

pp ii + 1-45 of *THE PARISH OF S. JOHN BAPTIST BRIDGWATER*  
with some notes on *THE ANCIENT HOSPITAL*

by

H. EARDLEY FIELD and T. BRUCE DILKS

1946

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**EDITORIAL NOTE**

T Bruce Dilks's account of St Johns Hospital occupied the remainder of the volume digitised here. It can be read here:

<http://www.bridgwaterheritage.org.uk/friam/Dilks/bibliography/John.pdf>

Digitised and edited by Tony & Jane Woolrich  
22/11/2019



**FOREWORD**

IF the idea of writing the history of this parish was a happy one, still happier was the fortune to find one who had not only the leisure but the skill to piece together what he could find of general interest.

The Rev. H. Eardley Field has proved himself in many ways a good friend to St. John's, and we are proud and happy to know that by this labour of love his name will be incorporated in a permanent memorial to our Church and parish. We thank Mr. Field most cordially for the pains he has taken to investigate every source of information, and we hope that his health and strength will allow him to carry through the work he has so kindly and so ably begun.

It is proposed to publish the story of St. John's in monthly instalments in the Parish Magazine and, when completed, to bind up a limited number of copies together with an account of St. John's Hospital of bygone days which Mr. T. B. Dilks hopes to extract from a larger book he is at present engaged upon.

If our readers can throw any fresh light on the story as it unravels itself through the months, they will not only contribute to the truth of the record, they will also render a service to the writer who deserves all the help we can give him.

The whole should prove interesting reading to those connected with this parish, and while reminding us of God's blessing on the labours of former generations should give us who enter into their labours courage to go forward in the same faith by which they lived and in which they died.

P. M. TAYLOR.

St. John's Vicarage, January, 1944.

**PREFACE**

WHERE any Centenary occurs, those who keep it naturally look at the beginning of that which they commemorate ; so as we observe the hundredth anniversary of St. John's Church, we should not forget that its story goes back further than that of the present parish. It has a connection with the history of the old Hospital of St. John, which stood near its site, and whence it derives its dedication. It is hoped to include in these notes a sketch of this earlier foundation, kindly promised by Mr. T. B. Dilks, B.A., F.R.Hist.S, whose intimate knowledge of all that relates to the Bridgwater of the past and its records is unrivalled.

It is curious that while we know a good deal about many of our ancient churches, the history of some of the later date has been unrecorded owing perhaps to the hurry of modern life; so with St. John's. The late Prebendary Bazell began to compile, an account, but found, even in his time, much had been forgotten. The present writer has however consulted all available sources, so that some account as complete as possible may remain for those who follow.

It would be of real service if any who read these notes could correct or supplement them. Such corrections would be under " Corrigenda " at the end.

As ordinary lives have their sunlight and shadow so also is it with churches. St. John's, as we shall see, has had its vicissitudes, but these were met by the loyal and steadfast faith of its people. These, it may well be said,

" Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight,  
better,  
Sleep to wake."

and have handed down the tradition of a great past, which their successors, we are sure, will maintain. On looking back, we may say in all humility and thankfulness that those who ministered both at St. John's and All Saints', contributed not only to spiritual development, — this they certainly did but also to the material progress of the Parish and Borough, having, no doubt different methods but in all was " the working of the one and self same Spirit " and striving for the advancement of His Glory and the good of His Church....

H.E.F.

January, 1944.

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## THE PARISH OF

## S. JOHN BAPTIST BRIDGWATER

WE may fairly claim that the first two Churches built under the influence of the "Oxford Movement" were those of St. Mary Littlemore, Oxford, built by John Henry Newman, and our own Church of St. John, built by the Rev. John Moore Capes; nor does their likeness end here. Both were offerings by men filled with faith, but whose hopes faltered in times of stress: men of self-sacrificing energy but unable to "tarry the Lord's leisure," dowered with great gifts, but lacking in steadfastness. It is not ours to criticise them, but rather to render thanks for their gifts to the Church they at last left. It may not be out of place here to give an outline of the life of the founder and first priest in charge of St. John's. We first find J. M. Capes mentioned as a M.A. of Balliol College, Oxford, strongly under the influence of Newman. He was assistant Priest of Shepton Moyne, Gloucestershire, and apparently held office as Proctor in Doctors' Commons, with ample private means. We shall see in the following pages how he was attracted by the spiritual needs of the Eastover District, and became founder and first priest in charge of St. John's. Of his secession to the Roman Church we have the following mention in a letter of J. H. Newman, dated December, 1845.\*

"Frederick Capes was very promising ... his wife is to be received nearly directly. His brother (J. M. Capes) a Proctor in Doctors' Commons, has just been received and given up £1,200 a year or thereabouts!"

\*W. Ward, *Life of Cardinal Newman*, Vol 1. p. 109.;

About 1850, he with his brother Frederick, established a publication entitled *The Rambler* of which Frederick was the editor. In this three of Newman's poems appeared. This paper became the organ of the Liberal Catholic party of Lord Acton coming under ecclesiastical censure. It ceased in 1862, or rather was succeeded by the *Home and Foreign Review*, under the editorship of Lord Acton. This also ceased in April of the same year, for the same reason. Later Mr. Capes returned to the English Church and wrote a book entitled *To Rome and back*. He occupied himself by contributing to various periodicals, but living a rather secluded life owing to failing

sight. He again became a Roman Catholic. This second change has been questioned but the following letter (still preserved) is sufficient evidence;

13 Norland Street, Kensington,  
London.

8 February, 1889.

Dear Father Scale,

"It is about three years ago since Mr. Capes, after an interview with Cardinal Manning, put himself in the hands of the Dominicans of Haverstock Hill, and was reconciled to the Church. When near his end, he expressed a wish to see Father Gordon of the Oratory, and his daughter the Dominicaness, who was allowed to come from Stone, wrote accordingly. Next morning he seemed failing, and again asked for Father Gordon. They then telegraphed. Father Gordon arrived while he was still perfectly sensible, and everything was done most happily. Miss Capes will be glad indeed, and I shall make a point of telling her."

Most Truly Yours,

S. N. STOKES."

Mr. Capes died at Grove House, Hampstead, London in January, 1889. Here, however, we are concerned with his building of St. John's. It was in the spring of 1840 he began to search for a district in which to build a Church, where one was needed. The Rev. J. H. Pender of Wells, suggested Eastover, then with a population of some 3,000, and with no Church nearer than St. Mary's. He then offered to build one here, "at his own cost," if a sufficient endowment for the Maintenance of its Vicar could be provided by subscriptions."

A Meeting to consider this offer was convened by the Mayor (Robert Bagehot, Esq.) on November 23rd, 1840, at the old Assize Court (where the Town Hall now stands). The Bishop (Dr. Law) was present, together with a large number of the principal townsmen, and those of the County. The Mayor in a short speech, introduced Mr. Capes, who outlined the proposed scheme, saying that for some time he had been looking for a district, where a Church was needed, and Eastover had been suggested. He desired that the Church, if built, should be free from "pew rents" and that it should stand near the site of the Ancient Hospital of St. John, and be dedicated in the name of this Saint. Great

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interest was aroused, and it was proposed by Sir Peregrine Acland, and seconded by Mr. Ruscombe Poole, " That this Meeting returns its grateful thanks to the Rev. J. M. Capes, for his munificent and disinterested offer to build a new Church in Eastover, provided that an adequate endowment can be raised by subscriptions for the minister, without the aid of pew rents, and pledges itself to use its best exertions to comply with the conditions annexed to the offer."

Among the speakers were the Rev. H. Parsons, Mr. Axford, and Mr. Sealy, the latter saying, " a part of a field belonging to me, having been selected for the site of the Church, it has been a gratifying thing to me to have the opportunity of giving it for that purpose, being so deeply influenced by the advantage of the Clergyman residing near the Church. I hope that part of the fund to be raised for the endowment will be employed in building a Parsonage house, and if such be the case, I beg to give a further part of the field for that purpose. I am glad to have the power to consecrate my land to so glorious a work."

The land so offered by Mr. Sealy was not taken. No record exists of the reason; but in its stead he gave £100 to the building fund.

The present site was purchased from the trustees of the Blake Charity.

The architect of the church was Mr. John Brown (1805—1876), the County Surveyor of Norfolk, and Surveyor of Norwich Cathedral. He was probably recommended by Mrs. Capes, who was related to Sir Digby Wyatt, a well known architect. The building, unchanged as to its structure, although, as we shall see, much altered internally, consists of a nave and chancel, with South porch, Western tower, and vestry. Its internal dimensions are :—nave, 84 ft. in length, by 32 ft. in width. The chancel is 32 ft. 6 in. in length, by 17 ft. 6 in. in breadth. The internal height is about 56 ft. the nave with six bays, each with a double lancet window ; the chancel has three bays, each with a lancet window, the East window has a triple lancet, the centre light of which is over 21 ft. in height. All these windows are said to be copied from those in Salisbury Cathedral. The roof is open work, with hammer beams, the outward thrust being taken by the strength of the external buttresses. The beams are carved

with angel figures, bearing alternately a cross or crown. The vestry is modelled from the Abbot's Kitchen at Glastonbury. In the original design, a spire, a small copy of that at Salisbury, was planned, but this was omitted, because some settlement of the tower warned the architect against an additional stress. The pinnacles, the gift of the Rev. H. N. C. Ruddock in 1887, greatly improved the elevation. The pulpit, font, reredos and the sedilia on the South of the chancel are of Painswick stone. The pulpit originally was on the North side, the entrance by an opening now filled by the organ screen ; while the old " bracket" once its base, now forms the support of the credence table.

The vicarage was built at the same time as the church, and the schools a little later. The land for the latter, (2 roods and 24 perches) was purchased by Mr. Capes from the trustees of the " Blake Charity " for £135 ; and by a deed dated August 15th, 1842, " set apart for the building of a school," the same " shall be under the entire management of the said J. M. Capes, until the church, now building in Eastover ... shall be consecrated, and a minister shall be duly appointed." At the same time it was arranged that the Vicars of St. John's Bridgwater, St. Mary's Bridgwater, and North Petherton should be trustees of the schools to be built thereon. The school buildings were the joint gift of the Rev. J. M. Capes and the Poole family " In memory of their grandfather." This apparently was after Mr. Capes' secession from the English Church, in fulfilment of a previous promise.

From the first the windows of the church were filled with stained glass. There is a pathetic touch concerning these. They were largely the work of Mr. Capes himself, but although he had the help and advice of Mr. Williment of Bristol, an authority on stained glass, they had many defects. The glass used was too thin, the leading not strong enough, the iron bars to which they were fastened too few in number; while the firing which was done in the oven at Mr. Capes' house was inadequate. The result, as we shall see later, was that the colouring peeled off and some of the windows were blown in by gales ; so that all had to be replaced ; while eye-strain in the painting, and bending over their firing originated the

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blindness of Mr. Capes in later years. No details of the nave windows remain, but we know that the East window contained medallions with scenes from the life of Our Lord, viz. The Annunciation, The Nativity, The Last Supper, Gethsemane, The Crucifixion, The Resurrection, and Our Lord in Glory. Mr. Capes had also collected some old Flemish glass, which he placed in a window near the font. The original organ, built by Mr. Bates of Ludgate Hill, London, was given by Mr. Capes, and placed beneath the tower, where was also the choir; this organ was within an open stone screen, avoiding the usual pipe and woodwork case. This was removed by Mr. Capes when he left the English Church, and placed by him in the Roman Catholic chapel in Gordon Terrace, Bridgwater, to the building of which both he and Cardinal Wiseman contributed. At St. John's its place was taken by a smaller one, subscribed for by friends, the principal donors being Miss Axford and Sir Peregrine Acland. This organ was in use until 1886, when it was removed to the Mission Church of All Saints. The seats are of oak, with carved Poppy heads. There are two sets of altar plate, the earlier bearing the date letter of 1842, and also a chalice, the marks on which are doubtful. The second, presented anonymously in 1892, "In Memoriam" is jewelled, and consists of a chalice, paten and flagons.

Mr. Capes was priest-in-charge of the new district, as the church, although built, was not yet consecrated. The first services were held in it on Wednesday, April 9th, 1845, Mr Capes preaching in the morning, and the Rev. E. W. Estcomb, Rector of Long Newnton, Wiltshire, in the evening. Only two months later came the shock, of Mr. Capes' secession to the Roman Church, which he announced in a letter of real pathos, from which the following is quoted:—"I cannot be insensible to the evil opinion which you will probably entertain respecting myself and my conduct, in the step I am now taking. It is impossible indeed that some should not think ill of me. All I ask is that you would judge as charitably as possible, and believe that if it were in my power, I would still labour, to the utmost for your spiritual and temporal welfare." The whole was written under an evident sense both of duty and self-sacrifice in thus leaving a task in which he had devoted much labour, and expended

about £7,000. Such disinterestedness must be respected, however much we may think he acted mistakenly.

The result of his secession was that services were suspended for a time, and some of his congregation followed him to the Roman Church,

It was ultimately arranged that Mr. Capes should be paid £1,485, in full discharge of all his claims to the church and churchyard, this sum including £290 for the land around the church, and £1000, for the building itself.

Mr. Capes had spent £500 on the erection of the parsonage house and also provided the purchase money (£390) for the site of the church and churchyard, without reckoning the cost of building the church, which was between five and six thousand pounds.

Then came the task of again collecting to meet this unexpected liability, and it was resolved that if a donor could be found to provide £1000, the first presentation to the new benefice should be assigned to him. The Rev. J. C. Collins, then living in Wembdon, paid this sum, and was nominated as Vicar designate of St. John's; the Bishop was then asked to consecrate the church, and also to assign to it an ecclesiastical parish. Then arose a new difficulty. Before either could be done, it was necessary that the church should be "inspected and approved" by the Church Building Commission—the precursor of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The report of their architect was probably influenced by the fear of a settlement of the tower, which had already caused the abandonment of the plan of erecting a spire, perhaps also because the ground was alluvial marl. At any rate, he required in his report that a sum of £300 must be raised and invested with the Incorporated Church Building Society, the interest on which should be available for future repairs. Again there was an appeal for further subscriptions, until these preliminaries were settled. At last, on August 17th, 1846, it was duly consecrated by the Bishop of the Diocese (Dr. Bagot); and the Rev. J. C. Collins instituted as first Vicar.

Of the consecration, the *Ecclesiastical Gazette* of September 1846, gives the following account:—

"The Worshipful the Mayor of Bridgwater (J. Sealy, Esq.) and the

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Corporation in their robes, accompanied by John Roy Allen, Esq. Recorder of the Borough, and also many of the neighbouring clergy and gentry, attended on the occasion, with the principal inhabitants of the town. The Morning Service was read by the Rev. J. C. Collins, the Incumbent, and the sermon preached by the Rev. J. H. Pender, Principal of Wells Theological College. The collection amounted to £59. This was followed by the consecration of the churchyard."

Naturally, after so many difficulties, the task of the first Vicar was that of consolidating the new parish, and apart from a steady growth in the congregation, not much is recorded of the fabric itself, although improvements were by no means neglected. St. John's was built somewhat on the plan of a college chapel and like our ancient churches, without due consideration of heating or lighting. In 1847, complaints were made that "owing to the construction of the church, the congregation suffered from cold during the winter months." The vestry also decided "it was to be considered what was the best means of lighting?" One wonders how it had been lighted at this time? To meet these requirements, it was later resolved "that the cost of the same should be defrayed out of the church rate." Many of the present generation have perhaps never heard of such a rate, so a short note may be useful.

At the time when St. John's was built, "Church Rates" were still a legal charge on all properties in every parish. In Eastover, for example, they varied from 4d. in the pound in 1846 to 1½d. in 1854, payable, it will be seen, according to the needs of the church to meet current expenses. At a vestry meeting at St. John's in 1855, it was resolved that "a voluntary subscription collected by the churchwardens, aided by a committee, should be substituted instead of the (unpopular) church rate." This, no doubt, was to carry out the founder's wish, that St. John's should be in every respect, a "people's" church, and was one of the first parishes to discontinue a church rate. Not until 1868 was an Act passed by which such rate was no longer demandable.

In 1848 we find from a minute in the churchwarden's book, "that the fabric of St.

John's Church has recently, most providentially, been preserved from demolition by fire... it is desirable that the churchwardens insure the church and its furniture for the sum of £1000... also thanks be rendered to all who exerted themselves in extinguishing the late fire at St. John's Church, especially to the West of England Insurance Office, and their servants, for their prompt and ready services, rendered gratuitously."

This insurance was effected with the above office, in recognition of their help. The late Prebendary Bazell endeavoured to obtain some details of this fire, but without success. In 1848, a new organ was placed by subscription to supply the place of one removed by Mr. Capes. The largest donors were the executors of the Will of the late Miss Axford, and Sir Peregrine Acland. Both organ and choir were still situated beneath the tower; in the same year it was proposed "that a gateway be opened, the gate to be of cast iron, at the Western end of the churchyard, and that the path therefrom, as well as that to the South porch, be formed with asphaltum." This apparently was never carried out.

In 1849 Bridgwater was visited by an outbreak of cholera, causing more than 200 deaths; of this number, 88 occurred in Eastover. The latter victims were buried in an isolated part of the churchyard, where is a stone with this inscription "In memory of the decease of 88 persons from cholera 1849. From plague, pestilence, and sudden death Good Lord deliver us." In speaking of the churchyard, mention should certainly be made of the grave of two men who in their day brought honour to their town, but who now seem almost forgotten. On the side opposite to "Blake Place" is a coped stone to the memory of the Bowen family, and William Baker. The latter was born in Eastover in 1787, and became a journeyman currier. From his early years he was intent on self-education; in this he was encouraged by Mr. T. Poole of Nether Stowey who was also the friend and patron of Coleridge, Southey and Wordsworth. Baker continued his studies during his work as a journeyman in London, Nottingham, Hull, Newcastle and Scotland. Returning to Bridgwater in 1809, he commenced business in Fore Street,

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removing later to St. Mary Street. All his scanty leisure was devoted to Natural History, in which he became so recognised an authority as to correspond with Professor Buckland, Lyon Playfair, Dean Conybeare, and Sir Humphrey Davy. For the latter he solved a problem in the life history of the common eel, which had been a mystery since the time of Aristotle. He also devised a new method for preparing anatomical specimens of small animals, which was at once adopted by St. George's Hospital, and for which he received the special thanks of the Governors. In 1842, he was elected a Member of the Royal Geological Society, in recognition of his geological discoveries. These were great achievements for a self-taught student, engaged in business, and with but little leisure Baker died in 1853, and was buried in the family grave of John Bowen, his life-long friend, who also wrote and published:—*Memoir of William Baker, F.G.S. by John Bowen, 1854.*

Bowen's career was hardly less remarkable. He, too, was of humble origin, and had no early education. He devoted himself to the study of engineering with such success, that he was employed by the Trinity House to make arrangements for establishing a light-house on the Farne Islands. There he almost starved, because through the violence of the winter storm, no supplies could be landed. Next, we hear of him wrecked in the Bay of Biscay, on a Man of war, but rescued and sent to Plymouth Naval Hospital, and discharged as "utterly disabled." However he recovered and again entering the service of the Trinity House, was sent to India to erect Light-houses on the coast. Having completed this task he retired with a competence to settle in Bridgwater, but later lost most of his fortune through the failure of an Indian Bank. Quite undaunted, he then established a wine and Spirit business in the town with much success. His former acquaintance with Baker grew into a close friendship, and fittingly they are buried in the same grave in St. John's churchyard.

In speaking of past worthies the name of Sir George Williams, the founder of the Y.M.C.A., should be mentioned. His life is one of the romances of trade. Born near Dulverton, the son of a small farmer, the youngest of a family of eight sons, he was apprenticed at the age of 15 to Mr. Holmes, a draper, at the top of Cornhill, Bridgwater ;

one of his fellow apprentices being the late Mr. Hurman. While there, he gained the sense of religious duty and responsibility which influenced his whole life. When his apprenticeship was finished, he became for a time assistant to his brother Frederick, then in business at North Petherton, and, by his influence, obtained a similar position with Messrs. Hitchcock and Rogers of Ludgate Hill, London. Here he gathered a band of 12 like minded with himself, and from this number, meeting in Williams' room, originated the Y.M.C.A. which now has its branches throughout the world. At the same time his business energies were so marked that he rose to the position of buyer for the firm, and in 1853 married Miss Hitchcock, the principal's daughter. He worked ceaselessly for the moral and material welfare of the shop workers, and to lessen their hours of work, and specially to promote the Y.M.C.A; which had grown so rapidly that in 1881 Exeter Hall, Strand, London, was purchased as its headquarters. In 1887 Mr. Williams came to Bridgwater to open the Eastover Branch ; of this the late Prebendary Bazell was for a time president. In recognition of Mr. Williams' services in philanthropic work of all kinds he received the honour of knighthood, and in 1894 he was admitted to the freedom of the City of London ; the certificate being presented in a casket of old oak from the Guildhall, decorated with gold and enamels. At his death his remains received the honour of interment in the Crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, on May 14th, 1905.

Until 1855, the churchyard was enclosed by a dwarf wall and wooden palings, with a poor approach to the church, but in this year we find the retiring churchwardens thanked " for their efforts in erecting a pair of splendid gates, in laying down a pavement to the entrance of the church, and in building and repairing the boundary wall."

1867 was saddened by the death of the first Vicar, the Rev. J. C. Collins, who, by wise guidance and devotion to duty, laid "well and truly " a foundation on which his successors could build. He was succeeded by his son, the Rev. J. W. Collins, by whom his father's work was developed and extended. One of his first acts was to increase the insurance on the church to £3000—small compared with modern values. Next, the parish was asked to raise

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£50 annually to secure grants from the "Curates' Aid Society," and the "Dio-cesan Church Fund" to obtain the help "of a second curate for this populous parish." This was done, and a second helper came in the following year

The Schools presented the next problem. Apparently these had become inefficient, and the government grant imperilled. In 1869 they were reorganised and restaffed, with the result that under a succession of excellent teachers they rose to a premier position, not only in the town, but in the County.

A further improvement of the churchyard boundary (begun in 1855) by the erection of iron railings, was now completed at a cost of £150. About the same time the present tiling was laid in the nave, replacing the original stone paving.

In 1875, it was thought desirable to obtain an additional burial-ground for the parish by purchasing from the Trustees of the late John Bowen, a piece of land of about 4 acres, on the Bristol Road. This was done, and in the following year, St. John's Burial Board came into being. This body was empowered to spend "a sum not exceeding £200 in iron railings and ornamental gates." And, a little later, "to raise a sum by loan, not exceeding £2000, to build a cottage for the person in charge, to lay out and level the ground, to build a chapel or chapels, and incidental charges, such charge to be met by the rates." This amount was found inadequate, and the sum borrowed was to be £3000, and a further one eighth of an acre purchased, at the rate of £200 per acre. The Board was to be elected by the Vestry, and to meet annually. This arrangement continued until December 13th, 1894, when, under Section 53 of the Local Government Act, its powers were transferred to a joint committee to be appointed by the Urban District of Bridgwater. This latter body purchased additional land, to the amount of £1700. from the trustees of the late Frederick Clothier.

A visit of the Rev. V. S. S. Coles, began the list of distinguished men who have preached at St. John's. The Rev. J. W. Collins resigned in 1876, going to Clare, Suffolk. He was succeeded by the Rev. F. S. P. Seale, to whom also both church and

parish owe much. It was he, who in January 1877, issued the first number of the Parish Magazine, which still continues, and in the same year, the "Three Hours" Service on Good Friday was first held.

On August 9th was the consecration of the new Cemetery by the Bishop of the Diocese (Lord A. C. Hervey). He was met at the vicarage by the Vicar, a large number of clergy, and the choir; and proceeded to the church with the processional hymn "Thro' the night of doubt and sorrow." The service consisted of the Litany, followed by the hymn "The saints of God." After an address by the Bishop, the procession reformed, passing to the cemetery, where the petition for consecration was presented to the Bishop, who directed it to be enrolled in the archives of the Diocese. Then, all proceeded round the portion assigned to church burials, reciting Psalms 44 and 116. At the chapel, the deed of consecration was read by the Bishop's Secretary and signed by his Lordship. A Lunch at St. John's Schools followed, at which about 70 guests were present. The chair was taken by the Vicar with the Bishop on his right, and the Mayor on his left.

Again came the old complaint of insufficient lighting in the church, and in 1878 this was reconstructed at a cost of £120.

The Guild of St. John Baptist originated during the incumbency of the Rev. J. W. Collins, its purpose being to deepen personal religion and to ensure a number of helpers, willing to promote the work of the parish. In 1879 this was extended to creating a fresh interest by means of papers, and discussion by members at the monthly meeting, and lectures. This proved a great success.

In January 1880, the "Admiral Blake" Coffee Tavern and Workman's Club, was opened in Church Street. From a small beginning it became the centre of the social life of the parish, until it was superseded by the larger, and better Church Hall in 1891.

The chief event in 1881 was the laying of the foundation stone of the Mission Church of All Saints. This was entirely due to the energy of Mr. Seale, who thought that if a Mission Centre were established at the other end of the parish, it would help to attract people to the church. We must

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remember that St. John's had then a Staff of 3 clergy, and no one could foresee that Bridgwater would extend in quite another direction, or that the parish might have a reduction in the number of clergy. He was perhaps persuaded by the architect to build on a larger scale than originally intended, with the risk of creating a rivalry, where unity was needed. However the story of All Saints must come later.

In 1883, Miss K. May of Dunster, an exhibitor at the Royal Academy, who was then staying with the Knight family in Eastover, kindly offered to fill three of the panels in the reredos with paintings. The centre one depicted the Ascension; that on the South side SS. John; Thomas, and Matthew; on the North SS. Andrew, Peter, and James. At the same time Miss Knight presented a red chalice veil and burse; to complete the set; and by "a Lady" the first processional banner used at St. John's. This bore the figure of the patron saint, clad in the traditional camel's hair garment and pilgrim's cloak, having in one hand a baptismal shell, and in the other a pilgrim's staff, surmounted by a cross. The Rev. N. H. G. Ruddock was then honorary Assistant Priest at St. John's and a noteworthy personage in many ways. He was connected with the town both as J.P. and as a lineal descendant from Admiral Blake. It was from a painting of Blake in his possession, that the features of that Admiral's statue in the Cornhill were copied. Besides giving his services, he was a generous donor to the church. It was he who in 1885, gave the processional cross, and a new altar cross, the latter replacing a marble one, given by Mr. Leng (this is now on the wall beneath the organ). The new cross being brass, is much lighter in form, and does not obscure the central figure in the reredos, as did the earlier one. Later, in 1887, the pinnacles were added to the tower, at his expense, although his official connection with St. John's had then ceased.

In 1883 the church was thoroughly cleaned for the first time since its erection, at a cost of £27 10s. 0d. During its temporary closing, the services were held in the new Mission Church of All Saints.

A great storm swept over Bridgwater on January 25th and 26th of 1884, causing much damage to St. John's both to the roof and windows. Two of these were blown in, partly as has been said previously, through

defects in construction. The Mission Church also suffered, the roof being damaged and the East window blown in.

In this year the Rev. F. S. P. Seale resigned to take up less exacting work at Pitminster. During his time the vicarage house was enlarged to its present size. Almost the last service taken by Mr. Seale was the High Celebration at the Patronal Festival with the Rev. N. H. C. Ruddock as Deacon, and the Rev. A. F. de Gex Sub-deacon. The sermon at Evensong was by the Rev. A. H. Ward, Warden of St. Raphael's, Bristol.

The next Vicar was the Rev. G. E. Peake, then Vicar of St. Margaret's, Rochester. In contrast with all his predecessors, he was not in sympathy with the type of service customary at St. John's, and at once made changes. This caused the resignation of Mr. Ruddock from his honorary curacy, and his official connection, but not his interest in the parish, for afterwards, in 1887, he completed the tower, defraying the cost of adding the pinnacles.

In the October following Mr. Peake's induction, a resolution was passed by the Vestry "that as a Christian church is composed of laity as well as clergy, it behoves the clergy and laity of the parish to combine their effort for advancing the religious and moral interests of all orders, of relieving the temporal wants, and improving the social condition of the poorer classes, and also of cultivating a spirit of Christian fellowship generally, in the parish." This body was to meet four times in each year.

In the March of 1885 at a meeting of parishioners it was decided "that the time has come for a new organ, the present instrument being not only obsolete and imperfect, but so nearly worn out, that a general breakdown might come at any time."

In furtherance of this project, a Bazaar was held in the Town Hall, on September 15th, 16th, and 17th, under the patronage of the Bishop, the Mayors of Taunton and Bridgwater, and a number of the County people. This produced £356; with this, and the aid of many subscribers, the order was placed with Messrs. Forster and Andrews, of Hull. The new organ was dedicated on August 4th, 1886, when the sermon was preached by the Rev. D. Claxton, Vicar of Merriott, and opened by Mr. G. Riseley,

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organist of Bristol Cathedral, who after the service gave an Organ Recital.

During the year there seems to have been unusual distress in the poorer class ; to relieve this, a temporary soup kitchen was opened at the vicarage, when on Wednesdays and Fridays, about 130 quarts of soup were distributed. This was restarted in the following year on three days in each week, and continued, as need arose, until 1907, when, on the initiative of the Mayor, public soup kitchens were opened at each end of the town.

In 1886, through ill-health, the Vicar was advised to go to Italy to recuperate. While there, he fortunately escaped experiencing an earthquake. In a letter dated November of that year, he says " the very house in which we commenced our stay, is in ruins, and the little town where we stayed some time, and thought to have passed the winter, only a week after we left, was so shaken that the people there are compelled to live in tents on the sea shore." His health did not improve and in the July of 1887, he felt obliged to resign from St. John's, and take the small country parish of Holford.

The Rev. C. Bazell, the Senior Curate of Twerton on Avon, was then appointed. His first act was to enquire whether the congregation desired to restore the services to the level of those under the first Vicar, or retain the plainer form adopted by Mr. Peake? A large majority desired the restoration. Naturally, a newspaper correspondence followed, but soon ceased when it was seen that he was also striving for the social needs of the town.

He began the " Industrial Christian Fellowship " to ally, on non-political lines, Friendly Societies, Trades Unions and Labour generally, with the church. Its meetings, still held, have been addressed by men like "Ted Rogers," once a workhouse lad, then a labour leader, and later ordained, and Studdert Kennedy (Woodbine Willy). Soon after his coming to Bridgwater, Mr. Bazell originated the Higher Education Movement, which developed later into the present Art and Technical Schools. He was elected Poor Law Guardian, procured the clearance of the " Rookery " and worked ceaselessly for the schools. Such were some of his social activities. But it is our task to tell the story

of St. John's, and these details will be dealt with as they occur. In this year, (1887) a new heating system for the church was found necessary, the existing one being found " neither safe or effectual." This was completed in the following year at a cost of £80. To commemorate the Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign a copper beech tree was planted in the churchyard.

On September 18th, a choral festival was held. The choirs of St. John's and All Saints' were supplemented by those from twelve neighbouring churches, some 200 in all, After a rehearsal at 8, Evensong began with the Processional " We march, we march to victory." At this the processional cross, given by Mr. Ruddock, was again in use. The sermon was by the Dean of Wells.

1889 was marked by an improvement both to the church and town. Ten old cottages in Monmouth Street, on what is now part of the vicarage grounds, had long been considered both insanitary and an " eyesore." When the church and vicarage were built, an attempt was made to remove these, but unsuccessfully ; this application was renewed later without result. In this year the owner (Mr. Alder-man Foster) seeing the advantage of a better approach to the town on the Bath and Bristol roads, kindly consented to sell this property at a price considerably less than he had given for it. £200 was paid to Mr. Foster and £100 spent on a dwarf wall and railings. The sanction of the Town Council was asked to make an unbroken frontage to the corner of Blake Place; not only did they consent, but voted a sum of £50 in recognition of the improvement effected; and donations came in so readily, that in eight months, the whole was paid. Part of the " Rookery " site was added to the vicarage garden, and part devoted to widening Blake Place and its approach from Monmouth Street.

1890 was a year of many activities. In May, after a meeting addressed by the Rev. F. Outram Marshall, a branch of the English Church Union was formed, in which 60 members were enrolled. These rose to 130 in April 1893. It was addressed by the Rev. Outram Marshall frequently ; and in June 1898, the Rev. C. Bazell was made President of the County organ-isation. The Bridgwater branch continued to flourish, until in the *Parish Magazine* for March 1899,

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this notice appeared : —“ The . Annual Meeting of the Bridgwater Branch that had been fixed for February 27th, is unavoidably postponed. The members will be advised in due course of any further arrangements that may be made.” This was never done. Its sudden cessation was supposed to be due to the Rev. C. Bazell’s disapproval of the line taken by the E.C.U. with respect to certain Bishops.

In 1890 some residents in Church Street wrote to the Home Secretary, complaining that the churchyard was too wet for interments. An enquiry was held, and as a result an order was made “that no interment must take place in a grave which is not free from water.”

In July of this year, the long talked of plan of building a Parish Room and Church Institute, began to take shape. Part of the vicarage stable yard was chosen as the site, and Mr. A. B. Cottam, A.R.I.B.A., the architect. The first portion was completed at a cost of £550, and on July 28, 1891, formally opened by Dean Plumtre of Wells at a choral service.

On August 9th, the Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral preached in St. John’s at the Sunday Services. The Service was attended by the Mayor and Corporation; and in October, the Dean of Wells gave a course of Lectures on the first six chapters of the Gospel according to St. John. This was the beginning of a plan for Higher Religious Education, and has been continued by various courses to the present time.

In this year the Vicar’s Bible Class on Sunday afternoons, and the Churchman’s Club were started, the latter meeting at the Church hall on Tuesdays for Papers and discussion.

1892. In this year the use of linen Eucharistic vestments was introduced ; and in May was formed what may be called a “ Parochial Church Council “ to “ co-operate with the Vicar in parochial matters e.g., finance, church decoration, Sunday Schools, Home, Foreign and Parochial Missions, and collections.” Its members were to be Communicants, to meet twice a year, with the Vicar as President.

A Parochial Mission was conducted from November 12-14 by the Rev. E. H. Jones, Vicar of Stogumber. This had been prepared for during the whole year by visiting every house in the parish, and circulating mission literature. As an outcome

of this there was a special Confirmation on January 23rd, 1893, by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Bromby at which 61 candidates were presented. It was in this year that an Order in Council was made by which “burials within the churchyard of St. John’s were to be discontinued as also in the church ” with certain exceptions.

In 1895, the Bishop (Dr. Kennion) twice visited St. John’s. First, on May 12th, when he celebrated at 8 ; and preached at Matins, and in the afternoon as a “surprise visit” to the Sunday Schools, and addressed the children. On the following day he presided at a conference of the Church School Managers of the town on “ the present and future of the Schools”.

In June 1896, the organ was cleaned and renovated by its builders. The preacher at the Patronal Festival was the Rev. C. L. Marson, Vicar of Hambridge. This was the Jubilee year of the Consecration of St. John’s; the anniversary was marked by a visit of the Mayor and Corporation “ in state “ to the church, the preacher was the Rev. E. H. Jones, Vicar of Stogumber.

This year was marked by a serious strike of the brick workers. The Mayor and Mr. C. Else who were chosen as arbitrators, failed to procure agreement. The situation became so serious that rioting began ; but it is only fair to say that the Labour leaders, Mr. Ben Tillet, and Mr. Orbell, did their best to restrain the strikers from any acts of violence. Soldiers from Plymouth were drafted into the town, and quartered in the Town Hall, and the police force was greatly augmented. After the strikers had broken its windows, the Mayor felt compelled to read the Riot Act, at the same time advising all to disperse peaceably, and return to their houses. This done, the soldiers filed out with bayonets fixed, preceded by the police ; these last charged the crowd with their staves. Several were injured but none fatally, and quiet was restored without military intervention, but not until the strike had lasted fourteen weeks, and much distress occasioned.

In 1897 a Mission was held for the whole town, including Wembdon. This was inaugurated by the Bishop, by a service on the evening of Ash Wednesday at St. Mary’s at which he gave an address, followed by his blessing on the Missioners. Those appointed to St. John’s were the Rev. V. S. S. Coles of Pusey House, Oxford and

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the Rev. J. E. Holliday of Freshwater, Isle of Wight. This had long been prepared for by house to house visits, and the distribution of some 10,000 leaflets. The Mission was from March 4th to 17th. There were Celebrations each day from 5 to 8 a.m., Intercession services, at which were many requests. The evening services at 8, were followed by instructions, and many sought assistance and counsel. Before these evening services were processions, preceded by cross and taper bearers, the Missioners, and a number of the Male Communicants singing the Litany, and, followed by the parochial clergy, stations were made and addresses given.

To the sorrow of all, the Rev. V. S. S. Coles was summoned by telegram on the evening of the 13th to the sick bed of his mother who passed away the following day. As he was unable to take part in the concluding part of the Mission, the Rev. C. Bickersteth, the missionary at St. Mary's, kindly assisted at St. John's. Mrs. Coles was buried at Shepton Beauchamp on March 19th. A floral cross was sent from this parish.

A special thanksgiving service commemorated the Diamond Jubilee of the reign of Queen Victoria, on June 24th, and the Te Deum sung at the close of evensong.

This year saw also the first of the "Glastonbury Pilgrimage," attended by more than 100 Bishops and nearly 1000 clergy and choirs, with cross and many banners. The address, by the Bishop Designate of Bristol; was on the position of the English Church, always "Ecclesia Anglicana Anglorum Ecclesia."

1898 was notable only for its succession of preachers. On February 16, a Quiet Day for clergy was conducted by Canon Hoskyns, Canon Missioner of Truro, and on February 26th, sermons and addresses by the Rev. C. Bickersteth, while the Holy Week and Three Hours services were taken by the Rev. V. S. S. Coles.

1899. In this year the Vicar and congregation were met with the necessity of repairing or replacing the nave windows. Their original defects have been mentioned, and after 50 years they had been so damaged by a succession of gales, that almost half of them were blown in, and were boarded up. Reports were made by

experts who agreed that any attempt at restoration would be useless, and even if undertaken, the cost would almost equal that of an entire renewal, and prove a waste of money. The Diocesan architect (Mr. Osmond Buckle) was of the same opinion, and on the advice of the Archdeacon of Taunton, Mr. Dudley Forsyth of Hampstead, London, was asked to submit a design for the West window, as an experiment. His design was accepted, and the window fixed in time for the Dedication Festival. The Committee were so satisfied that he was commissioned to submit further designs for those in the nave. These also were approved, and the order placed on February 14th, at a cost of about £440. Four of these have an inscription: the Eastern window on the North *In delectissimum Memoriae M.A.B.* (the Vicar's mother) another, an anonymous gift, *In Memoriam, a Beloved Brother* a third, *In loving Memory of Henry and Elizabeth Maidment* (he had been churchwarden 9 years); the fourth is the *Children's Window* largely paid for by the Sunday Schools.

A good deal of discussion took place whether some ancient "Flemish glass" collected by Mr. Capes and placed by him in the nave window near the font, should be incorporated in the new windows. This was negatived, on the ground that it would disturb the colour scheme. It was then suggested that the glass should be kept, and, when funds permitted, placed in the porch windows. Finally (March 1st, 1901) it was agreed that "it should be on view on an evening to be fixed by the Vicar and the Hon. Secretary, with the intention of its being disposed of to the best advantage, the Vicar being asked to announce the sale at the Sunday Service." It was sold for £1 1s. 6d. It is greatly to be regretted that the glass was not retained, as suggested; but the beauty and value of ancient glass was not appreciated as it is to-day.

The Bishop was a subscriber to the replacement fund, and the Chancellor of the Diocese allowed their insertion without a faculty, subject to the approval of the Archdeacon.

Besides the reglazing, much structural work was found necessary. The drainage from the roof was damaging the masonry, the inside walls needed replastering, and

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the lightning conductor replacing. This would also entail a thorough cleaning of the Church. The cost of all this, including the windows, was estimated at £700. All was completed in the following year.

October 4th was observed in Bridgwater as "Blake's Day," but the celebration was spoiled by persistent rain, and saddened by a fatal accident to the only son of Mr. J. C. Shuffrey. The Bishop of the Diocese came to conduct the funeral and express his sympathy with the bereaved family.

The Rev. C. Bazell, a pioneer of higher education in the town, and a member of the "Art and Technical Committee" in 1891, had the satisfaction of seeing "Lonsdale House" purchased, and altered to the requirements of an "Art and Technical School" a work aided by the passing of the "Technical Institute" Act of 1889. This building was formally opened on January 10th, 1891, and rendered valuable service ever since.

In 1902 the church was closed from August 12th to September 10th for cleaning, after structural improvements begun in the previous year. St. John's Hall being licensed for all services, including the publication of Banns, and — if necessary — Marriages, during this time. The reopening service was combined with the Harvest Thanksgiving, with a sermon by the Archdeacon of Taunton. On this occasion, the usual decorations were somewhat restricted, so that the improvements effected, and the increased light from the new windows, might be clearly seen. The glass of these nave windows is of such quality and the "leading" so strong, that, to quote the artist's words — "they should last for centuries." It may be of interest to note that the weight of the lead in these windows exceeds one ton.

The consecration of the Bristol Road Cemetery in 1878 has been mentioned. When, in 1899, enlargement became necessary, a part of the new ground was assigned for consecration by the Committee, but they declined to take any action to ensure this. The Vicar and Mr. W. H. Pollard (Chairman of the Burial Committee) guaranteed payment of the necessary fees, so that there should be no charge on the burial rate. Application was then made to the Secretary of State, that he should request the Bishop to consecrate this approved ground. There was no difficulty

in satisfying the Secretary that a reasonable number of the parishioners desired this, and the Bishop readily assented. The consecration took place on February 6th, 1902. The Bishop was met at the cemetery by the Secretary of the Committee, (W. J. R. Poole), the parochial clergy, the churchwardens, the organist and choir, and the Bishop's domestic chaplain. The Chancellor of the Diocese was represented by the Vicar. Among others present were the Diocesan Registrar, the Bishop's private secretary, and a number of parishioners. After a service on the ground, the procession passed to the cemetery chapel, where the deed of consecration was read and signed. Afterwards the hymn "Jesus lives" and "On the Resurrection morning" were sung, followed by an address by the Bishop.

As the cost of the new windows and other repairs had to be met, further alterations had to be deferred; but a number of gifts were made.

In 1905 the problem of efficient lighting recurred, and the use of incandescent gas mantles was adopted, and in 1907, the churchyard was set in order, the trees lopped, and the undergrowth cleared. Notice was also given that neglected graves would be levelled.

In July, 1908, by an order of the Charity Commissioners, the "Blake" and "Gilbert" Charities were placed under one body of trustees. At the first meeting of this new Committee, the Vicar of St. John's, who had been for some years Chairman of the "Gilbert" trust, was appointed Chairman of the joint body.

1909 was a year of much activity. In January, at a meeting of church collectors, the "Free Will Offering" scheme was adopted. This, beginning with a membership of 68, has since become an integral part of church finance.

In June the Rev. C. Bickersteth of the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield, addressed a meeting in St. John's on their work in training candidates for the priesthood. One from this parish, (Mr. W. J. Dight) was so trained, and ordained to St. Saviour's Roath, Cardiff. Additions and improvements were made at St. John's Hall. The class-room was more than doubled in length, and a smaller one added, together with adequate cloak-room and lavatory accommodation, and the electric

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light installed throughout, at a cost of about £250.

In this year the Rev. E. S. Noakes became Archdeacon of Nottingham. He was formerly a pupil teacher in St. John's schools, and after a brilliant scholastic course, obtained his M.A. at Cambridge, and later, the L.L.D. of Trinity College, Dublin.

In November, a parochial Mission was conducted by some members of the Church Army.

In the May of 1911 the Vicarage was struck by lightning. Fortunately this occurred in the daytime, so that what might have been, a serious fire, was extinguished by the ready help of neighbours.

In December another parochial Mission was conducted by the Rev. W. E. Colchester, Rector of St. Maurice, Winchester and Canon Braithwaite. This followed the lines of previous missions in being well prepared for, and with processions and services outside the church, frequent Celebrations of Holy Communion, and special addresses by Canon Braithwaite at two of the brickyards, and by Mrs. Braithwaite to the workers at the collar factories.

1912. On March 10th, the Bishop of Taunton visited St. John's, preaching at Matins, and addressing the Vicar's Class in the afternoon; and in May Canon Braithwaite paid a return visit, from the 18th to the 21st.

In July a strike at the collar and blouse factories disturbed the parish for a time, but happily, the dispute was soon settled. A little incident during a Sale of Work in November, is perhaps worth recording.

A sheep, offered as a prize to the person guessing its weight, was won by Mrs. Coates, who sold it, and handed the price as the first donation towards replacing the East window, which greatly needed restoration. Her example was followed by other friends.

In this year the insurance on the church was further increased to £8000.

In 1913 the Vicar was appointed to a Prebendal Stall in Wells Cathedral, and the Diocesan "Quota" scheme was adopted.

Welsh Disestablishment was then the "

burning question," and June 11th was observed as a Day of Intercession for Divine guidance, and on the 12th, after an address by the Archdeacon of Brecon at St. Mary's, a procession with cross and banners passed through the town; this included the Bishop of Taunton, the clergy, and about 2000 people. At the Town Hall addresses were given by the Bishop, the Archdeacon of Brecon, and Mr. John Morgan, a stone mason from Haverfordwest. The Meeting closed with the Bishop's benediction.

In October, the Rev. C. Bickersteth again came to speak on the work of the Mirfield Community. A letter was read from the Dean of Wells, regretting his inability to be present, and commending its importance to the Church.

In 1914, a Finance Committee was formed, principally to arrange for the new "Quota" scheme. This was composed of six elected communicants, together with the Vicar and churchwardens. The first meeting was on March 25th.

At Easter a set of white silk vestments was presented by an anonymous donor, under the condition of its use; failing this, it was to become the personal property of the Vicar. To this was added the promise of a red set also. So far there had been a curious "use" at St. John's. On Sundays, only red or white altar frontals were in use, although on week-days, all four colours, both on the frontals and chalice veils were adopted.

The altar vessels, presented in 1892, were found to need repair, and were sent to the makers for the necessary restoration. This was done at a cost of £5 10s. 0d.

A new altar book was given by subscription in memory of the Vicar's late daughter, and bears the inscription "This book is dedicated by the worshippers in St. John Baptist Church Eastover, to the service of God, and to the memory of Valerie St. John Kempe who died October 25th, 1913." New sanctuary curtains were also fixed.

In this year came the first great War with Germany. Intercession services were at once arranged, and at every Celebration the names of those on active service from the parish (some 200) were read and specially remembered.

1915. The War somewhat altered the Children's usual "Flower" service; they

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were asked to bring eggs for the wounded soldiers, in the Hospital, instead of flowers. This met with a ready response and was continued during the next years, until the shortage prevented this being done.

The Daily Celebration was begun in September ; partly that the value of continual intercession for those on active service might be realised, but also to deepen spiritual life in the parish. This has been continued ever since.

For some years the story of Our Lord's Nativity and its lessons had been retold by Lantern Services at Christmastide. This year, for the first time, and to larger congregations, the Bethlehem Tableaux taught these with greater vividness. All the characters were represented by the teachers and scholars of the Sunday Schools. These were so appreciated, that they have been repeated each year.

Although shadowed by War, the Easter of 1916 was noteworthy. The church had again been renovated and cleaned, The East windows, which like those of the nave, had perished and were for some time boarded up, were now replaced. These were from the studio of Mr. Dudley Forsyth, and although, for reasons of economy, his original design had to be simplified, it is perhaps an advantage, as the figures, by isolation, are in bolder relief. The centre light, over 21 ft. in height, has the figure of Our Blessed Lord with hands raised in benediction ; above is a scroll bearing the words " King of Kings," and at the top, an allegorical represent-ation of the Holy Trinity ; the Father's hand pointing towards the principal figure, and beneath, the Holy Dove. The North light has the figure of St. John Baptist, the South light has St. Andrew and the unnamed disciple, and illustrates St. John, i.35f. Other gifts were a white altar frontal, presented by Miss Collins, in memory of her two sisters, who had been church-workers at St. John's for many years; Mr. and Mrs. Comley worked and painted a new banner; The figure of St. John on this, was copied from a work of Donatello, the Italian artist. Mr. Comley also cleaned and restored the painting on the reredos. An oak litany desk was also given by the Sunday School scholars. All these were dedicated on Easter Eve.

In this year the church was heated by steam radiators, and two riddel posts placed to sustain the weight of the altar

curtains as the strain had drawn the rods from the wall to which they were fastened.

Twenty-nine wounded soldiers were in Bridgwater Hospital; for these the; Vicar arranged a short service each Sunday afternoon.

The National Mission of Repentance and Hope was held in Bridgwater from October 6th to 10th. The missionaries at St. John's were the. Rev. Lowman Lang and the Rev. A. O Hayes. The Vicar of St. John's also acted as missionary in various parishes for two months.

As St. John's Hall was taken for military purposes, parochial organisation was somewhat hampered, and it seemed that the Sunday School scholars must forego their annual treat; but by the kindness of the owner of the Bijou Theatre; they had a special picture exhibition on December 28th.

Of course the War prevented material developments, but spiritual progress continued. The Rev. R. Wynter, of St. John's Taunton, gave a Lenten Course, and the " Blue Pilgrim" messengers visited the parish in August, October and November. These ladies visited from house to house, held cottage meetings, and services for children, and invited all to the Mission Services. Their work was entirely voluntary. They accepted nothing except hospitality, if proffered, and certainly their efforts had good results.

In 1918, the Choral Eucharist, became the chief Sunday Service.

The Lighting of the church was again improved by lowering the pendants both in the chancel and nave.

1919 was marked by Thanksgiving services after the armistice. By request of the Bishop, a Memorial Service was held in every church of the Diocese on Low Sunday. At St John's this took the form of a Requiem for the Fallen at the 11 o'clock Eucharist.

On May 20th there was a Thanksgiving for those of the parish, who had returned safely from the War. The preacher at St. John's was the Rev. W. R. F. Addison V.C., C.F. He had formerly been a "lumber-man" in Canada and later ordained to the Curacy of St. Edmund's, Salisbury ; and in March, after the outbreak of war, he was appointed Army Chaplain, and the second chaplain to receive the honour of V.C. After the

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service, the men adjourned to St. John's Hall, for a social evening. The use of St. John's Hall had recently been restored to the parish.

In June we had another visit from the Rev. C. Bickersteth; and on St. Bartholomew's Day a sermon was preached by the Bishop of the Falkland Islands.

In November the church was thoroughly renovated and painted; this had been necessarily postponed during the War.

In 1920, from February 13th to the 17th, a special effort was made in the town to arouse interest in the work of the church overseas. The missioner at St. John's was the Rev. I. Harrison, Vicar of Corfe. There were special services, Celebrations and instructions.

On the passing of the "Enabling Bill" a roll of Parochial Church Electors was prepared, and the first meeting held on April, 13th.

The use of envelopes for the Free Will Offering scheme was adopted this year, as was the ancient custom of the blessing and distribution of palms at the 11 o'clock Eucharist on Palm Sunday

At the Dedication Festival (August 17th) of 1921, the War Memorial was dedicated. This is an oak lectern, in the form of an angel upholding the Ever-lasting Gospel, and is local work, the carving being by a parishioner. On its base is the inscription:—"In sacred memory of the worshippers at this church who gave their lives in the Great War—1914—1918. R.I.P." At Evensong the memorial was covered with a "Union Jack." When the Psalms were ended—the last being Psalm XXIII—the churchwardens left their seats, and unveiled the lectern. The Vicar and the Rural Dean (Prebendary Dixon) facing them. The prayer of Dedication was then offered with a commendation of the souls of the Departed. The words of the Dedication were "In the faith of Jesus Christ, we bless, hallow, and dedicate this lectern to the Glory of God, for the benefit of His Holy Church, and in grateful memory of His servants who formerly worshipped in this church, and who gave their lives in the Great War. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen." The service concluded with the hymn "The supreme

sacrifice."

On June 14th, 1922, a tablet was unveiled in the Schools, to the memory of the late E. M. Lucas who was Head Master for 30 years. At the same time a book-case and collection of books was handed over. These were to form the nucleus of the Lucas School Library.

The organ was again renovated and improved by the addition of a pedal bourdon, at a cost of £212. This was completed in time for the Harvest Thanksgiving on October 5th. We cannot fail to notice that three items of expenditure constantly recur; these are the organ the heating, and the lighting. The latter two may perhaps be attributed to structural difficulties in the building, but one wonders why the organ needed a frequent outlay. Although in 1922 this had been renovated, in the May of 1924 it was found necessary "to clean and overhaul the organ," as well as "to improve the heating of the church" These improvements were effected at a cost of £40.

Among other gifts, the Patronal Festival of this year was marked by the presentation of a cope; the materials were provided by subscription, and the work executed by Miss C.M. Bazell. She—it may be mentioned—had made all the vestments then in use.

1925. In this year the Bethlehem Tableaux were presented on a much larger scale, and members of the congregation took the parts formerly rendered by the Sunday-Schools.

In February a troop of Boy Scouts was formed under Mr Sanderson, and a company of Girl Guides.

In March the definition of parish boundaries was revised. It seems that the wording of the Order in Council by which the ecclesiastical district was formed, was so vague that some houses hitherto considered to be in St. John's parish are really in Wembdon. These are "all the houses to the North of the railway bridge on the Bristol Road—with the exception of Hawker's Farm, in Chilton Trinity parish—as well as Sydenham Manor House, and Little Sydenham on the Bath Road."

In this year the electric light was installed in the church, at a cost of £200.

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'This, it may be hoped, finally solves an old problem.

Among the gifts of this year was a cupboard to enclose the electric light meter, by Mr. H. H. Jones, and a substantial box to contain the cope by Mr. W. B. Crossman.

During 1926 the Industrial Christian Fellowship made a special effort to arouse interest in its work and aims. These are to form a non-political movement in which all unite "to present Christ as the Living Lord and Master in every department of human life, and to proclaim the supreme authority of the Christian Law of Love." Among its members are both employers and Labour leaders. In January Mr. Ted Rogers, once a workhouse boy, but at this time a Missioner of the I.C.F. gave a lecture in St. John's Hall on "My life's story, or From Workhouse to Pulpit." Afterwards he held conferences, and services in church. A branch of this I.C.F. was formed in April, and an annual "Industrial Sunday" begun. This is still observed. On November 17th, a Mass Meeting of this fellowship was held, in Blake Hall "at which Major M. Cely Trevilian presided. The speakers were the Rev. G. A. Studdert Kennedy (Woodbine Willy) Chaplain to the King; the Rev. R. H. S. Gobbitt (District Secretary) and Mr. A. C. White I.C.F. agent at Cardiff.

In May the coal strike caused the postponement of some parochial arrangements.

In June the Missionary Exhibition, long prepared for, was held in the Town Hall from the 15th to the 21st. At this St. John's was responsible for the Palestine Court, and All Saints' for the West African Court; both churches helping at the refreshment and book stalls. The Day School children, some 1000 in number, accompanied by the Teachers, were admitted without charge, on three days. The object of the exhibition was not to raise money, but to arouse interest in Foreign Missions; but although the expenses were necessarily heavy, a surplus of £77 remained; this was divided among the societies represented at the exhibition. Each evening was closed with a short intercession, until the last, when there was a service of thanksgiving. Two Conferences were also held in the Vestry of St. Mary's.

The chief event in 1927, was the Bridgwater Pageant. To St. John's was allotted the episode "King John visits Bridgwater," This was arranged and

directed by Mrs Wallis. Many will remember the success the pageant achieved, the ready co-operation of the whole town, and fresh interest aroused in its historic past.

#### EDITORIAL NOTE

The pageant is extensively covered on the Blake Museum web site:

<https://www.bridgwatermuseum.org.uk/1927pageant.htm>

In this year a question was raised by the Town Clerk in relation to the disused churchyard. When this was closed by an Order in Council the churchwardens, maintained it, and carried out necessary repairs, recovering these costs from the Overseers, as a charge on the Poor Rate; When Parochial Church Councils were established, they took over that part of the churchwardens' responsibility. This arrangement continued until the end of 1926, when the Town Council became the body to whom the claim for this repayment should be made. The Town Council then applied to the Ministry of Health for an Order, under the Local Government Act of 1924, conferring on them the duty of maintaining the churchyard, thus relieving the Parochial Church Council of that responsibility. The Church Council wrote, asking that the existing arrangement should continue, pointing out that the Caretaker had not only kept the churchyard in order, but had given more time to it than was covered by this payment, and further, that the Church Council had provided shrubs, and laid out flower beds at their own cost. In March the reply came from the Ministry of Health, granting the Town Council the powers they asked over the disused graveyard. From this decision there was no appeal; but the Church Council then wrote, requesting that the Town Council will not avail themselves of this consent until a date to be mutually agreed; and in no case earlier than April 1st; also that the services of the present Caretaker might be continued; and suggesting a co-operation of the Town Council with the Church Council, the latter undertaking to cut the grass, plant shrubs, lay out flower beds, and generally improve the churchyard, if the Town Council, on their part, would pay the Caretaker 8/- weekly. This, they argued would be a mutual economy. This was finally agreed to, the Town Council paying,

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as formerly, up to March 31st, and co-operating with the Church Council on the lines suggested, with the understanding the Caretaker should be under the direct supervision of the Town Council.

On September 1st an almond tree was planted to commemorate the completion (on August 25th) of the Vicar's 41 years' service in the parish. A brass plate, the gift of Mr. H. Gilbert, was later affixed to the guard protecting the tree, with the inscription "This tree was planted 1st September, 1928, to commemorate the completion of Prebendary Bazell's 41 years' ministry in the Parish. Brian Norris, Walter King, Churchwardens."

1929. On January 27th the preacher at Evensong was the Bishop of Taunton.

In May the Church Committee was again faced with the necessity of cleaning the church; and improving the heating and ventilation. More than £600 had been spent on the fabric during the last few years, and these new requirements would cost about £400 more. They were however undertaken, and a service of thanksgiving for its completion, held on October 20th; the orchestra of the British Legion, under the leadership of Mr. W. Barnett, supplementing the organ on this occasion.

From September 14th to the 23rd five members of the Student Missionary Campaign visited the town, and worked in the three parishes, opening, with a service of welcome at St. Mary's, Our Missioner Mr. John F. Hough of St. John's College, Oxford; held several meetings, besides preaching on Sunday, both at St. John's and All Saints'.

At Christmas the Crib was placed in the church for the first time, as an object lesson of the great Feast of the Nativity.

On May 6th, 1930, a portion of the new Borough Cemetery in the Quantock Road, was consecrated by the Bishop of the Diocese. As the Borough Council declined to apply for this, application was made by the churches of the town, who made themselves responsible for paying the necessary fees.

In this year the "Hadow Report" introduced a change in educational methods. By this, schools were divided into Junior (for scholars up to .11 years) and

Senior for those older, St. John's passing under the former category. H.M. Inspector also reported that the playground was "too meagre" and that alterations were necessary to adapt the buildings to the requirements of a Junior School. Adjoining the school was a disused warehouse. This was purchased for £500, to be the site used to enlarge the playground, the Diocesan Education authority aiding by a grant of £100. New offices to be made, and, at a cost of £600, the buildings reorganised for the work of a Junior School, to meet these requirements.

The insurance of the church was raised from £10,000 to £16,000.

1931 The Industrial Christian Fellowship sermon was preached by the newly appointed Bishop of Taunton, and the Lessons read by the Mayor and Mr. G. B. Hargreaves, the British Legion Orchestra accompanying the organ.

1932 At Eastertide this year, the "Easter Garden" was placed in the church for the first time; this represented the appearance of the Risen Christ to St. Mary Magdalene. This was the work of Mrs Wallis, who gave the figures.

### Editorial note

In 1932, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination, Prebendary Blazell was presented with an elaborately illuminated Testimonial book, with the names of the members of the congregation and school pupils.

Following a house clearance it turned up on EBay in 2013, together with an album of photographs of late C19 Bridgwater. The Blake Museum purchased the Testimonial, and it now forms part of the Permanent Collection. The album was purchased by a collector and subsequently published as David Bown, *Bridgwater in the 1890s*. Copies are available exclusively from the Museum shop for £14.95

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1933 Instead of the Bethlehem Tableaux a Nativity Play was presented on January 26th and 27th by Mrs. Wallis and a band of helpers, in St. John's Hall.

At Easter the Altar hangings and white frontal were cleaned and renovated by Mrs. Wallis. Miss C. M. Bazell made a new white chasuble, burse and veil, and also gave a set

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of purificators, and Mr. Doxford restored one of the banners.

In April a letter was read at a meeting of St. John's Church Committee relating to the vicarage under the "Dilapidations Act"; stating that the necessary repairs would cost at least £93, with an annual payment of £19 to meet future dilapidations at the end of five years; the house was insured by the incumbent for £4755. The Vicar said that as the churchwardens already paid for the upkeep of the ground, he could not ask them to meet this new charge. It was arranged that this money should be raised at a Summer Sale. This was held in July, and produced £110.

In October 1933 Mr. H. B. Norris completed his 50th year of service as organ blower.

A letter was received in April 1934 from the Dean of Wells, announcing the formation of an association to be called "The friends of Wells Cathedral," to aid in the care and maintenance of the building. It was agreed that St. John's should become a "friend" and contribute 10/- annually.

In October it was resolved to form a St. John's Maintenance Fund, or rather to unite this with the Free Will Offering plan. It was suggested that each worshipper should promise a definite sum, and place this in an envelope provided for the purpose. By this it was hoped to avoid, or at least lessen, the need for continual Sales of Work.

At the beginning of 1935, the Vicar's sight became seriously affected; it was hoped this would be temporary, but as it did not improve, he decided, on medical advice, that the time had now come for him to resign. This he did in June, after 53 years' service in the Diocese, and nearly 48 years at St. John's. He presided at the Easter Vestry Meeting, at which he introduced the Rev. P. M. Taylor as his successor.

From May 18th to 23rd a Missionary Exhibition was held in the Town Hall. This parish undertook the "Bedouin Tent" besides co-operating in many ways. Nearly all the Missionary Societies were represented and it was emphasised that its purpose was not simply to raise money, but to stimulate interest in the work of the church overseas.

The 25th anniversary of the King's Accession in June, was everywhere observed as a Jubilee. At St. John's it was

marked by a Celebration of Holy Communion, followed by a Children's Service at 10, before joining in the town's arrangements. The collections at both services were sent to King George's Trust Fund.

In July the Rev. P. M. Taylor was instituted as Vicar, and in November Mr. B. G. Hargreaves received the Bishop's Licence to officiate as Layreader in the parish.

In September of this year another attempt was made to form a scouts' troop in the parish, with Mr. Bert Jones as Scoutmaster. The Vicar offered the use of the stable loft, and after a good deal of alteration and work on it, this became the home and headquarters of the new troop to be known as the 11th Bridgwater (St. John's).

After a probationary period through the winter months, the first 12 boys were invested by the District Commissioner, Mr. W. H. Phillips, on June 8th, 1936.

The investiture was followed by an attendance at the West Country Jamboree of 10,000 Scouts, held at Mount Edgcombe, Plymouth, in August. Ours was the youngest troop in Camp, and so was honoured by being presented to Lord Mount Edgcombe, the owner of the camping ground.

Another Jubilee, that of the Mothers' Union, was kept this year, on June 11<sup>th</sup>. 3000 members were present at the service at the Cathedral, 2000 within; and 1000 just outside, the latter hearing all by means of Loud Speakers. Some 60 from St. John's were among the number.

This year too, at the Bristol Road Cemetery on Easter Eve, a short service for those whose bodies there rest until "the last and greatest Easter" was held. This has been continued each year.

Bridgwater was visited by the Church Army Crusaders from June 27th to 29th. Starting from Canterbury, with the blessing of the Archbishop, they went on foot to Welshpool, holding Open Air services at each halting place as missionaries.

The year was saddened by the passing of King George V, whose Jubilee was celebrated the previous year. He was a King to whom the term "Noble" well applies. The day of his funeral was kept by celebration of Holy Communion at St.

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John's, as elsewhere.

In 1937 we had a series of episcopal visits. The Bishop of the Diocese preached on January 24th : the Bishop of Taunton came to open the Palestine Exhibition, and later took a Confirmation; and Bishop M. S. O'Rorke was the preacher at the Harvest Thanksgiving.

On January 28th, Dr. Nicholas Zernov, Ph. D. of Oxford, came to speak on the "need for reunion between the Anglican and Oriental churches." This has been emphasized by the events of the last few years.

From February 9th to 12th a Palestine Exhibition was held in St. John's Hall opened on the first day by the Mayor (F. J. Reed, Esq.) and on the second by the Bishop of Taunton.

During the year, the Children's Eucharist at 10 a.m., was commenced, and in October the annual "Gift Day" established. Two altar frontals, a black and a new green one, were given anonymous-ly.

May 12th saw the Coronation of King George VI. By the kindness of Mr. P. Taylor of Bridgwater, a good radiogram brought the abbey service clearly to the congregation at St. John's. Mr. Maggs, with his staff of teachers and friends, carried out all the arrangements for the Children's tea with great care and good management. After tea an oak tree was planted in the paddock by Mr. Walter King, to commemorate this National event.

In November Bishop Wynne Willson resigned the See of Bath and Wells after an Episcopate of 15 years. Only those who knew him intimately realised what he did both for the County and the Diocese, and he retired with the sincere wishes of all, that he might gain renewed strength and happiness, when through failing health he laid down the work of a Bishop.

1938 seemed a year fraught with difficulties. First, on the recommendation of the Rural Dean, came the replacement of the chancel windows; these, like the others, had become almost dangerous. However, four "Friends" came forward, each defraying the cost of one; the fifth was paid for from the General Fund. But a far greater task then confronted the parish. This was the complete reconstruction of the schools

and further improvement of the playground, involving an outlay of £2,500. To many, perhaps to most, raising such a sum seemed an impossibility ; but the Vicar refused to be discouraged. So, aided by grants from the Diocesan Board of Finance, the National Society, Betton's Charity and the parish, the work was begun. Only a few understand how ceaseless was the labour and perseverance needed to carry such a project through, but not only the parishioners, but many of the town, recognised the value of the work, and responded to the Appeal. The whole was completed, and in 1942 the whole cost paid off.

In June occurred the death of Mrs. S. D. A. Wallis. During the latter years of her father's life (she was a daughter of Prebendary Bazell) she had been the leading spirit in all connected with St. John's — whether in Sunday Schools, Garden Fetes or Nativity Plays, she was an inspiration to those about her. It was she who inaugurated the "Maintenance Fund." All this, in spite of being an invalid for the last five years of her life.

The Bishop of the Diocese, Dr. Underhill, visited the parish on July 17th, confirming an invalid at her house, and four others in the church at Evensong, and afterwards preached.

In January 1939, the consent of the Parochial Church Council, was given to the sale of part of the Vicarage grounds to the Bridgwater Co-operative Society, and the approval of Queen Anne's Bounty asked. This was given later, as the Land was required for business premises and not, as on a previous occasion, for a dwelling house.

From February 28th — March 4th, the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association, under the auspices of Toc H, held an exhibition in the Town Hall, with the result that over £200 was handed to the association.

On September 3rd the second great war with Germany began. This brought many changes. An influx of evacuees added about 150 children to the Sunday School, and a reduced number of teachers, the "Black out" changed the hours of some services, and the loss of the Church Hall, which was commandeered by the Military, was greatly

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felt. But there was a compensating gain, for the Rev. R. P. Duke, on his retirement from Ruishton, had planned to go abroad for a time ; the war preventing this, he remained in England, and became a voluntary helper at St. John's. Here, as in many parishes, prayers and Eucharist were continuously offered for those on active service and all sufferers through the war ; especially for those from our own parish " Prayer was made without ceasing by the Church unto God for them."

On May 7th, 1940, Prebendary Bazell died at Ansford Rectory, at the age of 82. For nearly half a century he had been Vicar of St. John's. All his ministerial life had been spent in the Diocese, having been ordained Deacon to the parish of Twerton-on-Avon in 1882, remaining there until he was appointed Vicar of St. John's in 1887. Besides being Prebendary of Litton, and Rural Dean, he held important positions in the town, for which his early banking experience had well fitted him ; he was Chairman of the Governors of Dr . Morgan's School, and lived to see this old foundation transferred to the large new building in Durleigh Road, and made a County School. He was also Chairman of the Higher Education Committee, which developed later into the " Art and Technical School " ; and one of the Governors of the County School for Girls, and Poor Law Guardian ; in addition to his constant efforts for St. John's Schools. Besides these and other civic duties, he was a distinguished Free Mason, holding many important offices, and becoming Chaplain of Grand Lodge. He was buried in the churchyard of Ansford, the Office being taken by the Bishop of Taunton, many clergy and some of his old parishioners attending.

This year, the roof of St. John's was found to be affected by " dryrot," and had to be restored. The work was carried out by Messrs. Pollard at a cost of £70. Of this £40 was met from the accumulated interest of the fund vested in the Church Building Society, and the remainder from the Church funds.

Mr. L. Dight, organist of St. John's, generously offered his services gratuitously for the duration of the war, the amount so saved to be placed on deposit for future needs.

In 1941 at the January Meeting, the Parochial Church Council voted £5, in response to the Bishop's appeal for a fund to be raised for the restoration of churches damaged by enemy raids.

A beautiful new banner was presented in June by two friends, who did not wish their names known. This replaced an old one which was past its best.

September 3rd, the first anniversary of the War, was observed at the King's request, as a Day of National Prayer. Here, as in many parishes, constant prayers and celebrations were offered, with special intentions for all sufferers, and for all on active service, specially for those of this parish. The King's purpose was to unite all his people in one Corporate Act of Intercession, as the voice of one great family.

Instead of the Bethlehem Tableaux or a Nativity Play at Christmas Miss Spalton produced a Nativity Puppet Play, with scenes from the Nativity of Our Lord. This was in church, St. John's Hall being occupied by the military, but rendered with perfect reverence and devotion. '

The chief event of 1941 was the Thanksgiving, on October 31st, for the completion of the work of rebuilding the Schools. This began with a visit of the new building, by the Mayor, and some of the Corporation, the Rev. P. T. Pryce-Michell, (one of the foundation Managers) and many of the local clergy. At the service which followed, the sermon was by the Rev. P. T. Pryce-Michell; the collection amounted to £17 10s. 0d.

The confirmation this year at St. John's was somewhat exceptional, Bishop Sara taking the service during the Choral Eucharist, thus at once bringing the candidates to a realisation of the sacramental aspect of their faith, and reminding the congregation of the gift of the Holy Spirit thus given.

On the recommendation of the Bishop a Holy oil stock was provided for the sick who desired this administration, in accordance with the teaching of St. James, V 14

In 1942, Palm Sunday was, by the King's wish, observed as a day of National prayer. St. John's readily responded as at this time 161 men and 5 women from the parish were serving and 13 had made the supreme

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sacrifice.

In May a legacy of £20 was left to the Vicar and Church wardens for the "bene-fit of the church and services." In the same month a "Flag Day" for the school funds, realised £43 14s. 8d. During this year the schools themselves, raised by entertainments £102 16s. 2d., which was apportioned thus Aid to Russia Fund, £19. China Relief Fund £40, and School Maintenance £43 16s. 2d. In July, there was a united Festival Service at St. Mary's Church, at which the Bishop was the preacher. All the parishes in the Bridgwater Deanery had been asked to present their "parish purses" in aid of the Missionary Work of the Church at this service. These offerings amounted to £40, which St. John's contributed £7 15s. 6d. September 3rd was appointed by the King to be a National Day of Prayer, this being the third anniversary of the declaration of War with Germany, and was well observed. In this month the Bishop met about 170 Parochial Church Councillors in St. John's Hall, and spoke to them on the past and present of the church: as a whole. He contrasted its condition now, in comparison with the deadness which prevailed a century ago, but urged his hearers not to rest on existing results, but to press on, with the co-operation of all its members to yet greater effort.

It has been mentioned that St. John's Hall was commandeered soon after the beginning of the War by the military authorities; in 1940 their occupation ceased; on leaving, a sum of £76 was paid for depreciation and damage; for some time it was closed, and all furniture removed to save the expense of rates. Then the Town Council requisitioned it, by the authority of the Ministry of Food, and adapted it as a British Restaurant. In 1942 the Council asked for this to be licensed for music and dancing that it might be used as a dance hall on the lines of that at the Blake Hall. This was strongly opposed by the Church Authorities, as opposed to the whole purpose for which the building was erected, and after some negotiation, this proposal was withdrawn.

In the January of 1943 came the sudden death of the Bishop of the Diocese. Although for some time his health had hindered him from as many activities as he

would have wished, no one thought the call to rest would have come so soon, and all deeply felt his loss.

The attention of the Town Clerk was drawn to the condition of the churchyard (now their care). This was at once remedied.

The Children's Eucharist at 10 o'clock was now merged into the Parish Celebration at 11.

On October 3rd Mr. H. Norris completed 60 years' service as organ blower at St. John's. He received a letter of congratulation from the Archbishop of Canterbury, which now occupies a place of honour in his house, and a sum of £32 12s. 0d.; was presented to him from 122 friends.

Owing to the displacement of some tiles, the organ was found to be injured by damp: for some time little had been spent on this, and it was resolved that temporary repairs should be carried out by Messrs. Osmond of Taunton, at a cost of about £130, and that later the whole should be overhauled and an electric blower installed for the Centenary Year, if War conditions permitted.

On November 18th, the Right Reverend John William Charles Wand, D.D., was enthroned in the Cathedral as the 72nd Bishop of Bath and Wells. He came to the Diocese with a splendid record of service. The foundation of his education was laid in just such a Church elementary school as our own. He took an Honours Degree at Oxford in 1907, and after serving as a Chaplain to the Forces in the Great War, was Vicar of St. Mark's Church in Salisbury before returning to Oxford to become Fellow, Tutor and Dean of Oriel College. In 1934 he was consecrated Archbishop of Brisbane, being in charge of the Province of Queensland consisting of five dioceses, New Guinea being one of them. He soon won the profound respect and affection of all in this diocese, and championed the cause of the Church Schools appealing to the Diocese to make the most of the New Education Act.

In 1944 the members of the W.V.S. who had been using our school during the war, under the leadership of Mrs. Heald, made a generous and gracious contribution to our Centenary Fund, when a cheque for £20 was handed to the Vicar.

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On September 25th 1944 the parish and many friends lost a tireless worker, and the companionship of a noble soul, in the passing of the Rev. R. P. Duke. He was the eldest son of Patrick Laurence and Frances Helen Duke, of Newpark, Sligo, a well known Irish family. He was born on August 14th, 1874, educated at Wellington College, and took his degree at Trinity College, Dublin, in 1897. His parents hoped that he would become a barrister, but from childhood he had felt the call to serve God in the sacred ministry of His Church. In 1900 he was ordained deacon by Bishop Perowne, and priest in 1902 by Dr. Gore then Bishop of Worcester. After serving Curacies in Coventry, Folkstone and Verwood he came to Somerset, and spent the rest of his life in the Diocese. Many still remember him at Holy Trinity, Bridgwater. In 1912 he became Vicar of Northmoor Green; while there he married Miss Pixell, a daughter of a well known London priest; the Vicar of St. Faith's, Stoke Newington. In 1926 he was appointed Vicar of Ruishton, near Taunton, where he remained until his resignation in 1939. Mr. and Mrs. Duke had hoped to take a well earned rest abroad but the outbreak of war preventing this, they settled in Bridgwater, and as we have good reason to remember, our dear friend devoted himself to work in this parish without stipend, earning the gratitude of many to whom he ministered, who thank God for his help and ready sympathy.

In November, Dr. Joyce Partridge who had given a course of lectures at the Health Centre, kindly consented to repeat them for our people; these were greatly appreciated.

At the close of the year Mr. William Crossman, who for many years had been sacristan and crucifer at St. John's, left the town to live at Glastonbury, with many regrets and best wishes from all his friends.

Repairs are always recurring. The chimney of the church furnace had to be renewed as it was found to be in a dangerous condition. We may be thankful that no accident occurred. Repairs were executed at a cost of £85.

Mr. Francis Burgess, for some years the musical director of the Gregorian Choral Association, was ordained deacon to St. John's on December 17th by the Bishop of Oxford, on letters dimissary from our own Bishop, and began his work in the parish the following day.

On the same day at St. John's the Bishop, (Dr. Wand), conducted a Confirmation during the Choral Celebration, meeting members of the congregation at an informal gathering afterwards in the school, where on behalf of the people he presented Mr. Field with a book as a token of their warm appreciation of his many services to this parish. This was followed by lunch at the Vicarage, at which the churchwardens and some of the workers were introduced to the Bishop and Mrs. Wand.

1945 The opening of the year saw the severance of another link with the past, by the resignation of Mr. I. J. Maggs, after 23 years excellent service as Head Master of St. John's School. Of his work much might be written, but even a few details can testify to its value. Of the 1,400 children who passed through his hands; 175 gained scholarships in secondary schools. Many have become prominent business men and more than one has risen to the office of Mayor of the town. He saw active service in the war of 1914-1918, and during the present one has given valuable help in the A.R.P. and "rest" services, besides raising £6,000 in the schools in "War Savings." He is succeeded by Mr. E. A. Hardy, who in his early days was a pupil of Mr. Maggs.

On February 24th, Canon H. Thomas was consecrated Bishop of Taunton in St. Paul's Cathedral.

On Refreshment Sunday and the following Tuesday and Friday the children of the Catechism, under the instruction of Miss Spalton, and with her Marionettes, presented a Devotional play, "The Five Joyful Mysteries." The proceeds were given to the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield.

*The Centenary.* It was on Wednesday, April 9th, 1845 at 11 o'clock that the Holy Communion was celebrated for the first time and the first sermon preached in St. John's Church. On Monday, April 9th, 1945, which also was the Feast of the Annunciation of our Lady, being transferred from March 25th (Palm Sunday), at 11 o'clock the centenary celebrations opened with High Mass and sermon. The sacred ministers were the Vicar, celebrant, the Rev. H. W. G. Vincent, deacon, the Rev. E. T. P. Luxford, subdeacon, and the preacher was the Rev. H. Eardley Field, whose sermon will be found elsewhere in this book\*. There was a full choir and a large congregation. That

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evening the school was full to overflowing with parishioners who enjoyed a happy social party.

#### Editorial note

\* The sermon noted here is not the volume from which the text was taken. It probably was in the *Parish Magazine* in which the history was first serialised

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On Trinity Sunday, May 27th, the Rev. H. W. G. Vincent was ordained priest in St. John's Church by the Lord Bishop of Taunton, on the authority of the Bishop of the Diocese. This was certainly the first time an ordination had been held in our church, and probably in Bridgwater, and the occasion will long be remembered by all present as among the most impressive and instructive ever witnessed. The Bishop was both preacher and celebrant. Prebendary A. Chisholm, one of the Bishop's examining chaplains presented Mr. Vincent and the other priests taking part in the laying on of hands were Prebendaries A. J. Hook, E. H. Hughes Davies, the Revs. L. Bush, R.D., P. T. Pryce Michell, H. E. Field, C. B. Hunt, E. T. P. Luxford, L. S. Thorp, and P. M. Taylor.

The Patronal Festival, June 24th, the Nativity of S. John Baptist, fell on a Sunday this year, when the revised form of liturgy now in use was adopted. Prebendary A. J. Hook and the Rev. Francis H. Burgess were the special preachers on the day. And on the octave Sunday July 1st Mr. A. J. Batchelor, a layman licensed to preach by the Archbishop of Canterbury gave us a graphic description of the work of the Church in New Guinea. His visit marked the formation of a local association to support that Mission, and at the Festival of the Deanery Missionary Association the contents of our parish purse were given to it.

On Friday June 22nd our faithful friend and server William Board Crossman entered into his rest. The last occasion on which he attended S. John's Church was at the ordination service when he had the honour, which he greatly appreciated, of leading the choir from the tower into their places. His body was laid to rest in the St. John's cemetery, Bristol Road on June 26.

On Wednesday, July 25th St. James' Day there passed to his rest another of our faithful friends, Ivor James Maggs, who had

only in March resigned from the school of which he had been headmaster for 23 years. His body was laid to rest in the Quantock Road Cemetery on July 28th.

The end of the war in Europe, V.E. Day, came on Tuesday May 8th and V.J. Day, the end of the war in the East, on Wednesday August 15th. On both occasions there were services of thanksgiving in the Cornhill and in the churches.

In August Dr. Wand left the diocese of Bath and Wells to become Bishop of London.

The Archdeacon of the Gambias and David, a native boy from his mission, paid us a visit in August. At a meeting in Westonzoyland of the Bridgwater Branch of the Church Union on the 30th the Archdeacon spoke again on behalf of his Mission.

The Rev. Francis Burgess was ordained priest at the parish church of Twerton-on-Avon on Sunday, September 23rd, by the Bishop of Taunton.

By the death, on November 23rd, of the Rev. Percy Turner Pryce-Michell, St. John's lost a good friend of the parish and a regular worshipper at the church. For ten years he had been a foundation manager of the school, in which office he is succeeded by Lord St. Audries.

Confirmation was again administered in the Sung Eucharist on the Sunday before Christmas by the Bishop of Taunton.

St. John's School continues to flourish under the new headmaster. The children did well in their examinations: they made Christmas bright with a carol service in church and a party in the school. The parents' association has proved a good friend, and among its latest benefactions is the installation of electricity into the school. Soon we shall know what plans there are for bringing the school up to the requirements of the new Education Act.

1946 The scouts were honoured by a visit from the Chief Scout, Lord Rowallan, in the New Year on the occasion of a conference in Bridgwater.

An electric blower has been installed into the organ.

The Rev. W. H. Elwin, Vicar of Merriott, gave a course of missionary lectures on the

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Christian Fellowship, in preparation for the centenary celebration.

In March came the good news that the King had nominated the Venerable Harold William Bradfield, Archdeacon of Croydon, for election to the See of Bath and Wells. He was consecrated Bishop in Westminster Abbey on May 1st, the festival of SS. Philip and James, and enthroned in Wells Cathedral on June 12th. He will receive a warm welcome when he comes to visit St. John's, Bridgwater on the occasion of our centenary and patronal festival.

### THE MISSION CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS.

In 1880, during the Vicariate of the Rev. T. S. P. Seale, it was proposed to build a Mission Church near the station, at an estimated cost of about £600 ; and at a meeting held on November 17th of that year it was resolved " that steps be taken to secure a suitable room for holding Mission Services, until such time as the new Mission Church shall be built." One in Edward Street (part of a collar factory) was chosen, and a tenancy for one year was arranged at a rental of £16, commencing in January 1881.\*

Note \* As the church was not completed at the end of the year, the committee were allowed (by the kindness of Messrs Webb and Clark to retain the room till April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1882.

The site for the proposed church was the next consideration. The building in Edward Street was considered but thought unsuitable; then, 3 cottages in Polden Street were purchased but the space was thought inadequate and too near to the Parish Church. The Vicar then approached Lady Cooper, who owned some land in a suitable position, some of which had recently been sold at £365 per acre, but it was felt this price would be prohibitive. At the time of his writing, he was not aware that Lady Cooper was in her last illness. She, however, was able to express her wishes, and Colonel C. Kemys-Tynte wrote in reply " The last act of Lady Cooper was conferring with Mr. Bere and myself on " the subject of the new church;" adding " May God prosper, our united wishes;" The result was that a quarter of an acre and eight perches of land was given for the site at a nominal payment of £5, and the land transferred to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. \*\*

Note \*\* On the deed of conveyance, dated June 8<sup>th</sup> 1881, the purchase price was given as £135. This probably was the agreed value on which succession duty was payable.

Later, with the consent of the Vicar and the Commissioners, a part of this land on the South side, was exchanged with the Bridgwater Rural District Council for a plot of ground lying at the North West of the Mission- Church and adjoining it. This was set out. in a deed dated April 14th, 1891.

Plans for the proposed church were prepared and submitted to the Diocesan architect (Mr. J. D Sedding) who advised that a cruciform building would be better than a nave, aisle and chancel, as suggested. This he estimated; would cost about £1000, leaving part of the nave to be completed later. New plans were then prepared embodying his suggestion.

In the light of 60 years' experience we may feel that the; building of a second church, on so large a scale and near the Parish Church, was a mistake, this nearness tending to rivalry rather than co-operation ; while the cost of maintaining a second church made it a liability not an asset. And further, what was practicable with a staff of clergy, became an impossibility for a single priest.

The foundation stone was laid in the presence of the Bishop (Lord A. C. Hervey) by Mr. Stanley of Quantock Lodge, a generous contributor to the building fund. The silver trowel used was presented by the "Oddfellows" of Bridgwater, of which Order both the Vicar and Mr. Stanley were members. The collection amounting to £11 9s. 6d., was placed on the stone by the Bishop. The trowel bore the inscription — " Presented to Brother Stanley on the occasion of his laying the Foundation Stone of All Saints' Mission Chapel, Bridgwater June 28th, 1881, by the Brethren of the Bridgwater District I.O.O.F.M.W." Among the papers placed in a bottle beneath the foundation stone was a parchment with the following : — " The Foundation Stone of All Saints' Mission Chapel was laid on this twenty eighth day of June, in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty one, by E. L Stanley Esq. of Quantock Lodge, in the presence of Arthur Charles, Lord Bishop of the Diocese of Bath and Wells."

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This was signed by the Bishop, the Vicar and churchwardens, the Rural Dean, Mr. Stanley, the architect, and the Contractors. The church with seating for 300, was opened on St. Mark's Day 1882, with a Celebration of Holy Communion at 8 a.m. At the first Evensong, at 3 p.m the Bishop preached, and at 7.30 the sermon was by Archdeacon Denison.

Many gifts for the new church came from the congregation of St. John's and other friends. To enumerate them would be too lengthy, but that of the Font should not be omitted. This bears the inscription — "To the Glory of God. This font was presented to All Saints' Mission Chapel by the Teachers and Scholars attending the Sunday School of the Parish Church of St. John the Baptist, Bridgwater. A.D. MDCCCLXXXII."

The cost of the completed work was about £1400.

Naturally most of the parochial activities appear in the account of the Mother Church ; but as some relate specially to All Saints,' the more important should be recorded. When St. John's was closed in 1883, for its first thorough cleaning since its opening, the Services were transferred to All Saints'. Later, when a like necessity arose, St. John's Hall was requisitioned, this being much closer.

On January 25th and 26th, 1884, a violent gale damaged both our churches. Here one section of the East window was blown in and some of the tiles stripped from the roof.

In August, 1886, the organ formerly in St. John's, was brought to the Mission Church, having been removed at a cost of £50, and formally opened on October 3rd; Mr. Chas. Temblett kindly undertook the decoration of the new pipes necessary for its completion. Placing the organ led to some alterations in the planning of the church. The vestry was placed in the North transept, which was also the organ chamber ; the South transept was filled with seats, and the chancel slightly narrowed. These alterations provided more seating than had been lost by the erection of the organ. All this was done under the direction of Mr. Down, who also, at his own cost, coloured the inside walls. The Committee then decided to lay a tar path in the churchyard to improve the approach, at a cost of £80,

and in 1887 the trees were planted.

In 1901 the church was thoroughly cleaned, the walls recoloured, and the stoves reconditioned. During the necessary closing the services were held in St. John's Hall. In the following year the iron railings were continued round the whole of the church, and shrubs and plants placed in the churchyard.

All Saints', like the Mother Church, always had a band of zealous workers ; it is impossible to mention all, but the name of Mr. James Davey must be remembered. He, since the church was built, acted as honorary organist and choir master for 22 years, besides helping in every way to promote the work. In 1904, through pressure of engagements, he felt obliged to resign from the organ, but not from All Saints' and its activities. Mr. E. M. Lucas succeeded him, and held office as organist for 5 years, when he too, was unable to continue. Mr. W. E. Cooper undertook it for a time. On his resignation, Mr. J. Davey again resumed duty at the organ with the assistance of his son, Mr. L. A. Davey ; eventually his son took over the organ altogether, and his father went into the choir, read the Lessons, and often took the service. Mr. L. A. Davey, although appointed headmaster at Huntspill in 1915, still lived in Bridgwater, continuing as voluntary organist until 1919, when he removed to Huntspill. Mr. J. Davey died in 1920. A marble tablet was erected in his memory at All Saints', this was dedicated by the Vicar on January 12th, 1921.

In 1912 incandescent lighting was installed in the sanctuary, and the new oak pulpit given and made by Mr. F. Growtage, placed on a stone base, the gift of Mr. A. Bradfield. This was dedicated on All Saints' Day, by the Bishop of Taunton.

In 1913 members of the congregation undertook the following improvements. They placed a brass tablet on the pulpit recording its donors, cleaned the inside walls, repaired the outside railings, tarring the path, revarnishing the internal woodwork, and laying down a new cement path from the porch to the vestry. All was done by voluntary service, besides many gifts to the church.

1914. The Bishop of the Diocese visited All Saints' and preached on June 21st.

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1915. A detachment of the Army Service Corps, stationed in the town, attended service, and the Bishop of Taunton preached at the Dedication Festival. In this year the lighting was further improved, the lectern repaired, and new hangings provided.

1917. The organ was repaired at a cost of £6.

1918. The altar was enlarged to a length of 7 ft. 8 in., and made 5 inches wider ; riddel posts given, and the height of the dossal raised ; a new sanctuary carpet provided by an anonymous donor ; two oak standard candlesticks placed on each side of the altar ; new pendant light installed and the choir stalls moved to give greater width to the chancel. The close of this year was marked by the end of the first great war with the Germans, kept universally by services of thanksgiving ; that this was not merely transitory at All Saints', is shewn by the congregation resolving in 1919, that a permanent Memorial should record their thanks to God for His deliverance. They decided to place a carved oak tablet with the names of the fallen ; to purchase an " Army Hut " to be used for Sunday School and parochial purposes ; to repair the chalice and provide a new paten and pair of cruets. This was done ; the " hut " opened on All Saints' Day, and dignified with the name of " All Saints' Memorial Hall."

The total cost of these was :—	£	s.	d.
Cost and erection of Hall .	£358	16	7
Furniture		30	18 0
Oak tablet	...	18	0 0
Altar plate	...	16	0 0

Besides this, the organ was again reconditioned at a cost of £122. A number of valuable gifts came this year to All Saints', among these was that of a Litany Desk by an anonymous donor, and a brass lectern presented by Mr. and Mrs. H. Gilbert. These were dedicated on December 29th, by the Bishop of Taunton. Also, a beautiful processional cross of old Flemish work given by a " friend " not a member of All Saints' . This was restored and refitted to its oak shaft by one " who desires to thank God for His Mercies " : the sidesmen also presented four oak alms dishes. Mr. A. Davey resigned his post as organist, owing to his removal to Huntspill; his place was supplied by Miss Burston.

A proposal was made during this year, to make All Saints' a quasi sole charge. It

was considered by the Vicar, and assented to, but as an experimental, not a permanent arrangement ; it being understood, that the Priest in charge (then the Rev. W. J. Stuart Crump) must be responsible for the maintenance of the church, the services, and parochial obligations within the district. The income of All Saints' was an annual, grant of £100 from the Diocese, and this depended on the available funds.

In 1920 Mr. H. Reed paid the cost of the extension of the altar rails in memory of Mrs. Reed: A marble tablet was erected in memory of Mr. J. Davey, who died this year.

A Committee was appointed to manage all affairs relating to the Memorial Hall, and another, formed of members of the Mission Church section of the Parochial Church Council, to deal with matters concerning the church. The Rev. F. S. Popham had now succeeded Mr. Stuart Crump at All. Saints'.

The Hall roof was re-tarred to exclude rain.

The principal gifts in 1921 were a carved oak prayer desk presented by Mr. H. Reed, executed by Mr. C. Gillman, and an oak retable by an anonymous donor. The musical part of the services was well maintained with Mr. Evans as Choir-master and Mr. Dight as organist. By the end of the year all the liabilities on the Hall, its furnishings, and the cost of the rest of the War Memorial were discharged. The necessary legal work involved was most kindly done by Messrs. Barrington, and Son without any fee. The organ seems a recurring expense for in 1922 . it became necessary it should be entirely re-conditioned. At the same time it was completed by the addition of a Pedal Bourdon, the whole costing £122.

In 1923 Mrs L. Dight who had been organist for three years was appointed as organist at St. John's.

In 1924, the "Hut" was re-floored, its roof re-tarred, and a new stove placed in it. At the church Mr. C. Gillman was appointed as Choir master.

In 1926, a Missionary Exhibition was held in the Town Hall. All Saints' co-operating by undertaking the West Africa Court and a series of tableaux depicting " Child Life in South Africa." Fifty of the congregation of All Saints' helped with these.

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Although the "Hut" roof had been repaired, it now showed signs of collapsing altogether, and it seemed necessary to replace it with corrugated iron sheets. To complete this would cost £70, but a portion was replaced at a cost of £45:

In, 1927 the Rev. H. J. Shellabeare Cooke became Curate of the district. By his efforts a number of gifts were made to All Saints'. A new oak altar and three frontals from St. Mary's, Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight; three sets of Eucharistic vestments from the C.B.S.; a green silk chasuble from; Prebendary Randolph of Frome; and Mrs. B; Thomson of Frome, a well known artist, painted and presented a picture to serve as altar piece; a new alb, surplice, and purificators given by Canon Gillson of All Saints', Clifton, and a white chalice veil and burse by Miss Bazell.

In this year too, the All Saints' troop of "Scouts" began under Mr. Christopher Burton.

In 1928 came an anonymous gift of side curtains for the side altar, and a fair linen cloth for the high altar, the latter embroidered by the All Saints', Clifton, Linen Guild.

1929 On Good Friday there was a "Procession of Witness" through the district, with addresses. The gifts this year, included a carved oak credence table in memory of Mrs. C. Besley, long a worker at All Saints', and a picture of "Our Lord, blessing Little Children" for the children's chapel, given by Mr. Snow. There was also a visit from the Students' Missionary Campaigners in September.

1930 In January a heavy gale damaged the roof, and also destroyed a statue of the Good Shepherd, within the church, which was at once replaced. Among the gifts this year was a set of models illustrating Bible scenes and places, given by "a gentleman," and a linen cloth for the credence table.

The Rev. H. J. Shellabeare Cooke resigned this year to become Vicar of Treborough, and was succeeded by the Rev. H. S. Box. His coming was at a time of financial difficulties; those not familiar with the circumstances might wonder why a church, which in its earlier days had so grown and prospered that in 1919 (aided by

the Diocesan grant) felt able to be self-supporting, had now "fallen off"? There were several reasons. When All Saints' was built, the parish had a staff of five clergy; the Vicar and four Assistant Priests, of whom one at least, gave his services. By their efforts, a number of eager workers was got together, with good results; but when there were but two clergy for the whole parish, and at times only one, and the former workers passed away, there were but few to take their places. Frequent changes in the clergy officiating were also detrimental to the work; while the rising cost of maintenance and all church expenses, was a further complication. Mr. Box, faced with these difficulties, resigned in 1931. During his time, the "Stations of the Cross" and a statue of Our Blessed Lady — as a Memorial of Raymond Pugsley — placed in the church, and the ceremonial use of incense introduced. He was to have been succeeded by the Rev. E. I. Dent, but on the day before he was to have come, he met with a serious accident, which proved fatal a few days later.

1932. On January 12th, an important meeting of the All Saints' Church Committee was convened to consider its future, the Vicar presiding. This resolved that the service should be somewhat simplified; that an Assistant Priest should be obtained as soon as possible and in the interim as many services as possible should be maintained, with such help as could be arranged. The Rev. H. E. Field of Wembdon volunteered to assist, and promised to be responsible for the preparation of the Confirmation candidates, for the "Three Hours" Service on Good Friday, and the services on Easter Day. Mr. Strong resigned from the Secretaryship of the Committee, and his place was taken by Mr. Burton. In May the Rev. G. Morant took charge of All Saints'. In this the Jubilee year of the church, the chief events were that the boys of the All Saints' Choir gained second class certificates of merit at the festival of the Mid-Somerset Musical Competition; and on July 24th, during the Choral Celebration, two Kensittes began brawling; They were promptly ejected, and no confusion was caused. A cross for the Lady Chapel Altar was placed by subscription, as a Memorial to Mrs. Lydia Adams.

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The organ again needed thorough renovation, and was removed to Taunton for this to be carried out, at an estimated cost of £100. Mr. Osmond, who undertook the work, lent an American organ free of charge. This was completed in 1933, when Lord St. Audries played at its reopening on January 8th, at Evensong, followed by an Organ Recital. The heating stoves were again repaired. A slight fire damaged the dossal of the Lady Chapel Altar, but this was replaced from the insurance.

The financial position became more acute, there was a deficit of £48, which was increasing, in addition to about £30, still owing for the organ restoration. In consequence of this the Rev. G. Morant resigned, and the services were carried on by the Parish Church clergy, assisted by friends, and the ready help of lay-readers.

In May, 1934, it was reported that no names had been nominated from All Saints', to serve on the Parochial Church Council, and the only representatives were Mr. C. B. Pardoe, and Mr. W. P. Smith. It was arranged that these, and a small committee should act, with the Vicar, as advisers and the suggestion was made that an All Saints' Maintenance Fund should be begun. This and a Bazaar at the end of the year cleared off the deficit, and the services were maintained with the help of the Rev. P. T. Pryce-Michell and neighbouring clergy, as also by our Lay-readers, Messrs. Hargreaves, Lovibond and Wevell, the former of whom was formally licensed by the Bishop in 1935; while the social side, and the work of the Sunday Schools was carried on by Mrs. Wallis until her father (Rev. Preb. Bazell) resigned. The Sunday School work was difficult for her, as she had to go to All Saints' in a wheeled chair, as illness prevented her from walking.

At the Easter Vestry in 1935, the Vicar was able to report that all the liabilities had been met and there was a substantial balance in hand for All Saints'. The Lenten Services in 1935 were aided by a visit from the Church Army, with Captains Coxhall and Heaton; these held services for adults and children, and visited in the district. The previous arrangements for the ordinary services continued until the resignation of the Rev. C. Bazell in June, and the induction of the Rev. P. M. Taylor. He, although single handed until 1936, managed to continue the services at All Saints', as also

the Sunday Schools, although we had lost the help of Mrs. Wallis, who had gone to Burnham, to be with her father, the Rev. C. Bazell.

Soon after his induction, the Vicar was met with a request to begin a Mission Church in the Bath Road, because the population of the parish had greatly increased in that direction. This he had to decline, pointing out that St. John's was so centrally placed that nearly every part of the parish including Bath Road, was within reasonable distance; that no one priest could efficiently work three Centres; and further, that the difficulty about All Saints' had still to be met. The elder scholars of the All Saints' Sunday School were in 1937 transferred to St. John's.

In 1937, on December 12th, 14th, 15th, and 19th, the Bethlehem Tableaux were presented at All Saints' with full Choir assisted by 50 others. During the year both Church and 'The Hut' were repaired.

In 1938 Mrs. Wallis died at Burnham, after a long illness. She had not allowed ill health to hinder her social or religious work. She was a moving spirit in 'The Pageant'; the Bethlehem Tableaux; the Maintenance Fund; and, until she left Bridgwater, was wheeled in her invalid chair to All Saints' Sunday School, of which she was Superintendent.

1939. The Rev. R. P. Duke, who after his resignation from Ruishton, had come to live in Bridgwater, came as voluntary helper at St. John's and especially at All Saints'. There was general agreement that an ideal arrangement would be to have one priest in charge of All Saints', not as a sole charge, but in closest union with the Parish Church, as in this way, a family circle feeling might exist, without isolation.

The outbreak of the second Great War in 1939, created fresh financial and other difficulties. At All Saints' the organist, blower, and caretaker, most generously agreed to forego their salaries.

1944. It should again be recorded that during the difficult days of war, and with only occasional help at the Parish Church, the continuance of many of our Holy Communion Services has only been possible by the help of the Rev. R. P. Duke. So pending future arrangements, the story of All Saints' becomes merged into that of St. John's at this date.

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So we end the story of the first 100 years of our church, and also Mr. Dilks' admirable summary of the history of St. John's Hospital—whence the former derives its dedication—both necessarily short. Of church and parish alike, much one would wish to record is omitted for lack of space. Even to mention all its workers would need a volume to itself. These, however, are not forgotten. It may be said, "Their memory is ever green among us, for it is hung round with the immortelles of our loves."

Much too might be written of the organisations in the parish, e.g. the quiet, steady work of the Mothers' Union, which began in 1884, and is still with us, or of the Church Lads' Brigade, formed in 1895, and in 1909 was merged into the "Scouts," now more vigorous than ever, whose "camps" and adventures, are full of interest. Other activities have assumed new forms, such, as the G.F.S. 1893-1935 which in the latter years became the Girls' Guild; the Churchman's Club from 1891-1921 did capital, work by papers read and discussions, until superseded by newer methods. It was tempting to give some letters and documents in full rather than by extracts, but again, space had to be considered; some records are preserved at the vicarage and additional facts or reminiscences relating to church or parish will be welcomed by the vicar and added to the records.

These notes are of past developments. Living as we do in times when "the old order, changeth, giving place to new," our motto must ever be "Progress." The past should be our inspiration to accomplish even more in the future so that not only in a material but in a higher spiritual sense "The Glory of the latter house shall be greater than of the former."

In speaking of the need for brevity, in dealing with; a period of 100 years we can appreciate the skill with which Mr. Dilks has summarised so ably the history of; the (now vanished) hospital, during, a, period of more than 300 years in times of special change and crisis; times which moulded—though unconsciously to those who took part in them—the "Life that now is," the England of our own day.