THE VICAR'S LETTER

My dear Friends,

I could write much about the weather but I am sure you have seen quite sufficient of it without me reminding you again.

But I think I should put on record in these pages for future generations, who might dig out an old copy of this magazine of some old dusty Church chest, that we have suffered under the severest weather in living memory.

On the Sunday after the blizzard Winterbourne Kingston had no Services at all, as not only was it impossible for me to get there even by walking but it was even impossible to enter the Church owing to an immense snowdrift which had piled against the Church door. Bere Regis had its Services, though only one or two managed to struggle through the snow to the Church. And since then conditions have not been much better.

In next month's issue of this Magazine I will give you a full list of Lenten Arrangements, but for the moment in a later page you will find the Service for Ash Wednesday.

Owing to the Christmas post, one or two articles which were due to appear in the January issue did not reach the printer in time to be included. They now appear in this issue.

May I remind the Secretaries of the various Village Clubs and organisations that we are always pleased to publish articles from them on their activities and forthcoming events. The Magazine goes into almost every other house in the Parish so it is a most useful advertising medium. Quite a number of people have asked me why more advantage is not taken of this. I can only reply that we can supply the space but we cannot write the articles!

Your sincere friend and Vicar,
Paul Tranter.

SANCTUARY FLOWER GUILD

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BERE REGIS WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Owing to the very cold weather it was decided to postpone the Old Age Pensioners Tea Party.
At the February meeting members will be pleased to hear we
HISTORY OF BERE REGIS - 20.

VILLAGE FIRES (continued)

Between twelve and one o'clock in the morning on the 4th of June, 1788, a fire broke out in the 'Crown' Public House at Bere, and in a short time rapidly spread and completely destroyed the Vicarage and more than forty other houses in addition to stables, barns, and outbuildings. At this time cottages stood near the Church on the north side, and although the fire several times threatened to spread to it, it remained undamaged. Unfortunately, the current parish registers were in the Vicarage at the time, and perished with it. A blind man was the only person to die as a result of the fire. Most of the houses were uninsured and appeals were made on behalf of those whose property was destroyed, including a newspaper appeal by the Vicar and Churchwardens.

A contemporary periodical described the scene thus:— "The scene of distress occasioned by this terrible conflagration is far beyond description. Many of the unhappy sufferers, who could not otherwise accommodate themselves, retired almost naked to the buildings erected for the fair on Woodbury Hill, where they found temporary shelter, and were very humanely and liberally supplied with every article necessary for their immediate relief, by the inhabitants of Blandford, Wareham, and other neighbouring places."

The money paid out as a result of the fire is shown in the following copy of the treasurer's account:—

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<th>£</th>
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<td>1,279.19.4</td>
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<td>62.5.8</td>
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Paid to 39 sufferers by fire in the said town of Bere Regis, in three classes, viz., to the first class, who were most distressed, and had lost their whole property, 14s. in the pound; to the second class, 11s. 6d.; and to the third class, 7s. 6d.

By advertisements, fire engines, firemen, assistants in removing goods and quenching the fire, and other incidental expenses

Left in the treasurer's hands, to be applied towards buying a new fire-engine for the said town, the old one having been burnt in the fire

The 'Crown' is mentioned in several old documents and is thought to have been on the site of No. 89 on the north side of West Street. This house seems to have been rebuilt at some time since 1788, and older foundation walling can be still seen. There is also a tradition that it was once a public house. The area destroyed by this fire extended from just north of the Church in what is now the churchyard, to the old Vicarage, in a north-south direction, and from the Royal Oak to Mrs. Kellaway's shop in an east-west direction. This area, before the fire, was very densely built up, and included rows of cottages on each side of the north church approach.

There was another fire on June 23, 1816.

F. P. Pitfield.

BERE REGIS MOTHERS' UNION

The monthly meeting of the Mothers' Union will be held at 7.30 in the Women's Institute Hut on Thursday February 14th, when the Vicar will be the Speaker.

The Winterbourne Kingston Branch of the Mothers' Union have kindly invited members from Bere Regis to their Christmas Party which is now to be held on Saturday, February 16th, commencing at 7.00 p.m. Please keep this date free and let me know as soon as possible if you will be able to come so that I can make the necessary arrangements for transport.

P. J. T.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

SUNFLOWER GUILD

The total from the boxes which has been sent to Headquarters amounted to the sum of £6.16.0d.

Our grateful thanks to all boxholders who give so generously.

We are greatly in need of more people to take boxes to help this most deserving work for needy children. If any of our readers would care to help, will they please get in touch with me.

Mrs. Drew - Chamberlaynes.

SERVICES FOR ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27th.

BERE REGIS

9.30 a.m. Holy Communion.
7.00 p.m. Evensong.

IN AND AROUND BERE REGIS

by Parishioner

It was good to have the re-wiring of the church virtually complete before Christmas. What an improvement there is in the
lighting of the church! The floodlights, too, are most effective.

The Carol Service, once again, was well attended. I often wonder why it is that we all join in the singing of Christmas hymns with such enthusiasm while at ordinary services the congregation is sometimes scarcely audible. Is it that we all know the Carols so much better or is it partly the memories of childhood that make us sing? There are some great hymns and tunes that we sing on many a Sunday but they do not capture the congregation as the Christmas hymns do. At school we used to have congregational hymn practice and study both the hymns and psalms for the week. It added more meaning to our services with the congregation taking a greater part. It is difficult, however, to see how this could be worked in a parish.

In this bad weather farmers find it a change for their products to be actually wanted. So much is inaccessible that if one is lucky enough to be able to reach one's grain or hay, or whatever it may be, there is no lack of buyers. It is a sad fact, that with much of the world's population underfed, farmers in this country often find it difficult to get a satisfactory price for their products and are constantly being urged not to produce more. Even if the problem of financing the distribution of surplus food to under-developed countries could be solved we cannot grow the kind of food that is required in these latitudes. So it seems that in future we shall have to produce the same amount of food but on less acres and with fewer farmers and farm workers. The process is likely to be slow with young men not entering agriculture rather than an exodus of the present population. Our country will reach a stage of industrialization where even in the truly rural villages only a small percentage of the people will work on the land. It is a sad thought but one we must face because as yet there seems no end to the "Drift from the land" which we have been experiencing since the Middle Ages. It is supposed to give us a higher standard of living but I wonder if we are any happier.

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**BELL RINGERS GUILD**

At a General Meeting of Bellringers held at the Vicarage on January 16th, Mr. H. Pitfield was elected Captain and Correspondent and Mr. D. Gibbs was elected Vice-Captain. Mr. P. Woolfries was elected Steeplekeeper and kindly consented to continue his care of the bells and equipment.

It was decided to divide the ringers into two teams to ring on alternate Sundays, one under the leadership of the Captain and the other under the Vice-Captain. Members of the teams were urged and promised to let their Captain know if they were unable to be present on their duty Sunday so that a replacement could be arranged.

For the time being the composition of the two teams was arranged as follows:

**A Team**
- Mr. H. Pitfield, Captain.
- Mr. A. Rawbone.
- Mr. R. Ricketts.

**B Team**
- Mr. D. Gibbs, Vice-Captain.
- Mr. C. Scott.
- Miss T. Cheeseman.

**The Following**
- Mr. T. Woolfries.
- Miss I. Pitfield.
- Mr. A. Standfield.

The following are under instruction and will be included in Sunday ringing in due course:
- Mr. J. Goldsack, Mrs. Goldsack, Jennifer Leggs, Arthur Stickley and Stuart Mackenzie.

The order of ringing for February is as follows:

Feb. 3rd.  "A" Team
Feb. 10th.  "B" Team
Feb. 17th.  "A" Team
Feb. 24th.  "B" Team

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**THE BRIANTSPUDDLE SINGERS**

Owing to the continued very hard weather, the visit of the above Singers has been postponed until further notice.

We very much regret this but it seems better to leave their visit now until later in the year than have perhaps to postpone it again for the third time.

A full announcement will be made at a later date.

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**FAMILY SERVICE**

Postponed until the Second Sunday in March.

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**NOTICE TO ORGANISERS OF SUMMER EVENTS**

**THE 1963 BERE REGIS CHURCH GARDEN PARTY WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, JUNE 29th,**

or to put it simply - **THE LAST SATURDAY IN JUNE**

**PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF THIS DATE.**

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**BERE REGIS AND DISTRICT FLORAL GROUP**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday February 12th. The Speaker will be Mrs. M. Fish, who will be giving a talk on gardening
illustrated with some of her beautiful colour slides and including, we hope, some of her own lovely garden in Somerset. It was a great disappointment to members when bad weather prevented her visit in January, and we sincerely hope that she will be able to reach us this time.

If there are any garden and flower lovers in the district who would like this opportunity of hearing Mrs. Fish and perhaps asking her expert advice on gardening matters, the Floral Group will be very happy to see them at the Meeting. New members and visitors are always welcome.

Patience Lloyd, Hon., Asst. Sec.

WINTERBOURNE KINGSTON

PRIMARY SCHOOL

The end of term at the Primary School was marked in the usual way by the presentation of a concert by the pupils to their parents, friends, friends of the school, as well as school managers.

This year the main feature was the enacting of a delightful musical fairy play entitled 'The Little Fir Tree', ten fairies were in the play, two rabbits, the part of the 'fir-tree' being sung by one of the young pupils, and of course the setting of the play took place around a fir tree.

There was a varied programme, a wide selection of carols, unison and part playing by the recorder group, singing of rounds, a display of country dancing, singing games by the infants as well as recitations, and a Nativity Play was also enacted by the youngest children of the school. Production was by Miss E. Knight, the Headmistress; and the Assistant Mistress, Miss Allen, assisted with the younger children.

WINTERBOURNE KINGSTON MOTHERS' UNION

The next monthly meeting of the Mothers' Union will be held in the Reading Room at 2.45 p.m. on Wednesday February 13th, when the speaker will be Mrs. Aldis of Hamworthy.

It was unfortunate that owing to the ice and snow the Party had to be postponed, but we have managed to book the Women's Institute Hut for Saturday, February 16th, and the party will be held then, when we are hoping to welcome a number of members from the Bere Regis Branch.

P. J. T.

FOR OUR YOUNGER READERS - LIVES OF THE LESSER SAINTS

JANUARY

ST. JOHN CHRYSTOSOTOM

At the end of Mattins and Evensong, there is a prayer which has the title 'A Prayer of St. Chrysostom'. I hope you will find it in your Prayer Book. It is probable that this prayer is the one thing by which we know this saint. It was Archbishop Cranmer who put the prayer into the Prayer Book of 1549.
February, about the year 270. There is mention of a Roman official called Furious Placidus taking some part against the Bishop, and there is historical evidence that someone of this name was Consul in 273. Therefore from the information available there is enough for us to observe the 14th February as the day when one of the early Christians bearing the name of Valentine was put to death.

We observe an age old custom on this day, which appears to be as popular now as in the past generations; that of exchanging cards and affectionate tokens, which are called 'Valentines'. The earliest poetical Valentine is said to have been written by Charles, Duke of Orleans, in the Tower of London, he having been taken prisoner at the battle of Agincourt.

We think, therefore, in the month of February and on the 14th day of the month, of this early Christian martyr, Valentine, faithful unto death, and of the centuries that have followed until the present day, the remembrance of this Saint, the patron of lovers.

E.M.S.

WINTERBOURNE KINGSTON

ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27th.
11.00 a.m. Holy Communion.

CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS SUNDAY SCHOOL.

The usual Christmas Party for children of the Sunday School, together with their mothers, church workers and friends, was held fortunately before the blizzard. All were entertained to tea and afterwards Carols were sung and games enjoyed. The Vicar distributed the attendance book prizes to the children. Sylvia House and Shirley Amey received prizes for best kept Stamp Album. The traditional Christmas Tree added to the occasion. Most grateful thanks to those who contributed to the Party in various way, and especially those who assisted with the tea.

E.M.S.

HEATING FUND. Mr. and Mrs. P. House organised a Christmas Whist Drive for the Heating Fund. Attendance was good and Mrs. Tranter distributed prizes to many winners. The Vicar and Church Council are grateful for the profit of £11. 5. 0.

ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH.

REGISTER.

BURIAL. January 5th. Thomas May. aged 75 years.

'SMALL ADS'

(2/6d for every three lines)

LADIES HAIRDRESSING BY QUALIFIED STYLIST. MRS. SOLDAN.
"MERRYDOWN", SITTERTON, BERE REGIS 308. RING BEFORE 9.30 a.m.
FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT. REPRESENTATIVE FOR AVON BEAUTY PRODUCTS.