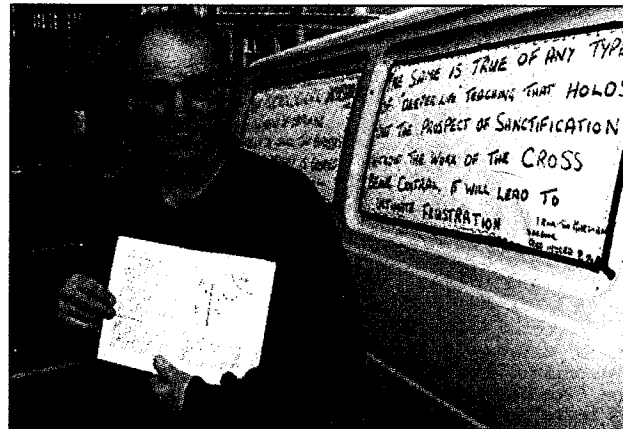


Friday, April 23, 1993



Scientologists celebrate the opening of the new Hubbard Dianetics bookshop in East Grinstead

Photo number 68380/29



Graham Threlfell had his own personal message for both sides in the dispute

Photo number 68380/32



Protestors held a vigil outside the new bookshop and distributed leaflets in which they denounce Scientology

Photo number 68380/26

## Protest marks opening of town's new Scientology bookshop

LOCAL CHURCH leaders have spoken out against the opening of a Dianetics bookshop in East Grinstead. The bookshop opened in London Road, on Saturday afternoon, where Videographic video rental used to be.

Rev Roger Brown, vicar at St Swithun's, told the Courier: "People should be aware of the damage caused to families and communities by Scientology. The bookshop is no more than a public front for the Church of Scientology."

Vicar of Felbridge's St John's church, Rev Stephen Bowen said: "I am concerned that it will become more than a bookshop, and that it will be used as a centre for the so-called personality testing. I believe Scientology has a harmful effect on the community."

And Sackville School Headteacher Clive Brooks also spoke out.

"I am concerned that young people may be asked to do these personality tests," he said. "I am opposed to the methods the church uses."

The opening of the bookshop was also met with protest from a newly-formed group of anti-cult campaigners.

Escape, a self-styled support group for people who have left or who wish to leave the Saint Hill based cult, has recently moved to East Grinstead.

Escape is run by Bonnie Woods, an ex-Scientologist who has just moved to East Grinstead. "If you want to be near the heat, move into the kitchen," Mrs Woods said when explaining why she moved to East Grinstead.

Mrs Woods and her husband Richard were among a group of Christians forming the Christian Vigil Against Scientology handing out leaflets at the opening of the new bookshop on Saturday.

The leaflets, published by Mrs Woods, make a number of claims concerning L.Ron Hubbard the founder of the Church of Scientology.

But Scientology officials have angrily hit back at the criticism of the new bookshop.

Spokeswoman Barbara Bradley said critics should be more concerned with the town's drug and crime problems.

"People should be protesting and fighting drugs and crime not innocent religious groups. Rev Brown, Rev Bowen and Mr Brooks are quite welcome to come down to the bookshop and talk to

staff there. We are always open and happy to hear people's views."

But Ms Bradley was scathing in her criticism of Escape and the group's claims.

"These people are waging a Nazi-style hate campaign — their comments about Mr Hubbard are laughable.

"If these people are opposed to what we are doing then they must be for drugs and crime.

"They call themselves Christians but they seek to destroy religion at a time when the world needs more of it. Why don't they do what the bible says and love thy neighbour?"

● *Businessman Tom Shuster talks about what Scientology means to him — see page 13*

● *See also letters on page 8*