

Now other groups back off cult's fete

CONTROVERSY this week continued to cloud tomorrow's Saint Hill summer fete.

Other groups have now denied links with the Church of Scientology event after Queen Victoria Hospital last week refused to accept cult money from the proceeds.

Advertisements and flyers pushed through East Grinstead letter boxes say the fete, with John Travolta topping the bill, will be

opened by Radio Mercury.

But the station's programme director, Martin Campbell, denied it would attend the event at the organisation's headquarters.

He stressed: "Radio Mercury has no involvement whatsoever with the Church of Scientology or the fete."

Mr Campbell said Radio Mercury was not contacted by Scientologists but had spoken with fete organiser Liz Dalrymple, who acknowledged it was wrong to use the company's name.

He said the station was billed as appearing after a former Radio Mercury presenter, Chris Oxlade,

agreed to attend the fete.

Mr Campbell added: "The agreement was between him and the Church of Scientology. It's nothing to do with us at all."

The Courier last week disclosed that the Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead was "appalled" by advertisements saying money raised would be in aid of its burns unit.

A spokesman for Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, said to be receiving donations, denied links.

He said: "We did receive a gift from the Church of Scientology last year. But we have reviewed the situation and decided it's not in

our best interests to be associated with them. We told them we will decline to accept anything this year."

St John Ambulance officer Roger Leonard, of Felbridge and East Grinstead division, said the volunteer organisation would welcome donations.

"We've no reason to doubt their generosity," he said. "I know they have had a pretty rough ride but maybe that's to do with, ig-

norance and intolerance."

Fete organiser Liz Dalrymple said: "QVH and Great Ormond Street were happy last year with their involvement and with the funds they received.

"This year all groups were told we would like to donate to them. There seemed to be no problem so for them to pull out at the last minute is uncharitable, not to say unkind."

● See also page 8.

Sad loss of cash for Queen Vic

I WAS very saddened by the decision of Mr Jeffrey Park, chairman of the Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Trust, to turn down our offer of fundraising (report and letter, June 17)

As the hospital has been glad to accept our donations in the past, it came as a shock that Mr Park had changed the policy, denying not only Scientologists, but all those who attend our fete, the opportunity to support the hospital.

I have been reassured that the medical staff at the hospital do have a policy of non-discrimination and give their highest standards of health care and nursing to all patients regardless of creed, race or religion. It is a great pity that the management staff do not seem to follow a similar non-discriminatory policy.

Scientologists were among those who supported the Queen Victoria in its recent administrative crises.

We were glad to do so as we appreciate the work done for us by the hospital medical staff.

It is sad, when human rights and tolerance are becoming the norm, that my contribution to my local hospital is restricted by a narrow-minded and poor-spirited decision.

(Mrs) E. DALRYMPLE
Saint Hill Manor
East Grinstead

□ WHAT irresponsible behaviour by chairman Jeffrey Park. A communication problem exists at the Queen Vic, if some of the management knew last year and this year, but others who should have, did not.

Surely most people will regard this fiasco as discourteous, irresponsible and a betrayal of trust to QVH management and the local community?

J.L. HODGSON

Cantelupe Road
East Grinstead

□ DURING the past seven years I have been closely associated with many Scientologists and their families, through my work as a peripatetic teacher, and I have only found them to be friendly, kind, sympathetic, honest and hard working — quite normal in fact.

I am extremely disappointed that the QVH should have been swayed into rejecting much needed fund-raising money from the Saint Hill fete. Surely the health service can't afford to be this fussy?

NAME and ADDRESS
SUPPLIED

Forest Row

□ I HAVE always been an admirer of the Queen Victoria Hospital and in particular its work in burns treatment in the past.

It is extraordinary that I will not be able to contribute to its welfare because of Mr Park's comments. He seems more interested in the politics and PR of the affair, than the rights and wrongs.

M. CHAMPNESS

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