

NEW BURY - 1840 to 1965

Notes on the History of St. James's Church and Parish By Canon H. O. Fielding, M.A., Vicar
St. James's Church was Consecrated on December 30th, 1865

The Beginnings

The obscurity of New Bury is typified in the innocent enquiry of all strangers, "Where is it?" Or the persistence with which letters have to be redirected from Bury. Magazine proofs have even been known to find a temporary home in Newbury, Berkshire, while parishioners in Lancashire have been clamouring for their copies. The origin of the name remains one of the many tantalising mysteries connected with the history of the area, which only more painstaking research than the present writer can manage to give may eventually solve. Our people have had no eye to posterity, and the lack of continuous or consistent records is bound to make any historical review an uneven and patchy affair without doing justice to all of those who have contributed to the religious and social life of the parish.

We were still part of the Diocese of Chester, and the mother parish of St. John, Farnworth-with-Kearsley, had only been carved out of the parish of Deane some ten years previously when the movement for forming a new district at New Bury began to find expression. This was graphically recounted by an enterprising reporter on "The Bolton Chronicle" in the issue for August 16th, 1862, which described the laying of the foundation stone of the church in great detail. Watching the ceremony "there was one individual, John Longworth, who may be said to be a founder, if not the founder, of that now flourishing school, the germ of the present ecclesiastical district. The narrative of his connection with the church and schools of Farnworth is, we venture to think, as interesting as any portion of the proceedings of the day; and... we place it on record here. He says: I am a working collier in the service of the Trustees of the Duke of Bridgewater. I began to work under them when I was eight years of age. I have never worked for any other employers, and I shall be 61 years old this August. I live in the same house in which I was born, and have never occupied any other. I walked in the procession amongst the Independent Order of Oddfellows of the Manchester Unity at the laying of the foundation stone of the Parish Church of Farnworth-with-Kearsley, and I have been a churchman ever since. That was in 1824. I became a teacher of the church Sunday school when it was held in a barn at old "Billy Longworth's". We began with about 30 scholars; last Whitsuntide, at the same schools, tickets were given out to 1,300 scholars for buns and coffee. Twenty-three years since I had been to St. George's Church at Bolton, and was talking with the Rev. Mr. Burns, our vicar, about what I had heard there. He said to me: "I wish we had a Sunday school in New Bury". I said: "It shall be tried". I talked about it to Thomas Myers, then a collier like myself, and a teacher at the Sunday School. We agreed to begin the work, and volunteered to go first amongst the labouring class of New Bury and the neighbourhood. We got on very well with them, and collected in small subscriptions of half-crowns, shillings and pence, between £40 and £50 towards building a Sunday school. Then we thought we could go with a good grace to the tradesmen and the higher classes. The first we called on was James Howarth, farmer, of Top Fold, and after a talk he said he would give £5. After that we went to George Lomas, Esq., of Birch Hall, and he subscribed £5; to Thos. Bonsor Crompton, Esq., he gave £10; Mrs. John Crompton, of Rock Hall, Farnworth, £10, Tho. Bentley, Esq., of Birch House, £10. Then we went to Worsley to see Lady Ellesmere (she was Lady Frances Egerton then); we met her in the lane, told her our errand, and showed our subscription

book. She stickled a bit, asked us several questions, then bid us go to the hall and tell the butler to give us some bread and cheese and ale; and while we were having it she sent the book in with a subscription of £10 written in it. As we had got about £95, for which we had walked scores - aye hundreds - of miles, we may say, at time and times when we had tired legs and empty bellies. Then the present school was contracted for and built by Gideon Coope, of Farnworth. It cost about £120. but we got a good deal of the carting of bricks and other things done by neighbouring farmers for nothing. The school was opened in 1840 with about 100 scholars; now there is above 300 - as many as there is room for".

The school was licensed for services on October 31st, 1841, and the first minister to conduct regular services in the schoolroom was the Rev. J. McLindon, then curate of Farnworth-with -Kearsley. Collections at the opening services came to £40, and entirely freed the building of debt. In the succeeding 22 years, the Rev. Wm. Richardson appears to have played a prominent part in developing the district to full parochial status.

In this account of our early beginnings, the pattern of religious activity is clearly seen. The situation was a missionary one. The coming of the railway probably had much to do with the rapid growth of an industrial population in this area. With the extensive use of coal, landowners prospered, but the life of the working man on whom they depended must have been by contrast miserably restricted, with long hours and conditions which by modern standards must have seemed almost bestial. Writers like Charles Dickens and the Anglican clergyman, Charles Kingsley, were beginning to reveal the inhumanities of the industrial revolution. About this time the Church of England had undertaken the education of about 75% of the population, entirely from resources raised on its own initiative. The development at New Bury was typical: a sense of responsibility aroused at a typical "school sermons" dealing with the need of education, followed by enlightened lay initiative which led to the provision of buildings for instruction on Sundays, weekdays and evenings. A noble and enterprising work for which the Church is given little credit today. Consistently since these early days, the Church in New Bury has realised the importance of our schools as a foundation for her future life and influence, as well as being her major contribution to the spiritual welfare of the children God has placed in our care. We have been served by a succession of pastors and devoted laymen who have held dear to this tradition, and have never failed to meet any challenge or neglect any opportunity when ever possible to maintain that particular source of inspiration which brought our Church into being.

For a church indeed inevitably followed the school. The Laying of the Foundation Stone of St. James's Church took place on Saturday, August 9th, 1862. To continue "The Bolton Chronicle" account: "Soon after two o'clock, the Sunday scholars of the Parish Church and of St. James's, Farnworth, assembled at their respective schools, where processions were formed, and at half-past the former left the National Schools, Church Lane, in the following order: The Churchwardens of Farnworth-with-Kearsley (Messrs. Thos. Bowden and Peter Bradburn) carrying their staves of office; the sidesmen (Messrs. Henry Crompton and Donald McDonald) ; the Clergy, including the Revds. J. G. Stowell and Wm. Henry Burns, B.A., curates of Farnworth; Chas. Jas. Stewart, incumbent of the district of New Bury; E. W. Gilbert, incumbent of the district of Kersley Moor; Thos. Loxham, incumbent of Great Lever; J. Spicer Wood, incumbent of the district of Dunkirk, Little Hulton; Wm. Richardson, of Miles Platting, Manchester, formerly curate of

Farnworth; and Thos. Caine, of Manchester, formerly of Farnworth-with-Kersley; the Architect, Isaac Holden, bearing the plans and silver trowel; J. Edmondson, parish clerk; Members of the Building Committee; Laity and Contributors towards the cost of the new church; Superintendents, Teachers and Sunday scholars of the Parish Church schools to the number of upwards of 1,000 - this part of the procession being enlivened by flags and banners, ornamented with Scriptural mottoes and ecclesiastical devices. At New Bury Church Schools other friends were in waiting with the teachers and Sunday scholars of St. James's, and a junction having taken place (the scholars connected with the new church having precedence), the large procession proceeded to the site, where the accustomed services and ceremonials took place. The Rev. W. Burns, respected vicar of the parish, had been urgently requested to lay the foundation stone, but the state of his health forbidding such exertion and excitement, he was represented in that work by his son, the Rev. Wm. H. Burns. Upon arriving at the site, and the assemblage had become separated into groups around the stone, which was at the north-west corner of the foundations, the scene was one of great beauty and animation, there being about three thousand persons congregated. Amongst the laity were W. F. Horton, Esq.; George Piggott, Esq.; F. Charlton, Esq., of Little Hulton; John Hall, Esq., Stonehill, Farnworth; Councillor D. W. Latham, of Bolton; Jas. Longworth, Greenside, New Bury, Poor-law guardian; John Crompton; Robert Peat; Thos. Kershaw; Samuel and James Tonge; Wm. Young, warden of Christ Church, Bolton, and other visitors. Not the least interesting portion of the assembly were the larger boys and girls (about 100 in number) from the workhouse at Fishpool, invited by the Rev. C. J. Stewart, who officiates as chaplain at the workhouse; their appearance excited much curiosity, especially amongst the females and Sunday scholars, who crowded round, shook hands, and otherwise fraternised with them. Meanwhile the architect was directing the workmen, who were enclosing within a cavity of the lower corner stone a sealed bottle containing the "Bolton Chronicle" and the "Manchester Courier" of that date, with their descriptions of the church and details relating thereto; also a parchment, on which the annexed statement was beautifully and tastefully written, and ornamented with illuminated letters:

"The first stone of this church - to be built to the glory of God and dedicated to St. James the Apostle - was placed here by the Rev. Wm. Burns, M.A., Vicar of Farnworth-with-Kersley (the site having been first presented, the church endowed, and the Rev. Charles James Stewart nominated as the first incumbent of the said church by the Right Hon. George Augustus Frederick Henry, Earl of Bradford), on the 9th day of August, in the year of our Lord 1862, and in the 26th year of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria".

Detailed accounts of speeches given by the Architect, the Revds. Wm. H. Burns and Wm. Richardson then follow, paying tribute particularly to Lord Bradford and his agent George Piggott (whence Piggott Street gets its name) ; and in spite of an impassioned warning against the evils of drink by the Rev. Thos. Caine, the three brothers, Samuel, Giles and James Tonge then entertained the choirs and other guests at a dinner in the Albert Tavern, Albert Place, where so many toasts were drunk that that if the participants had later repaired to view, the object of their exhilarations, it is more than probable that many of them would have been capable of seeing two foundation stones, and not merely one.

The contractor for the Church was Hubert Neill, of Manchester. Delays in building were caused by bad weather, fires in the contractors timber yards, and disputes over the

stone quarrying. The stone was taken from the Peel quarries, Little Hulton. The accommodation, with the original west-end gallery, was for nearly 600 persons, including 250 free sittings.

The style is Early English, of about the middle of the 13th century. The Earl of Bradford gave the site, contributed £1,500 towards the cost of building, gave £1,000 for the endowment, and £100 for a repair fund. The total cost of building came to less than £2,500, of which the local people (their poverty being stressed) raised between £400 and £500. £300 was still required and had not yet been found when the church was completed and opened for services in January, 1864, but a succession of "appropriate and impressive discourses" delivered by five preachers, three of whom were found to have chosen the same text, produced collections of £101, and went some way towards clearing the outstanding debt. Samuel Hurst, Wm. Hargraves, H. Blair and John Greenhalgh were amongst the main contributors.

The Consecration was delayed by "unavoidable circumstances", which may well have been the famine amongst Lancashire cotton workers between 1862 and 5 caused by the cessation of supplies during the American Civil War. Almost two years after the church's completion, the consecration was duly carried out on December 30th, 1865, by James Prince Lee, the first Bishop of Manchester. And it says much for the phenomenal rate of church building at this time that St. James's was the 112th church to be consecrated by him from his appointment in 1848; an average of more than one every two months. With changed social conditions, the reverse process is now becoming more common in industrial South Lancashire. The preacher at the Consecration was Canon Thicknesse, the Rural Dean, who was scandalised by the fact that Farnworth, with a population of 13,723, was still only providing church accommodation for 1,968 people, and was restricted to three clergy! But, as the population continued to rise, four other churches were to be built in Farnworth and Kearsley before the end of the century, each with its own vicar, and in some cases a curate as well. What has been the fruit of all this magnificent provision? The optimistic promoters of nineteenth century church expansion could hardly have been aware of the later corrosive effects of an increasingly secular education influenced by the ideas of Darwin, Freud, Marx and others, carrying a challenge: to simple scriptural beliefs which is only now being met and absorbed on the popular level.

The Rev. C. J. Stewart, the first Vicar, knew nothing of this. He paid no heed to the Oxford Liturgical movement of his own day, and his conduct of services must have been more reminiscent of the eighteenth century parson, with the pulpit occupying a more central position, prominent parishioners sitting in the chancel, and an unrobed choir leading the singing from the gallery at the back. Possibly information about him may be gleaned from local papers of the time, but the parish records he left behind are sparse indeed, being confined solely to a few lines annually regarding appointments at the Easter Vestry meeting.

Typical are the minutes of the first Vestry Meeting held on April 12th, 1866. "Present - the Vicar, Messrs. L. Tonge, J. Tonge, Crompton, Jackson, Greenhalgh, Heathcote. The accounts were read, and on the motion of Mr. John Crompton, seconded by Mr. Jas. Tonge, passed.

Mr. Livesey Tonge was nominated by the Incumbent as his warden for the ensuing year.

On the motion of Mr. Jas. Tonge, seconded by Mr. John Jackson, Mr. John Crompton was appointed the seatholders' warden for the ensuing year".

Mr. Stewart lived at a house which had been bequeathed to St. James's as a parsonage by W. Samuel Tonge, Esq., a former churchwarden at St. John's, and a registrar and surveyor of the district.

The district did not actually come into existence legally as a parish until May 9th, 1866, the boundary dividing the parish from St. John's running from Brookhouse down Albert Road and Egerton Street to Moses Gate. The first marriage to take place was that of Mr. J. T. Jones, a bricklayer of New Bury, to Miss Betty Morris, of Walkden, who were presented with a bible.

Under Mr. Stewart, the day school was extended, Lord Bradford giving an additional 1,730 sq. yds. of land; £300 was raised for "adorning and tiling the chancel"; and four stained glass windows were put in the chancel in 1877, two by the Pendlebury family of Top Fold Farm, one by Mr. Horrocks and one by the congregation. We presume this last would be the east window which depicts St. James the Apostle under the figure of Christ the King, with the four evangelists on either side. St. James as a pilgrim is recognisable from the well-known lines of Sir Walter Raleigh:

"Give me my scallop-shell of quiet, My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope's true gage; And thus I'll take my pilgrimage".

- a reference to the mediaeval custom of paying a pilgrimage to the supposed shrine of St. James at Santiago di Compostella in Northern Spain, and the wearing of the local scallop shell as a badge.

When Mr. Stewart died in 1881, he was buried immediately outside the south door and later joined by the only other bachelor vicar of the parish who also died while in actual service here. The first curate with Mr. Stewart appears to have been the Rev. R. Faraker, M.A. He was followed by the Rev. Shapuriji Edalji, an Indian.

The Reverend George Holden, appointed by the Earl of Bradford from St. Bartholomew's, Bolton, encountered, like the present vicar, an inheritance unprepared and disorganised through death. Significant was the tone of his first Vestry Meeting on May 4th, 1881, when after passing accounts totalling £112/13/11 against receipts of £97/9/6, appointing Wm. Owen Pendlebury and John Tonge as Vicar's warden and

sidesman, Wm. Heathcote and John Young as People's warden and sidesman, a discussion took place on the following subjects: (1) The wearing of the black gown; (2) The Vicar turning to the east at the rehearsal of the creeds; (3) The removal of the matting in the aisles; (4) The employment of a curate; (5) The rehangings of the vestry and porch doors; (6) The alteration of the pulpit steps.

As the vestry would not accommodate anything like half the number of parishioners who wished to be present, an adjournment was made to the schoolroom. Mr. Holden diplomatically described himself as a middle-way man, having a strong feeling against anything approaching to Ritualism, and little sympathy with, but no opposition to Nonconformity. "They had nothing to do but to look at the preface of their Prayer Books, and they would find that the Church of England always took the middle course... He saw some clergymen preaching in surplices and black gowns, but it did not matter to him whether he preached in black or white ... He did not wish to disturb any of the customs at St. James's, and would preach in a black gown seeing that it had usually been the custom. Previously he had asked his parishioners to turn to the east during the time the Creed was being said; there was nothing particular in that circumstance, but it secured uniformity of worship. They always found that churches were built east and west, and the feet of the dead were always placed to the east. He suggested that the door at the principal entrance to the Church should be carried to the front of the porch, and swing doors put in its present place. Such an alteration would prevent cold draughts and secure greater privacy during service. He greatly admired the chancel and the stained glass windows, but would like to see the present dirty matting taken up off the floors". Ways and means were considered of securing £150 p.a. in grants for the stipend of a curate so that the Vicar could retain the chaplaincy of the workhouse from the guardians. "If he did not secure the appointment, it would be a loss to him. He had not gone to New Bury for money, for there was not much of it, but he had gone there as a matter of duty. Providence seemed to have pointed out New Bury as a proper place for him".

Subsequent events appear to substantiate this claim, for he stayed until his retirement in 1908 - a record as New Bury's longest serving Vicar that only the present incumbent has seemed likely to challenge, and is now unlikely to surpass. These two incumbencies, indeed, have much in common. Mr. Holden's early years were turbulent, and for some considerable time he could find no one to cooperate with him as churchwarden, the people steadfastly refusing to elect. Affairs noticeably improved at the turn of the century, however, after much spadework in the way of patient reconstruction had been accomplished.

The minutes of early Vestry meetings contain some interesting revelations and sidelights. In 1882 the Vicar appointed Mr. Job Lawton (St. James's Street) and Mr. Charles Young (Plodder Lane), as his warden and sidesman, the people appointing Mr. John Young (Cherry Tree Farm) and Mr. John Harrison (St. James's Street) respectively. They in turn approving the appointment of Mr. Stephen Tonge as organist, "to be allowed the proceeds of two collections on a Sunday specially arranged" in payment. Mr. Jos. Heathcote was re-engaged as apparitor at £15 p.a. In 1883 George Parkinson and Lewis Hodgkiss were elected to represent the parish at a Diocesan Conference of clergy and laity; the organ was moved from the gallery at the west end to the vestry in the north-east corner, which thus became the organ-chamber. An appeal was made in 1884

to 400 grave owners for the building of a churchyard wall on the north and east sides of the burial ground, the Vicar beginning his message with a premonition of the challenge of cremation in language which we, who have only just begun to experience the effect of his prophetic fears, would find ferociously partisan: "The past and present history of the heathen world furnishes the advocates of cremation with much gratification respecting the manner in which the savage disposes of his dead. But from the earliest periods in the histories of the Jewish and Christian Churches the burial of the dead in public places set apart for that special purpose, has always been performed with becoming respect and special religious ceremonies. The Ancient Christian Church treated the bodies of the dead with a care suited to the belief in the resurrection of the body, as set forth in the Apostles' Creed". In spite of increased population, burials at St. James's are now each year roughly the equivalent of what would normally then have taken place in one month in those days when the death rate amongst infants and younger persons was so much higher. The maintenance of a graveyard is now a burdensome embarrassment, when it is not known whether many of the graves will ever be used again, and neglect abounds. The canvass raised £74 towards the cost of the wall, leaving a debt of £ 70.

It was at the meeting in 1888 that the difficulty about appointing wardens first arose, and the Vicar argued that the retiring wardens would therefore have to remain in office, leading to the following interchange: "After a further long pause, the Chairman said: If you do not elect, the people's warden is still in office. Mr. John Collier (people's warden) Who put him in? The Chairman: You can't get out. Mr. Collier: I shall never be out, then. The Chairman: I shall call out again in a few minutes, and ask you to elect someone. Mr. Collier: You can call out 50 times if you like, but I shan't act." After much in this vein, the meeting broke up without transacting any business beyond the adoption of the following accounts: Offertories £34/1/4½d., Sermons collection £5; Expenditure-Archdeacon's fee 11/-, apparitor £15, coal, gas, etc. £5/1/1½d., insurance £3/7/0, water 7/9, organ blower, 15/-, printing 5/-, repairs and sundries £2/3/0.

Again at the meeting in 1890, the same situation arose, Mr. Charles Young refusing to act as warden and remarking: "It is strange that within a district like New Bury, with its large population, more parishioners are not present at the meeting so that they might be chosen as fresh officers. They can't expect one pair of hands to do all the work". The chairman replied that as he had given due notice of the meeting, he could do nothing more. Mr. T. Stanley, at the meeting in 1892, thought it a great pity that a church like New Bury, which cost next to nothing to keep open, should be without officers. Matters became particularly acrimonious in 1897 when there was, as had become inevitable, confusion over the accounts, in spite of a small sale of work opened by Mr. J. R. Fletcher, J.P., in April, 1896, to pull things together, and to raise £250 for renovating the organ, beautifying the church, and aiming at a new clergy vestry. The clergy were now obviously robing. Mr. Fletcher remarked that it redounded to their credit in the past 15 years in a working men's parish to have raised £500 for church purposes and £1,500 for schools. They had 650 children attending their two schools.

Sales of Work bring lady helpers into the limelight, and the following gave their services on this occasion: Congregational stall - Mesdames Holden, Ellis, Thomasson, Jones, Worthington, Cornish and Roberts; School stall -- Misses Boardman, Leyland,

Farnworth, Worthington and Haughton; Refreshment stall - Mesdames Wild, Isherwood, Tong, Roscoe, and Misses Roberts, Boardman, Hall, Wood, Allen, Young and Hodgkiss; Toy stall

Misses Hulme, Roberts, Davey, Roscoe, Parkinson, Jackson and Master J. A. Ellis; Flower and Plant stall - Mr. J. Armstrong;

Entertainments - Messrs. Roscoe, Tonge, Ridyard, Alldred and Moulton.

Everything seemed to be settled amicably by 1898, when the Vicar appointed Mr. W. Jones and Mr. W. Moulton as his warden and sidesman, with Mr. T. Stanley and Mr. J. Stones accepting responsibility for the people, Mr. Stones replacing Mr. Stanley as warden the following year, and becoming Vicar's Warden in 1900, when Mr. S. J. Hodgkiss first appears as People's Warden.

The improvement in communications and good relations coincided with the introduction of a monthly **Parish Magazine**, of which we are fortunate to have complete copies up to the date of Mr. Holden's resignation. Publication began in January, 1896, with 200 copies, and though the content is limited and formal, dealing carefully with all statements of accounts, details from the registers, school inspection reports, items from concerts, etc., they are a mine of invaluable information and reflect accurately the state of parish life and the religious outlook of the community, fixed and unquestioning though it be at that time. Progress began to be consistent. The Girls' Friendly Society came into being on January 21st, 1897, and has had an unbroken existence under various leaders ever since. There is evidence that a Church Lads' Brigade recruited members from school-leavers judging by occasional references to the rack in the schoolroom that held the boys' rifles and muskets. No doubt this was replaced by Scouts in the general reaction against militarism following the Great War. A Mothers' Class had been led by Mrs. Holden for twelve years prior to the Vicar's retirement; this was the forerunner of the actual Mothers' Union to which the class was affiliated by Mrs. Pugh on July 13th, 1911. A Parochial Mission in March, 1896, produced 106 Easter communicants - "the highest ever known". 750 persons, including "Workhouse children", took part in the Whit Friday procession in 1897. The choir were vested in robes for the first time in honour of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. A strict check was kept on choir attendance, the organist being required to present a regular return to the wardens. It was recorded in 1899 that "there are nearly 800 places in our two schools together, 260 of which are free". The maintaining of places and standards was a constant anxiety and expense to the managers, but they clearly saw the vital necessity of fulfilling this responsibility. School fees were not abolished until September, 1903, as a result of one of those Education Acts to which the Church has successively had to make adjustment.

A description of the parish in 1896 mentions that within one square mile it contained 1062 houses, accommodating about 6,000 persons, having 64 different place names, with Highfield Lane running through the centre and almost equally dividing the houses. The church being placed at a considerable distance from the bulk of the parishioners, coupled with the lack of intersecting public roads, was said to make efficient working of the parish very difficult, and constituted a great drawback to the children attending their parochial schools, and the people their Parish Church. The boundaries of the parish had

already been modified in 1885 to accommodate the new parish of St. Thomas, Dixon Green.

For good and ill, a war produces changes, and though modest in its effects, the South African War was no exception. Church accounts, comprising both income and expenditure, had changed hardly at all in 30 years. The need for doubling the income from collections became apparent in face of increasing demands to improve the lighting (new gas illuminators having already been provided by Mr. and Mrs. Booth, of Greenmount), renovate the graveyard, and keep up with educational requirements. The school sermons of 1901 had some unusual consequences, however. While parishioners were congratulating themselves upon a collection of £35/ 16/32d., a thief broke through a window on the north side of the church to help himself to this money. He did damage, but was not recompensed for his trouble, for as someone remarked, "Aw wur varry fane when aw yerd uts sarmons muny wur o' reet. Aw recon ut Parson 'ad it i't bedroom wi' 'im."

G.F.S. members took the opportunity to install one pane of a stained glass window as a memorial to Queen Victoria. This was in place by the end of the year at a cost of £24, and the whole window was completed by the G.F.S. providing the twin window in 1911 to honour the Coronation of King George V and Queen Mary. It depicts the Annunciation.

Mr. Holden's greatest achievement was to bring **St. George's School** into being. A meeting was held on November 11th, 1886, to consider legal action for securing a legacy left by George Piggott, Lord Bradford's agent, towards a school in Plodder Lane. The Managers of St. James's School (the Vicar, John Tonge, and Job Lawton) together with Jn. Brooks, James Greenhalgh, T. Hodgkiss, Enoch Parr and R. Stevenson, formed a committee of action, and Messrs Young, Dawson, France, Parker, Green and Grundy volunteered to conduct an appeal. The appeal raised £42, the litigation was successful, and a gift of land from Lord Bradford in April, 1887, led to the formation of a Building Committee comprising the Vicar, John Tonge, R. Stevenson and J. Greenhalgh. The Foundation Stone was laid on October 29th, 1887, the building cost about £1,500, and was not completely paid for until 1904, but a flourishing school resulted, served by Wm. Moulton, the Headmaster, who married his assistant, Amelia Mellor. The school soon had to face a serious crisis, the Board of Education stipulating in 1901 that proper cloak rooms and a new Infants Room would be required to bring the school up to standard at an estimated cost of £800. It seems unlikely that the Managers were able to comply with these conditions, for plans were put in hand by the Local Authority for the building of Plodder Lane Council School (now termed a County School) and St. George's was closed as a Day School on February 12th, 1908.

A new Clergy Vestry had frequently been mentioned. This was eventually given by Mrs. Fletcher in memory of her husband James, of Greenfold Farm. The memorial stone was laid on May 12th, 1906, by her grandson, Dr. James Fletcher Smith, and the vestry was opened four months later, having cost £140. Richard Bridge, of Highfield Quarry, was the mason employed by Coope's, the contractors. The Building Committee comprised the Vicar, Messrs. J. Stones and C. W. Norris (churchwardens), W. Hey and Councillor A. P. Smith. A faculty had been obtained for extending the vestry to the full depth of the chancel if required. The cost and time involved in building St. James's Church and this later addition to it may be compared with the lengthy and costly business of erecting a new choir vestry in the so-called progressive era of the

nineteen-sixties, and we shall be forced to the conclusion that other qualities are needed in workmanship besides just technical know-how, and are much more valuable in terms of money as well as of service. The gift of a vestry was followed in 1909 by the offer of a new eagle lectern presented by Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Smith, of Rawson Street, in memory of their two infant daughters. Mrs. Smith also gave the window adjacent to the vestry door in memory of her parents, James and Hannah Fletcher.

St. James's School was steered through many vicissitudes by two Headmasters who together served for over 70 years. James Greenhalgh died on March 27th, 1902, after 37 years at St. James's, and he was succeeded by his assistant, William Hey, who continued until 1936. Fred W. Dunderdale served throughout Mr. Hey's headmastership as his chief assistant. Tom Parkinson was appointed caretaker and sexton in 1905 from 50 applicants, and he, too, occupied this position until the 'thirties. Naturally, all these were well - known characters about whom many homely stories are told.

A mission service was held each Sunday at St. George's, conducted by lay evangelists, two of whom were in due course accepted for ordination: F. W. Coupe in 1897, who went to Australia to work for the S.P.G.; and Reginald Bettenson in 1907, who was licensed to a curacy at Emmanuel Church, Bolton.

A comment in the parish magazine on the choir sermons held at St. James's on July 19th, 1908, records that, "At the evening service the anthem selected was Churchill's 'Come, let us join our cheerful song'. The prelude to this was a solo named 'Arm, arm ye brave' from Handel, and was sung by George Miller in a manner which exhibited careful preparation and mastery of the music and matter. George has ability which if carefully trained will secure considerable musical credit. The solo by Miss E. Markie was very effective and her attack and clear full notes were a pleasing feature. The whole of the musical portion of the two services was a credit both to Mr. Tonge and to every member of the choir." Happily, this tradition of good singing is still a characteristic of St. James's, much appreciated by all visitors.

When the Rev. **David Humphrey Pugh** arrived in 1909 from All Saints', Farnworth, one of his first acts was to legalise the position regarding the **Vicarage**. The original parsonage, Beech Cottage, in Mossfield Road, had never been lived in by Mr. Holden, who rented it to his sexton, Joseph Heathcote, before it was sold in 1907 for £225. Instead, he took possession of the present house, then known as Highfield Lodge, built in 1871, reputedly by a brickmaker who had his brickyard in the field opposite. A good number of bricks certainly went into its building but economy was exercised in the interior fittings and finishings. The house became Church property in 1912 at a cost of £700. Having suffered recently from mining subsidence, and become very costly to maintain, it is now scheduled for replacement. Extensions were added in 1914, and other improvements have been effected or contemplated from time to time, generally as each successive incumbent took possession, until now it is realised that it will undoubtedly be cheaper in the long run to have a new house.

Mr. Pugh had the misfortune to serve during the First World War, when most of the men were away. But the parish honoured those who never returned by removing the gallery (the stone supports may still be seen) and installing the great west window with the names of the fallen incorporated in it. To this was added, a generation later, a plaque with the names of those, fewer in number, who died in the Second World War of 1939-45. With the return of the men, a Church Army Social Centre was established in Piggott Street in 1920 on a contract for 5 years. Mr. Charles Norris gave the reredos and sanctuary

panelling to commemorate the safe return of his sons from the fighting, and the refurnishing of the sanctuary was effectively completed at a later date with the gift of an altar table in memory of Charlotte Aspinall. A new church bell was provided in memory of Lt. Roby Watson, and he still calls clearly to summon the unheeding to worship.

Greenmount; in Kildare Street, was used in Mr. Pugh's time as a clergy house for curates. One of the curates, the Rev. C. R. Simmons, was married at St. James's, and went to be a missionary in Bangkok. The Vicar always had an interest in overseas work, and served for seventeen years as Deanery Representative of the S.P.G. His own son, Humphrey, was ordained and went to Gatooma in Southern Rhodesia. He is now Archdeacon of Bulawayo.

In an attempt to make the church more democratic in its government, and to give the laity more responsibility, one outcome of the war was the Enabling Act which brought the Church Assembly and Parochial Church Councils into being as recognised legal bodies. The first P.C.C. at St. James's met on April 22nd, 1920, and comprised the following: Messrs. J. Wane and F. J. Waite (churchwardens); Mr. W. Jones and Mr. C. W. Norris (Diocesan Conference); W. Hey, J. Eaves, A. Watt, Captain Allway, C.A., F. Collier (sidesmen); Mr. Parkinson (Sunday School); Miss Cornish (Church Levy Secretary); Mr. R. Mort: Mesdames Pugh, Waite, Wane, Steventon, Miller; Misses E. A. Leyland, H. Stones, Barrow; and Mr. Tarbatt, Mr. T. E. Tonge, Miss Unsworth, Miss H. Young, Mr. Taylor (St. George's). From this time onwards, the minutes of the P.C.C. have provided facts otherwise not available through the complete loss of parish magazines from 1909 to 1928. The first secretary of the P.C.C. was Mr. F. J. Waite, and he served most faithfully and conscientiously until his death in September, 1946, only missing one meeting through ill-health.

Another school crisis was looming, and some gloomy comments from the Vicar impended a change at the helm. When the Rev. George Hansford arrived from Wigan Parish Church in 1927, he undertook the task of rebuilding a black-listed St. James's school with characteristic and dauntless vigour. While the rebuilding was in progress, the scholars were accommodated at St. George's, Plodder Lane, which thus came into temporary use again. The cost of rebuilding was nearly £6,000, of which £1,600 had already been raised, £1,750 had been promised by grant or loan, and £2,000 still had to be found. The school was re-opened officially on October 4th, 1930, by the Venerable T. R. Sale, Archdeacon of Rochdale, with Canon Elsee, Rural Dean, in the chair. The architect was F. Thorpe. Mr. Hansford stayed at New Bury until the debt on the school was finally paid off through a sale of work opened by Mrs. George Leather in 1935.

Mr. Pugh's main contribution to the life of the church at New Bury was probably his warm and affectionate pastoral care. He later became an Honorary Canon of Manchester Cathedral, and is buried in St. James's churchyard, his widow presenting a silver bronze Processional Cross, designed by F. E. Howard, of Mowbrays, to the church in his memory in 1956. Mr. Hansford's spiritual power and conviction was a rousing experience for New Bury, and came at a suitable time. He was well served by his curates, the Reverend Father C. R. Ball, who is still doing good work for the Society of the Sacred Mission in Melanesia, and the late Rev. F. J. Holt. This era, coming just before the Second World War, probably represented in many ways a high-water mark in Church life in the parish. When the Parochial Church Council came into being, there were 880 names on the Electoral Roll, a number not since exceeded, and all there, no doubt, because they felt it meant something. Easter communicants in 1926 numbered 510, and 442 (from five

services) in 1934. The Diocesan Quota was £20 (in 1964 it had become £534). In 1934, the annual statement of accounts showed an income of £459 (collections £206, sermons £119), and an expenditure of £436, and this remained typical to the end of the War. The Whit Procession of 1938 included 550 persons. Mr. G. Miller became choirmaster in 1931, when a change was made to the English Hymnal.

Mr. Hansford had been a missionary in British Guiana. He was succeeded in 1936 by the Reverend William Henry Townsend, then a Vicar in Oldham, who had also served in Guiana. By this time, two new housing estates had been developed in the parish, and the population on the Harper Green side had grown substantially. Mr. Townsend's first act, therefore, was to carry out Mr. Hansford's recommendation and have St. George's declared a Conventional District by the Bishop, though even at this stage the decision was so half-hearted as to overlook the definition of boundaries. The first curate-in-charge was the Rev. Christopher R. Ridley, who gained an enthusiastic following, and hopes were expressed of starting a new church in 1938, and converting the present school to a parish hall. When he left in April, 1941, he was followed by an elderly clergyman in the Rev. W. H. Baumann, a fact which in itself suggested "second thoughts" on the Diocesan level. Meanwhile, St. George's had instituted their own duplicated parish leaflet, and they were given, rather prematurely, virtual independence. St. James's itself continued to have a succession of curates, the supply having not yet dried up. The Rev. S. G. B. Western was followed by the Rev. A. R. H. Greaves, now in Australia. The Rev. John Patch stayed but, few months, leaving to become a combatant, and was killed as an air-gunner. The first casualty of the war was John Fitton, lost in H.M.S. Daring early in 1940, and as dark nights and menacing days drew on, a note of despondency becomes discernible in the parish magazine. There is reference to falling congregations, and reminders when the moon would be up to encourage attendance at meetings. Subjects discussed by the C.E.M.S. began to include "Atheism", "Why do men not come to church?" A policy of retrenchment was followed. Printing of the magazine was allowed to lapse at the end of 1941, though a devoted group kept a newsletter going. On December 8th, 1943, the Vicar collapsed when pedalling home from school on his bicycle, and died in the hospital where, as chaplain, his best work had been done, at the age of 53.

This marked the end of an era; not only for the parish, but, coming near the end of the most revolutionary upheaval in history, for the Church of England as well; though many at that time may not have been aware of it. But before we pass to a review of the many changes that were impending, we need to pick up some ends to round off these pre-war years. Extensions of the graveyard had been consecrated and walled off in 1914 and 1938, the 26 burials of February and March, 1940, underlining the need. The church had benefited from a number of gifts, notably a lychgate given by Dr. J. Fletcher Smith and the Misses Smith in 1927; a new font and screen from the old Catholic Apostolic Church in Farnworth, which was placed in the north-west corner where an unsightly temporary vestry had been (1928); a silver ciborium given in memory of Bridget Stronge (1938); and various other small items. Electric lighting had been introduced in 1927, and an electric blower for the organ in 1932. Harold Isherwood and Frank Addison were encouraged by the Rev. G. Hansford to seek ordination. The former is now an Embassy Chaplain on the continent. Harold Grundy was another ordinand in part associated with St. James's. One who steered St. James's through many difficulties was James Stones, actively associated

with the church from the eighteen-nineties as warden, treasurer and particularly as a school manager continuously for 37 years. His work at the church was a prelude to a more extensive interest in public affairs, but the one did not replace the other; inspiration found expression in service. He was chairman of the Farnworth Urban District Council throughout the Great War, being a member for 30 years, and served on the Education Committee. His work was crowned when he was elected Farnworth's Conservative Member of Parliament in 1931, and he died while still holding that position on September 17th, 1935, at the age of 67.

Lord Bradford and those representing him had by this time lost interest in New Bury. In fact, all of his remaining land within the Borough was shortly to be acquired by the Local Authority on a compulsory purchase order for post-war development. The right of presentation to the living had been transferred

to the Bishop of Manchester, and the new incumbent, the Rev. **Harold Ormandy Fielding**, from Walkden Parish Church, was the first to be appointed by the Bishop; and at 31, was the youngest Vicar New Bury had experienced. He found that a ritualistic dispute had developed under the interregnum curate, the Rev. Maurice Sutcliffe, and the situation was by no means sympathetic to whatever decisions had to be made. That this was a relatively minor matter could not be appreciated at the time, but in view of the radically changed conditions after the war, the chronic shortage of men and money in the Church, the new building that was obviously to take place in the parish, and the demands of a new educational system, it was clear, at least to the Vicar, that the patient application of an overall constructive policy, probably necessitating a fairly long incumbency, must be the main object.

He immediately reintroduced a printed magazine as a sounding board for his views. Over the years, this has changed its form repeatedly to maintain an appeal consistent with a price it was thought a largely indifferent public would pay. One thousand copies are now published each month at sixpence. A Gift Day in 1944 produced £508. An annual sale of work was instituted involving the combined support of all organisations at the church which regularly raised over £600 each December. Pew rents, which had formerly provided up to £75 p.a. towards the Vicar's stipend, were allowed to lapse completely. Since they were not legally "bought up", they can technically be restored, but this is hardly likely to happen. Mr. Rex Smith was appointed Vicar's Warden in 1946, and served loyally up to 1965, not without offering appropriate criticism and advice as the occasion warranted. Some immediate improvements were put in hand, resulting in a new heating system at the church costing £300 in 1946. The original hot water system had been installed in 1887 to replace an ineffective hot air system of stoves and flues, the heat coming through grilles in the floor. The only radiators available were unfortunately "standard" in size at this time in view of regulations then in force. A new composition floor replaced the uneven flags and decayed linoleum in 1948, and there was some rearrangement of seating at the west end prior to decoration, the whole costing £850. A communion rail had been dedicated as a parish memorial to the late Vicar. In 1949 a new lectern bible was given by Miss Tonge, the boilerhouse was extended for coke storage, and paths were laid in the churchyard. Robes for the ladies of the choir were provided for the first time, and they joined in the procession from the vestry. Their black robes were replaced by more colourful blue in 1964. The organ was renovated, and kneeling benches provided in the nave. A sanctuary lamp controversy flared up in 1949, which was taken to a Chancellor's Court for a negative judgement.

Mrs. Fielding started the annual Rose Queen, described as "Children's Day", in 1951, and this is now a well-established event. Miss Jean Morris was the first Queen, crowned by Miss F. E. Norris, with Mrs. H. Nuttall presiding. Over 200 balloons were sent up, and a profit of £100 resulted. In the Whit Procession of 1953, 676 took part from St. James's, and 320 from St. George's - just on 1,000. This was the result of the "Operation Firm Faith" campaign amongst children. The sequence of alterations at St. James's was taken a stage further in 1956 with the laying of a new tiled floor in the chancel sanctuary, and the introduction of oak choir and clergy stalls, designed by Taylor and Young, architects, and made by Ashton, Leach, and Cumberbirch, of Rochdale. This work cost £800, but much of it was met by private subscription as individual memorials. The effect was to give greater spaciousness to the chancel. Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Tonge supplied a matching oak table for the west end, made locally by Mr. Frank Hall.

Planned Giving was introduced in 1959, the men and women of the church themselves organising and conducting the campaign which was launched at a Parish Dinner in the Cooperative Hall. 250 persons pledged an average of £42 a week, and at the end of the first year it was found that 197 actual contributors had produced over £2,000. This was surpassed in the next (1962) campaign, when record collections of £2,534 resulted at St. James's, as part of a much larger total income. This latter campaign was linked with other aspects of stewardship, and resulted in a "Good Neighbour" scheme for helping all who cared to call on us for assistance of any kind.

This consistent advance at St. James's was intertwined with the working out of three major projects.

First, there was the so-called "problem" of **St. George's**. Within a few months of the Vicar's arrival in 1944, the Curate-in-charge departed, and Mr. Fielding was vaguely asked by Bishop Warman (who was contemplating retirement) to "keep an eye on things at Plodder Lane". This temporary and highly unpopular arrangement continued for three-and-a-half years; an almost unbearable penance for the Vicar, single-handed as he was; and not until Bishop Greer arrived in 1947 were any steps taken to resolve it. But as soon as a house for a curate was purchased at 533 Plodder Lane, the Rev. L. L. Boulton came in May, 1948, and stayed until March, 1951. He was followed at intervals by the Rev. H. W. Smith (one year), the Rev. A. Parker (eighteen months) and the Rev. R. H. C. Lewis (two years). Meanwhile, diocesan authorities had been planning what church building was possible within the limit of available resources, and surveys were being carried out regarding the housing development that was likely to take place throughout the diocese. It became absolutely certain that St. George's would not qualify for a new church; £4,000 was the maximum sum collected over twenty years for a building that would now cost ten times that amount; and the diocese was stretched to providing for much larger and newer areas. The only new building accepted for the parish would be a small dual-purpose church and hall on the new housing estate projected for the Highfield area of the parish. The Conventional District was therefore dissolved on June 30th, 1951. The need to replace the outside toilets at St. George's led in 1957 to the drawing up of comprehensive plans by the Diocesan Surveyor, Mr. D. W. Buckler, for adding a new sanctuary, cloakrooms, kitchen, vestries and generally renovating the old building in such a way that it could eventually become a church with a new parish hall attached and adjoining. The work was carried out by the firm of Stanley Porter, and the curate's house in Plodder Lane had to be sold to help to meet the cost, amounting to some £7,000. As a preliminary, tortuous negotiations had to be carried out under the

provisions of Section 86 of the 1944 Education Act referring to disused schools, and with the Charity Commissioners over a frustrated trust. Lord Bradford, who had originally given the site for a school, waived his rights of reversion, and the nominal value of the property was allocated to the cost of St. James's new Secondary School, the Vicar and Wardens of St. James's being confirmed in their trusteeship, and organisations and individual members of St. George's most generously subscribed for interior furnishings. A satisfactory unit resulted, and the dedication was carried out by the Bishop of Manchester on St. George's Day, 1961, amidst an overflowing congregation manifesting considerable enthusiasm and thankfulness. Since 1957, the clergy of the parish have found it more efficient to work together to maintain continuity in their work, and this has been to the advantage of St. George's where a man previously had hardly time to size up the position before he was off to a living. Sales of work at St. George's in recent years have consistently been realising well over £400, and though there has always been a tendency to resist innovation, the vigour of new life like the Young Wives' Group should ensure the future.

St. James's Secondary School was the second major project. The creation of this school should prove to be the most significant development in the hundred years history of the parish. Details of the negotiations which led to its establishment would themselves fill a book. It had its beginning in 1936, when the Rev. John Wilcockson, Vicar of St. Thomas's, instituted a movement to secure a "Special Agreement" Church senior school for Farnworth whereby the Government agreed to pay three quarters of the cost as some kind of compensation for the loss to the Church of the senior scholars in her schools. A site was purchased between the Albert Road end of Harrowby Street and St. Germain Street, but when regulations of the 1944 Education Act were published, it was found that this site would be too small. Moreover, other Farnworth parishes were too concerned about the expense of retaining their own primary schools to have much interest in supporting a joint Church Secondary School as well. With some foresight and fearlessness, therefore, St. James's at a special Parochial Church Meeting in 1951 undertook alone the responsibility for this school, and in due course persuaded the Local Authority to sanction the site in Highfield Road chosen for its centrality in the parish and its proximity to those areas not served by St. James's Primary School. The Vicar's position on the Lancashire Education Committee as the Manchester Diocesan Representative helped to further the cause, and in due course the first sod was cut on March 31st, 1959, by the Mayor and vice-chairman of the Governors, Councillor George Benyon. Special features were incorporated in the building to guard against subsidence, and after many frustrating delays, the school first met at the New Jerusalem School, Kearsley, in September, 1960, before transferring to the new premises in November, the whole being only completed in time for an Official Opening and Dedication on December 2nd, 1961. The Foundation Stone had been laid by the Vicar on behalf of the parishioners on a scorching St. James's Day, July 25th, 1959. This was the first Church Secondary School to be built in the Diocese, and it cost about £120,000, the parish paying off its share in annual instalments through the Barchester Scheme, for which "sermons" collections, before planned giving was introduced, regularly raised £450. It is a two form-entry school, and under plans for comprehensive education should eventually grow to a six form entry, retaining pupils up to sixth-form standard. If lack of expected Diocesan and Government assistance is not forthcoming, the school could at least become a controlled school, retaining its essential Church connection without any

financial liability. The trustees (technically the owners) of the school are the members of the Parochial Church Council. The first Governors who are responsible for its administration comprise eight appointed by the church: the Vicar (ex-officio), Canon P. A. Wrigley (St. John's), Mr. F. Charnock (Diocesan Representative), Mr. C. Stevenson (St. George's), Mr. R. Smith, Mr. J. B. Waite, Mrs. H. Nuttall, Mrs. B. Higham (P.C.C.) ; and four L.E.A. Governors; J. Bradley, J. W. Geere (County Council), Mrs. A. M. Hesketh (Divisional Executive) and G. Benyon (Farnworth Borough). Their first duty was to authorise the contract to W. Fearnley and Sons, of Salford, on the advice of the Architects, Leach, Rhodes and Walker. Later, they were involved in appointing the Headmaster, Mr. K. Thompson, and other members of staff. The potential value of this school is inestimable, and has already resulted in a noticeably increased number of confirmation candidates and a flourishing Youth Club. A proposed Old Scholars' Association and a Parents' Association present further possibilities.

The building of 500 houses in the vicinity of St. James's Primary School in 1950 produced over-crowding problems which will not be solved until a new Controlled Primary School is built off Moorside Avenue behind Kildare Street, when the present building will be adapted solely as an aided infants school. Mr. J. Rickaby has energetically coped with these difficulties since he was appointed as Headmaster in 1960, following the sudden death of Mr. W. E. Parry at the age of 51, who succeeded Mr. G. Bath. Mr. Parry's appointment was practically the last act of the Rev. W. H. Townsend.

An old Headmaster, William Hey, died on October 7th, 1949, at the age of 78. He was an early exponent of "learning by doing". He left a legacy of over £3,000 to St. James's Church, the interest on which could be used for any purpose apart from building. Two of his longest serving assistants retired about this time: Miss A. Cornish and Miss E. Tonge. The latter had been an attender at St. James's from the age of three, paying 2d. or 4d. a week, and buying her own pencils and materials. She was made a monitor or probationary teacher at £10 p.a. in 1903, and a full teacher in 1914 at £50 p.a., for which she also taught in the Sunday School. She gave the oak table and chair for children's use in church. More recently, Mrs. H. Nuttall gave £100 to endow the "Nuttall Prizes" for Reading and Religious Knowledge at the Secondary School; Mrs. Fielding endowed a prize for Housecraft; and sports trophies were presented by Mr. R. Smith, Mrs. B. Higham and Mr. F. Charnock.

The building of St. Catherine's Church Hall was the third project, and followed the decisions regarding St. George's when it was seen that the population in the area west of the old railway line would grow from its pre-war 500 or so to its eventual 5,000. The site at first offered to the Diocesan authorities for purchase was in a depressed, off-centre situation identified on the map as the "Mud Hole"; but complaints led to the substitution of a more central and commanding position on Mount Pleasant. The nucleus of a church was built up through a Sunday School and a service in the new Cherry Tree County School organised in 1959 by the Rev. J. B. Hurst and his helpers, and through experiments in house meetings conducted by the Rev. R. E. Hickes and the Rev. A. D. Braddock, together with a Young Wives' Group brought into being by Mrs. Fielding. Consistent pressure was put on the Diocese to release funds for the new building, and eventually Mr. Norman Nightingale was authorised to draw up plans for an octagonal building not to exceed £17,000 in cost, of which we should have to repay one quarter over a period of twenty years. The first sod was cut by the Mayor, Councillor P. Norfield, secretary of the Church Committee, on January 11th, 1964; the foundation stone was

laid by the Bishop of Hulme, Chairman of the Diocesan Church Building Committee on April 25th; the building proceeded to schedule under the direction of George Beddows Ltd.; the Dedication was performed before a large congregation by the Bishop of Manchester on December 20th; and the first Communion Service was taken by the Vicar on Christmas Day, all in the same year. There is seating for 200, with ample room to spare, a spacious meeting place, and a site large enough to accommodate a separate church and a parsonage house should these ever materialise.

The dedication to St. Catherine, the patron saint of learning, introduces a woman to the galaxy of Anglican dedications in Farnworth, and her emblem, the wheel, is symbolised by the shape of the building, which suggests also spokes of influence radiating out to all parts of the community. Judging from the liveliness of its members, this is precisely the function it will perform.

The encouragement of lay responsibility is a constant theme in the Church today, and fortunately we have not been backward in the promotion of this ideal, either in the past or the present. A wide range of faithful service deserves acknowledgement, but outstanding in recent years has been the late Miss Hannah Young (67 years as a Sunday School teacher at St. George's), Mrs. B. Thomas and Mrs. E. Waite (choristers for over 50 years at St. George's and St. James's respectively), and Miss E. Aspinall (50 years a Sunday School teacher at St. James's). Many gifts have been provided at St. James's: an oak bench from Miss Millington, a verger's mace from Mrs. F. Collier, hymn boards from Miss Leyland, legacies of k100 or so from John Hodgkiss, Dr. J. Fletcher Smith, Mrs. Booth, Elizabeth Collier, Mr. Lawrence Tonge, and the fine house left to us for the use of a curate by Mrs. M. H. Bennett, of 75 Kildare Street, in 1963. Mr. S. Smith, who served as a Lay Reader at St. George's with Mr. E. E. Jones, was ordained on his retirement from the Civil Service to serve as an honorary curate in this parish. The ordination was conducted at St. James's by the Bishop of Manchester on March 11th, 1951. Mr. Smith still gives us assistance from time to time, but our only full-time curate at the moment, the Rev. A. D. Braddock, is shortly to become Vicar of St. Stephen's, Kearsley. The Church of England Men's Society appears to have functioned as far back as 1911, when there was a committee consisting of E. A. Norris (secretary), Mr. A. Clough (replacing Mr. Eaves as treasurer), F. Dunderdale, F. J. Waite, A. Barrett, W. Hodgkiss, R. Mort and H. Eckersley. The branch was revived with a Charter Night celebration on December 5th, 1932, and is still a forward-looking body of men, with Mr. T. Burke having been honoured by the society for his active services. The riotous pantomimes organised by the men in St. James's Primary School in the 1950's have now been replaced by the more sophisticated productions of the Dramatic Society on the Secondary School stage.

As Centenary Year approached, a complete renovation of the interior of St. James's Church was initiated. This involved the building of a new choir vestry, complete with toilet and caretaker's store, the clearing of old pews and screens at the west end to give more space, the tiling of the floor and resiting of the font centrally in its original position, oak interior doors, new and modernised lighting and complete redecoration. The work was directed by Mr. George Aldridge, G. H. Pearse Ltd. being responsible for the construction. The whole cost over £4,000, but as a result the interior has been wonderfully transformed. New pulpit falls being worked by Mrs. Mary Ozanne, and a Nativity window to be designed by Francis Skeat and commissioned by the Mothers' Union, will further enhance its appearance.

Stress has been laid on the Family Communion as the principal and most helpful act of worship. Communicants in 1962 totalled 9,411 at St. James's, and 2,544 at St. George's, but this number should, and no doubt will, be exceeded before very long in view of the increasing number of confirmations linked with the Secondary School (especially when we have countered the high rate of lapsing), and in view of the additional service at St. Catherine's.

The present Vicar became an Honorary Canon of Manchester Cathedral on July 15th, 1965; an honour which he hopes his parishioners would deservedly share. The wind of change is blowing through the Church, and many fear that parochial life is at an ebb. Large parishes, with resources and manpower comparable to their needs for doing God's work, are undoubtedly the parishes of the future, and there should be no qualms or fears in the Parish of St. James. By the time this booklet is published, it will be known that I have accepted the Bishop's pressing invitation to become Vicar and Rural Dean of Bolton, with challenging problems almost the reverse of those I have encountered at New Bury. It is with profound regret that I shall leave this happy and fruitful plot in God's garden to tend another.

DUTIES OF CHURCH PEOPLE

A Short Guide To the Duties of Church Membership

(As issued by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York at the request of the Church Assembly)

All baptized and confirmed members of the Church must play their full part in its life and witness. That you may fulfil this duty, we call upon you:

To follow the example of Christ in home and daily life, and to bear personal witness to Him.

To be regular in private prayer day by day.

To read the Bible carefully.

To come to Church every Sunday.

To receive the Holy Communion faithfully and regularly.

To give personal service to Church, neighbours, and community.

To give money for the work of parish and diocese and for the work of the Church at home and overseas.

To uphold the standard of marriage entrusted by Christ to His Church.

To care that children are brought up to love and serve the Lord.