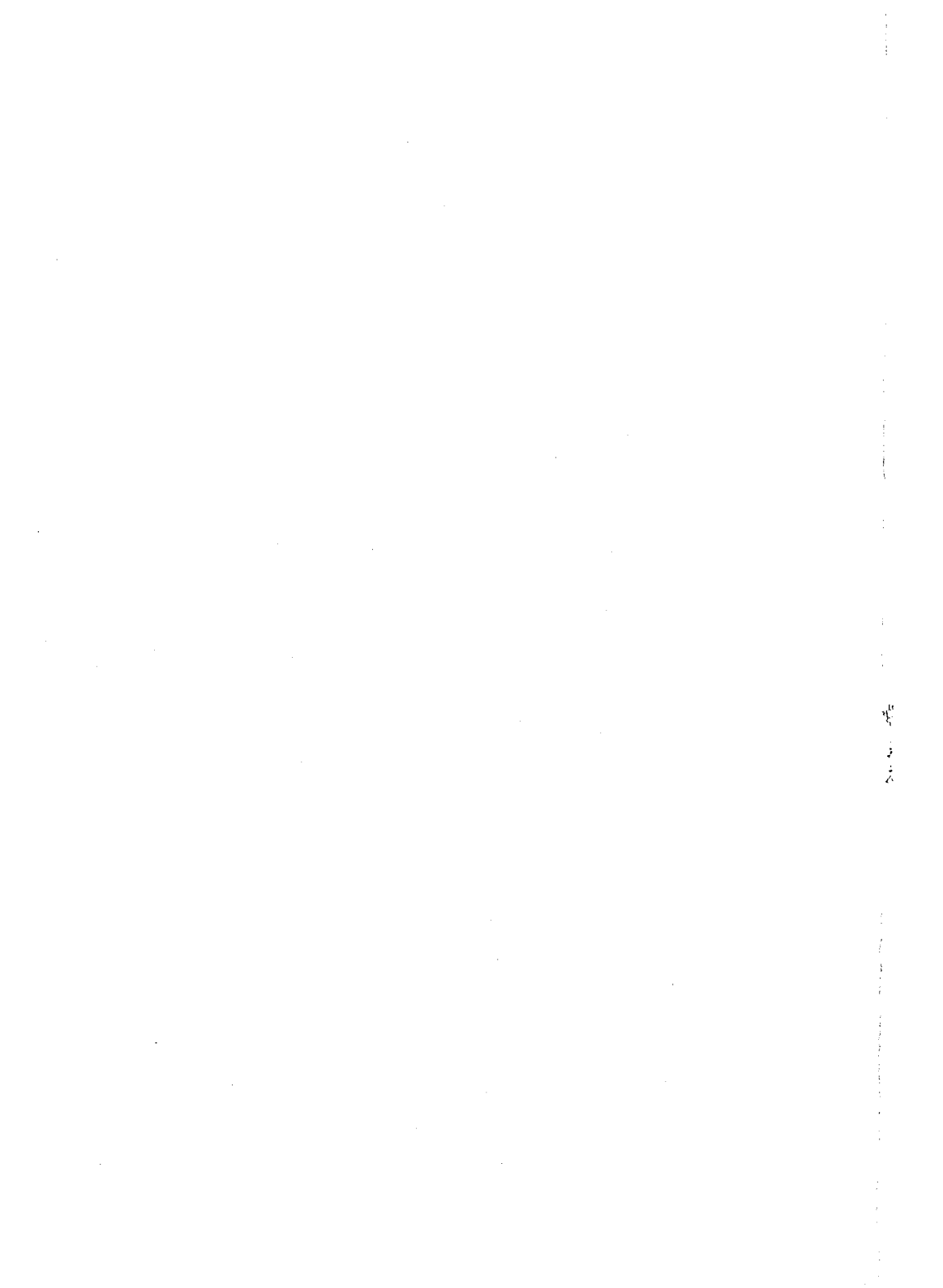
Visitors- Mesdames J Bush J Cruse A Ferguson-Pryce Z Grey G Griffin M Holmes E Prew M Stevens M Summerell M Williams and 15 members of the Sunday Club.

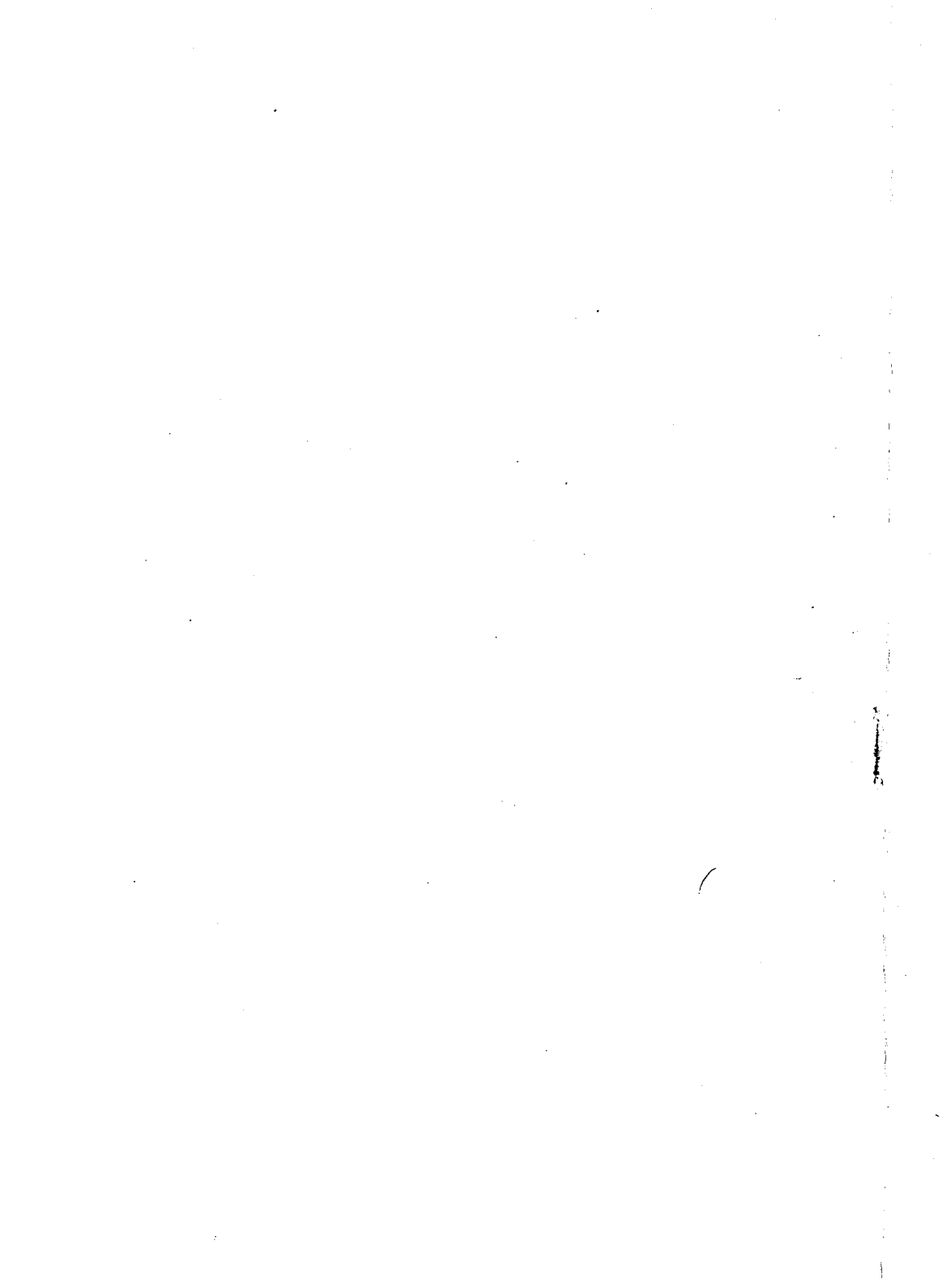
Apologies- Mrs I Surridge

John Cruse welcomed everyone to the Annual Vestry Meeting which by law must be held. The purpose of the Vestry Meeting was to elect Church wardens before the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of Yatton Moor at Kingston Seymour on 14 March 1993.

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 1992 were read agreed and signed.

Election of Churchwardens - There were two nominations for the post of Churchwarden - Mrs Renee Bell and Mr Ray Naish and they were duly returned as Churchwardens for a further year. John Cruse thanked them for their work during the past year and it was noted that the job of churchwarden is becoming more difficult with more paperwork and regulations.





KENN NEWS AND VIEWS

ON A LIGHTER NOTE

DENIAL

Avril would like to make it quite clear that she was NOT the drunken female trainee vicar in a Fiat Panda stopped and breathalysed on a motorway sliproad recently.

As if we would think it possible!!!

INNOCENCE

Did you know.....God's christian name is Peter.

So thinks at least one village youngster who at prayers is convinced he is right when he says, "Thanks Peter God."

QUIZ NIGHT

The Quiz Night has been re-scheduled for FRIDAY 23rd April at 7.30 for 8pm start prompt. Teams who booked for March 27th will be contacted to see if they still want their tables. New teams please telephone me NOW. Cost per team to enter - £5. Fish and chip supper £2.25. Please bring your own drinks. Proceeds to Kenn Church.

KATE 879747

VILLAGE GREEN

The following unsigned letter was delivered to the editors.

As a 'local' motorist who often passes your village green, I want to express my thanks for the wonderful display of daffodils. I have derived much pleasure from them in the past, and am delighted to see them again this year; they certainly brighten the road between Yatton and Clevedon. Thank You!

CONGRATULATIONS

The winner of last month's picture quiz was Iris Surrige - Well done, our Antipodean Three Fingered Typist will contact you soon.

KENN WOMENS INSTITUTE

JUMBLE SALE

WEDNESDAY 21st APRIL 7pm

Many stalls

Everybody welcome

In aid of W.I. funds

KENN NEWS AND VIEWS

therefore, that the Church in Kenn will survive, even if on a slightly slimmed-down level. It seems unlikely in the future that the clerical staffing level or the frequency of services could be maintained as they now stand. This helps us to answer question 1) by saying no. Therefore the appeal is a worthwhile attempt. If events change and financial crisis as yet unseen overwhelms us, then we will need to think again, but on a long-term project such as this we have to take things as we see them now and launch out in hope, or else we would be forever paralysed by indecision.

My answer to question 3) is absolute. No, it is not. If those who claim to be members of the Church fail to provide sufficient resources for its life, they should in no way expect the wider community to bail them out.

To come to some other points in your letter: you raise concern over the church fundraising taking over the entire charitable collecting in Kenn. This is something I have particularly asked those concerned with the appeal to bear in mind. I do not want this situation to arise. The church is just one of the many possible recipients of giving in the village, and I am aware that it might be seen as insensitive for a minority group in the village to muscle in on cash raised by the majority. Indeed, whilst hoping we can raise the money in as short a time as possible, I would not like the church to be the recipient of more than its fair share of Kenn's annual giving excluding, of course, the events mounted specially by church members to raise funds specifically for the roof.

Your final paragraph deserves a lengthy reply in itself; let me content myself with this. In an ideal world the church in Kenn would be used far more than it is. It seems nonsense even to me to raise huge sums to restore a building used only

once a week by so few people. I would love the building to be re-ordered so that it could be used by the wider village as a base for meetings and as a resource for groups. It seems nonsense to have, in such a small community, both a village hall & church which are under-resourced and under-used. However, we do not live in an ideal world. Under new statutory regulations, we would have to consult the secular planning authorities about such a scheme and, given the present conservationist hysteria about keeping anything older than the 1950s exactly as it is, we would, I fear, have the utmost difficulty. Remember the answer to our proposed room on the side of the church just before I arrived! And there are many people, church members and others, who would oppose such a scheme tooth and nail. Talk of reordering a church, opening it up to "other" uses or, heavens above, closing the building and all hell can break loose. Personally, I would be prepared to brave it, if it turns out to be our only viable alternative (and a slight re-ordering of the back of the church does not seem too much), but only if a substantial number of people were in favour and were prepared to work towards it.

To put all that into two short sentences: Kenn's congregation and its leaders are realistic about the level of giving needed, and a change is already discernible - hopefully it can be continued. Taking a gamble on this, and not wanting to be at the point in a few years time of having to raise a lot of money very quickly should the roof deteriorate, it seems sensible to begin the fundraising process now, and see what, as the discussion widens, the village wants from the Church, and what the church can be for the village.

Best wishes,

John Cruse, Team Vicar.