

**Badsey, Aldington and Wickhamford  
Parish Review**

JUNE, 1955

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE MOTHERS' UNION**

It cannot be too emphatically stated that the Mothers' Union exists for a positive purpose—the promotion and strengthening of Christian family life—and is not, as some people erroneously believe, simply an anti-divorce society. Because marriage is the primary safeguard of the family, the first object of the Mothers' Union has always been to uphold the sanctity of marriage.

It is always a pity to isolate marriage from the wider context of the family, but there is today a great deal of confusion in the minds of many people, even among some members of the Mothers' Union, about the Mothers' Union "attitude," as it is called, towards divorce. The Mothers' Union is charged with being un-Christian and pharisaical because its rules exclude from membership anyone whose marriage has been dissolved by a court of law, or who has married, during the lifetime of his former wife, a man whose marriage has been so dissolved. It is often accused of condemning and judging people who have been less fortunate in their marriages than the members of the Mothers' Union, and of refusing help to those who need it most. This article, in the form of Question and Answer, is intended to clarify the position of the Mothers' Union with regard to its rules of membership.

**The teaching of the Church on marriage**

"The Church of England affirms, according to our Lord's teaching, that marriage is a union permanent in its nature and life-long, for better for worse, till death do them part, of one man with one woman, to the exclusion of all others on either side, for the procreation and nurture of children, for the hallowing and right direction of the natural instincts and affections, and for the mutual society, help and comfort, which one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity."

Q. Is it not time for the Mothers' Union to widen its membership to meet the needs of today?

A. What are the needs of today? Surely one of the most urgent is the recovery of a strong, stable and moral family life built upon the Christian principle of marriage as a life-long relationship? It is this particular need which the Mothers' Union sets out to meet. It seeks to maintain and strengthen Christian family life and to uphold by witness and *example* the life-long nature of marriage as so clearly taught by our Lord, and expressed in the marriage service. To do this effectively, it can only admit to membership those who believe that marriage is a permanent relationship and who, in their own lives, are able to witness to this principle.

If the Mothers' Union were to widen its membership and admit divorced people it might meet another need and serve another useful purpose, but it would not be able to give so clear and effective a witness to the Church's teaching on marriage, simply because it would have among its members those who had denied the Church's teaching on marriage by seeking a dissolution of their marriages. It would, in fact, be a completely different society from the one it was intended to be, and it would not be so effective in building Christian family life which is the supreme need of today.

Q. Is the Mothers' Union being un-Christian and pharisaical in not admitting divorced people?

A. No, because the Mothers' Union was never intended to be a society for all women, or even for all married women. It is a sectional society, founded for a particular purpose, and if it is to be true to its purpose its membership must be restricted to those who are able and willing to adhere to the particular principle for which it stands. But this does not mean that the Mothers' Union condemns or sits in judgement on those who are ineligible for membership—it does not set itself up as a society of saints. It is a society of ordinary Christian women, voluntarily united in prayer and witness, to uphold the Church's teaching on marriage and family life.

It is very conscious that there are many people who are ineligible for membership who are more faithful and devoted Christians than some members of the Mothers' Union, but, the fact remains that if they are divorced they cannot give a clear and wholehearted witness to the life-long nature of marriage, which the Mothers' Union seeks to uphold: they can, and many do, serve God in some other sphere of Church work.

Q. What right has the Mothers' Union to exclude from membership those whom the Church admits to communion?

A. Implicit in this question is the suggestion that the Mothers' Union is setting itself up above the Church—that the Church forgives the sinner who is penitent—but that the Mothers' Union does not. There is a great difference between the Mothers' Union and the Church. The task of the Mothers' Union, which is only one of many societies within the Church, is quite simply to uphold and to promote the Church's teaching on marriage and family life. The Church has much wider responsibilities and must go beyond the bounds of the Mothers' Union. Only the Church can forgive sins, and only the Church has the power to impose and relax discipline.

The Church teaches that marriage is a permanent relationship, which can be severed only by the death of one of the partners, and, therefore, it does not permit divorced people to be re-married in church. But the Church has a ministry to all: to those who keep its rules and to those who break them, and in its pastoral care for souls it sometimes admits to full communicant status those who have been divorced and re-married. This is a necessary part of the Church's pastoral work, but is quite outside the sphere of the Mothers' Union. The Church, in admitting divorced people to communion, however, may in some cases have to take the risk of appearing to approve divorce and re-marriage, and so it is all the more important that there should be *within the Church* a society with limited responsibilities, to proclaim the Church's teaching on marriage in no uncertain tones.

Q. Surely the innocent party in a divorce should be allowed to join the Mothers' Union?

A. It may seem hard that the "innocent" party in a divorce may not join the Mothers' Union, but once a person has been through the divorce courts and asked for her marriage to be dissolved, even if she is the "innocent" party, she cannot again *by example* declare that she believes marriage to be an indissoluble relationship, broken only by death. By her action, she has in effect said that she believes marriage to be a relationship which can, in certain circumstances, be broken, and her life in future must be a witness to that belief.

Q. By excluding divorced people is not the Mothers' Union refusing help to those who need it most?

A. The Mothers' Union does not refuse help to those who are ineligible for membership. It has a deep concern for these people and, through open meetings of the Branches and through the Young Wives' Groups, it offers them help and friendship and makes all the resources of the Mothers' Union, such as its speakers, literature and Headquarters, available to them.

But, it is important to realise that the Mothers' Union was not founded *solely* to help people—that was the function of the mothers' meetings which it superseded. It was founded to bear witness to the truth about marriage as taught by our Lord, as well as to help mothers with the training of their children and the building of Christian homes.

(CATHLEEN LLEWELLYN-DAVIES).

#### THE JULY ISSUE OF "THE PARISH REVIEW"

I hope to be away on holiday from Monday June 27th to Saturday July 9th. This will mean that the distribution of the July issue will be delayed, especially if it is to contain, as it should, an account of the Fête. I, therefore, draw attention to certain events in the early part of July:—

(1) Sunday July 3rd. Church Services:—

Badsey. 8 a.m. Holy Communion; 11 a.m. Matins; 6.45 p.m. Evensong. Preacher (Morning and Evening) Rev. Wilson Baker.

Wickhamford. No 9 a.m. Celebration of the Holy Communion; 5.30 p.m. Evensong.

(2) Sunday July 10th. Church Services:—

Badsey. 8 a.m. Holy Communion; 11 a.m. Sung Eucharist; 6.45 p.m. Evensong.

Wickhamford: 5.30 p.m. Evensong.

(3) Thursday July 14th. Badsey Mothers' Union and Sanctuary Guild and Wickhamford Mothers' Union Outing to London.

#### Badsey and Aldington Notes

##### CHURCH SERVICES

Sundays June 5th (Trinity Sunday), 12th, 19th, 26th.—Services as usual.

Sundays July 3rd, 10th.—See elsewhere in this issue.

**Men's Fellowship.** Excursion to the Royal Tournament at Earls Court, Saturday June 18th. Bus leaves Royal Oak 8.50 a.m., "The Pike" 8.55 a.m., Wheatsheaf 9 a.m.

**Mothers' Union and Sanctuary Guild.** The Spring Cleaning of the Church will take place on Thursday, June 9th, at 10.30 (after Holy Communion at 10.0).

Excursion to London, Thursday July 14th. A Bus will leave "The Pike" at 7.30 a.m., Wheatsheaf 7.35 a.m., Sandys Arms 7.40 a.m. for the 8.6 a.m. train from Evesham. The cost of the Outing (excluding admission to the Tower of London and Tea) will be 29s. 6d. It is asked that this be paid to the Vicar not later than Friday June 17th (the closing day of the Apron Competition!)

##### THE FETE

The Fête will be held in the Vicarage Garden on Saturday June 25th from 3 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. Mrs. Bunbury has kindly consented to perform the Opening Ceremony. Programmes are now on sale. Members of the Mothers' Union, the Sanctuary Guild, the Memorial Hall Committee and Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Stewart are again responsible for the various Stalls, the 2nd Sunday Group of the Sanctuary Guild being in charge of the Tea Room.

Gifts for the various Stalls and the Tea Room will be gratefully received.

There will be the usual sideshows, including Ladies' and Gents' Bowling, "Race Horses," Treasure Hunt, Pony and Donkey Rides, "Throwing the Plates," etc.

Entries for the Apron Competition (Machine-made and Hand-made) should be brought to the Vicarage not later than Friday June 17th. Mrs. Gilbert Mills has kindly promised to act as Judge. Entries for the Cake Competition should be brought to the Vicarage not later than 10 a.m. on the day of the Fête.

If wet, the Fête will be held in Badsey School.

A Meeting of all willing to help will be held in the Parish Room on Tuesday, June 7th at 7.30 p.m.

#### SISTER HOLBROOK

We are all very sorry that Sister Holbrook is retiring from the position of District Nurse and is leaving Badsey. She has given devoted service in Badsey, Aldington and Wickhamford for the past 28 years and will be much missed. On May 5th the members of the former Nursing Association met at "Briarlea" (by kind invitation of Mr. James Holding) to present to her a gold watch and cheque as a token of gratitude for all she has done. The presentation was made by Mr. Holding, and warm tributes were paid by the Vicar, Mrs. Brady, Mrs. E. Carter, Mrs. S. B. Carter and Miss Ella Jones. In her reply Sister Holbrook thanked all subscribers to the presentation, the members of the Nursing Association, the helpers at the Infant Welfare Clinic and Mrs. Brazier, who has been in charge of Red Cross stores.

The total of donations received for the parting gift amounted to over £72.

Sister Holbrook also received a Handbag from the members of the Committee and the helpers at the Infant Welfare Clinic. The presentation was made by Mrs. S. B. Carter, and Dr. Murray paid tribute to her work at the Clinic.

#### IN MEMORIAM—FRED CLEAVER

The news of the death of Mr. F. Cleaver with such suddenness on May 6th came as a profound shock. He had been in his usual place in Church on the previous Sunday and had acted as Sidesman. He was one of the first Sidesmen I appointed and was most faithful in the performance of his duties. He loved our Church and its Services and delighted to join wholeheartedly in the singing. His cheery friendly manner gained for him many friends and his passing is a great loss to us all. We extend our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Cleaver and to Mr. Norman Cleaver. May he rest in peace and may the memory of his faithful service move us all to greater zeal in worship and witness.

"Blessed are they that keep His testimonies and seek Him with their whole heart."

W.B.C.

#### IN MEMORIAM—JULIA BILLINGS

Mrs. Billings passed away very peacefully on Low Sunday and was buried at Bengeworth on April 20th. Many of us will miss her greatly. It was a great privilege to me to know her as a friend and, as Vicar, to minister to her. Her life of service to others, her gentle courtesy and kindness were the outcome of her devotion to her Lord. She "loved much" and was much loved in return—it could not be otherwise. How appropriate in her case are the words inscribed on a Memorial Window in the Sanctuary of our Church—"Such as are gentle them shall He learn His way."

May she rest in peace.

W.B.C.

## PARISH REGISTERS

### Burials.

May 10th. Fred Cleaver, aged 58 years.

On Sunday, April 24th, three Blue Almsbags, in memory of Julia Billings, were dedicated.

Heartiest congratulations to Mr. J. Gilbert Mills on being made a Fellow of the Birmingham School of Music "for his great services to music in the City of Birmingham."

We are sorry to lose him and Mrs. Mills from our village, but we wish them health and happiness in their new home at Broadway. We know that they will still retain their interest in Badsey Church.

## ROTA OF SIDESMEN ON DUTY

**Sunday June 5th.** 8 a.m. Mr. G. H. Stewart; 11 a.m. Messrs. D. Peet and G. A. O. Jones; 6.45 p.m. Messrs. J. T. Batchelor, N. Cleaver and M. Brady.

**Sunday June 12th.** 8 a.m. Mr. A. L. Byrd; 11 a.m. Messrs. T. W. Hardiman and J. M. Chapman; 6.45 p.m. Messrs. D. A. Jelfs, M. J. Barnard and A. W. Smith.

**Sunday June 19th.** 8 a.m. Mr. M. Brady; 6.45 p.m. Messrs. R. Hartwell, R. Knight and T. C. Sparrow.

**Sunday June 26th.** 8 a.m. Mr. J. Major; 11 a.m. Mr. P. H. Sparrow and Churchwarden; 6.45 p.m. Messrs. C. Stewart, A. W. Sparrow and R. J. Taylor.

**Sunday July 3rd.** As Sunday June 5th.

## COLLECTIONS FOR CHURCH EXPENSES

April 24th, £7 15s. 3d.; May 1st, £7 0s. 2d.; May 8th, £8 1s. 2d. **Total £22 16s. 7d.**

### Other Receipts

S.P.C.K. (May 15th, Evening) £6 0s. 0d.; **Freewill Offering Envelopes**—Church Expenses £1 8s. 11d., Church Overseas 9s. 1d. **Total £1 18s. 0d.** (No. 6, 15s.; Nos. 7 and 12, 8s.; No. 8, 4s.; No. 10, 3s.; No. 11, 4s.; No. 16, 4s.)

## WAR MEMORIAL

The following are kindly responsible for the Flowers:—June 5th, Mrs. Chapman; 12th, Mrs. Edwards; 19th, Mrs. W. H. Reed; 26th, Mrs. Betteridge; July 3rd, Mrs. Brazier; 10th, Mrs. Pethard.

## WICKHAMFORD NOTES

### Church Services

**Sundays June 5th (Trinity Sunday), 12th, 19th, 26th—Services as usual.**

**Sunday, July 3rd. No 9 a.m. Celebration; 5.30 p.m., Evensong.**

**Sunday, July 10th. 5.30 p.m. Evensong.**

**Mothers' Union.** Nearly seventy Members of Badsey, Bretforton and Wickhamford Branches attended the Joint Service on April 20th. The Rural Dean preached a most impressive Sermon. Our visitors were loud in their praises of the appearance of the Church with its Easter decorations. Wickhamford Members are to be congratulated on the excellent Tea they provided. It was a very happy occasion, favoured with beautiful Spring weather. Next year's Joint Service will be at Badsey.

The attention of Members is drawn to the notice in the Badsey Notes concerning the Excursion to London on Thursday, July 14th.

## PARISH REGISTERS

### Baptisms

April 24th. Trevor Southern.

May 8th. Peter Geoffrey Hancock.

### Burials

May 7th. Sarah Anne Brotherton, aged 72 years.

**Collections for Church Expenses** (April 24th to May 15th incl.) **£10 2s. 1d.**

We extend our sympathy to the relatives of the late Mrs. Brotherton, who died in Evesham Hospital on May 4th.

We were indeed glad to welcome back to Church on Sunday, May 15th, Mr. Arkell, after his most serious motoring accident. We all wish him a speedy and complete recovery.

We are sorry to say good-bye to Mr. and Mrs. Batty, Mrs. Sandys-Lumsdaine and the members of their families. We shall always be grateful for the help they gave us in various ways. Outstanding in this direction was the Christmas Fayre at the Manor in 1951 which realised over £260 for the Roof Repair Fund.

Mrs. Batty is at present in Evesham Hospital, but we are glad to report that she is progressing very favourably.

## REPORTS OF VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

**Badsey W.I.** In the unavoidable absence of Mrs. S. B. Carter, Mrs. A. Reed presided over the May Meeting. She introduced Mrs. R. T. Edwards who gave a truly fascinating talk and demonstration on "Flower Arrangement." She was heartily thanked by our Mrs. Edwards. This very interesting item was followed by a most enjoyable recital of songs by the Members of the W.I. Choir under the direction of Mrs. Chapman, with Mrs. G. W. Marshall as accompanist. Amid much applause, Mrs. Taylor expressed our grateful thanks. Mrs. Robinson then spoke on the six Resolutions to be discussed at the Annual Conference in the Albert Hall in June. After these resolutions had been discussed and voted on, our delegate (Mrs. Harvey) thanked Mrs. Robinson for her lucid explanations of rather difficult subjects. Refreshments were then served and another very successful Meeting closed with the singing of the National Anthem. **DAPHNE BELL.**

**Wickhamford W.I.** At the May meeting, with Mrs. E. Cooke in the chair, the Rev. F. C. Champion gave a very interesting talk on "Herbs and their Uses." A vote of thanks was proposed by Mrs. G. Hancock. Mrs. Mayne discussed the resolutions to be voted on at the Annual Conference in London. Mrs. R. Thomas gave her Sick Visitor's report and Mrs. G. Hancock was elected for the ensuing month. The Competition for a miniature garden on a plate, judged by Mrs. Harvey, was won by Mrs. G. Hancock. The Monthly Parcel was won by Mrs. F. Green. The evening concluded with the Choir singing a group of Songs, conducted by Mrs. T. H. Collett and accompanied by Mr. Peet. Tea hostesses were Mesdames T. Shannon-Garvey, W. Hampton, R. Thomas, N. Haines, T. H. Collett and Miss V. Halford.

**D. DAFFURN.**