

Havant Parish Magazines 1912-1961

Mike Dodsworth was given a cache of Parish Magazines covering the period 1912 - 1961 that had belonged to Audrey Brown of 40 East Street. This lady died in 1992 and will be known to many parishioners because she spent virtually her whole life in Havant. Mike has compiled a fascinating insight into St Faith's over the years, as revealed in these magazines, for inclusion in "Faith Matters". I would welcome any memories from readers of the people mentioned in this narrative. I know that Audrey Currie remembers Audrey Brown and the shop in East Street.

Editor

The first magazine is April 1912, when it is reported that the new lighting scheme is not quite complete. In December 1917, during the First World War, Commander Boyd Richardson proposes a scheme to build a new parish hall. (He was a great benefactor of the church and was destined to give us our Lady Chapel as a memorial to his mother). A large amount of money is raised to start off this scheme, with donations of £500 from Mr Woolmer White, £250 Commander Richardson and £100 Mr E R Longcroft.

Not surprisingly, the war dominates the magazines between 1914 and 1918. Much of the news is good, clearly to lift morale. In January 1918, there is a Day of Prayer for final victory proclaimed by the King. A Mr E E Brown (any relation to Audrey Brown?) is compiling a Roll of all in the Parish who are serving. The February 1918 magazine records that the Assistant Curate, The Reverend Hill, has left the parish to go to war and is now at a school for Chaplains. By April, the magazine records tremendous advances by the German troops and there would seem to be considerable unease about the war. That Easter, there are 450 communicants. By August, the site for the new Church Hall in the Pallant has been chosen and Mr Longcroft has given a further £100 to it. In October, a Roll of Honour is published listing all the men killed so far in the war.

Happily, the war comes to an end and in December 1918 the magazine records that a Thanks-Giving Service on Armistice Day had completely filled the church, leaving many outside unable to get in. Around this time a Miss A D Chandler of 113 West Street is shown as a member of the staff but by January 1919 she had left to be a Deaconess in Calcutta. During her year at St Faith's, she had run the Mission Hall Girls' Fellowship Club. There was also a St Faith's Young Men's Club in Pallant House. (Years later, the July 1925 magazine records that Dorothy Chandler had in fact been in Calcutta from 1910 and had returned to England, only to be stuck in Havant by the war. She had died in June 1925 in Calcutta).

The magazines are full of names, many familiar to older parishioners. Rectors include Scott (1912), Musgrave (1917), followed by Rodgers. In August 1919, Boyd Richardson is now Churchwarden and Dymoke White is a Sidesman. The Reverend Hill is still away! Having been in Salonika, then reported as going to the Army of Occupation, he finally turns up in Athens as Chaplain to the British Legation. He never returns to Havant. By November 1920, Dymoke White has become Churchwarden. Presumably, his father had died because his address is given as Eastleigh House.

In February 1922, there is news of an appeal about to be launched for the War Memorial Cross, designed by Sir Charles Nicholson and Mr E A Stallard, to stand on the crossroads (where it is now). With the magazine is a Roll of Honour, so that names and details can be checked before the bronze panels are made. The magazine contains a number of burials, including, sadly, two babies aged 3 hours and two days. On a happier note, an advertisement appears for Brown's Connoisseur Cafe, 10 North Street. The manageress, Miss Evelyn Brown, runs a tearoom, serving tea, confectionery, jams, jellies, biscuits etc. We now have a new Assistant Curate, The Reverend E F King.

September 1922, Lady FitzWygram is giving a memorial window in memory of her son Sir Frederick FitzWygram and the Rector says it is to take the place of "*that extraordinary crude and ugly Faith, Hope and Charity window in the south transept which was erected by many parishioners in 1848*". (In fact, the window was moved and is still in the church!). The new memorial window has St Michael centre, St George left, St Hubert right, together with the Regimental Crest of the Scots Guards and FitzWygram's name. The War Memorial is to be unveiled on 30 September by the Member of Parliament, Major General Davidson.

In April 1923, the magazine reports the death of Preston Watson aged 80 and a long list of candidates for confirmation includes John Rankin Mcllroy (of the drapery family) and three Redshaws. Moving to 1924, the October magazine includes a complaint from the Rector about poorest congregations and low collections! In December, the proposed new Diocese of Portsmouth has its first Archdeacon. News of a February Fair, with one stall run by Mr Bulpitt and one by Mr Rankin Mcllroy, rival drapers! Other helpers include Mrs Dymoke White, Miss Longcroft and Mrs Paxton. In September, the Bishop of Winchester reluctantly announces his retirement - at the age of 80! Was he pushed out?

August 1924 has a note from the Rector about weddings:

1. Please not to rush out to the porch to see the bride go, as this is scarcely reverential behaviour;
2. Bridesmaids' heads should be covered; a bandeau or wreath of leaves does not rightly meet this requirement.

On the same subject, there seems to be easy choices on where to get married. The period of residence to obtain a Marriage Licence is only 15 days and, no doubt, it was sufficient just to leave a coat somewhere to establish residence!

In January 1925, the magazine includes a slip showing the proposed new parish hall, looking similar to the eventual building. Browns have now moved to 38 East Street, next to their house, and seemed to have given up on confectionery. The February magazine announces that the new Parish Hall is to be opened on 20 April by the Duke of Somerset and that a Fair is to be opened by the Countess of Bessborough, who presumably had now moved to Stansted from Ireland. By July 1925 we have a new Assistant Curate named Band, who is not yet ordained and who has come from being an Assistant Master at Kings School, Ely.

In January 1926, Mrs Norman has started a Soup Kitchen every Wednesday; selling 300 pints of soup at a penny a pint. In May, the new Parish Hall opens. In November, there is a report of a meeting in Pallant House, when the Men's Club is closed after some three years. During the year, Tom Hoar marries Ivy and Charlie Longcroft marries Ethel Russell. The new Diocese of Portsmouth is created on 1 May 1927, The Reverend Hamilton is now the Assistant Curate and James Tugwell Coldman is confirmed. By August, Hamilton has had a nervous breakdown and left! The Rector, The Reverend Rodgers, becomes Archdeacon of Portsmouth, whilst remaining Rector of Havant (and subsequently becomes Bishop of Sherbourne). The Reverend Spinney arrives from St Mary's, Portsea, to be followed by the Reverend Henn. The latter is a retired clergyman who had been Head Master of a Church of England Grammar School in Guildford, Western Australia, and an Honorary Canon of St George's Cathedral, Perth.

April 1929 finds the Rector ordered away by his Doctor to Italy. The Reverend Spinney is the senior Assistant Curate and a Reverend Hardy has arrived as Deacon. In June, Dymoke White is to put up money for a Choir Vestry, with plans drawn up by the Diocesan Architect, Sir Charles Nicholson. There is also an appeal for a Restoration Fund because the Tower and Turret are in a serious condition. The battlements are loose and are removed for the sake of safety. A hot water radiator system is required to heat the church, there are no pews because they were infected and the organ is to be overhauled. The whole to cost £1,200! In July, there is a service for the King's recovery but the main news is the repair of the Church Tower, which is taken down 15 feet and rebuilt. By September, work is continuing on the Tower; electric lighting and the heating system are installed. The following year, the Bells are rehung. Six were made by Richard Phelps of London in 1714 and are now recast.

We now jump ahead to June 1935. Spinney and Henn have disappeared from the scene and Dymoke White is now Sir Dymoke White of Southleigh Park. By 1938, Rodgers has gone and the Rector is Aston. Nurse Anderson *"wishes it to be known that her address in future will be 6 Western Road"*. (I remember that she lived at 42 West Street for many years, including post-war. I once read that she married and went to live in Rowlands Castle. She was always known as Nurse Anderson and was buried in Warblington Churchyard).

Easter 1939 saw an evening procession on Good Friday, with all churches meeting in Havant Park and going to the Empire Cinema for, as in previous years, a joint service. There is also a 3-hour service that day. The Rector apparently received the benefit of the Easter Collection because he is recorded as thanking the congregation for his Easter offering! Did many people go to church in those days? The communicants at the 8.00am service in August 1939, with war just days away, are given as between 30 and 40 but 80 or so on the First Sunday. By October, Mr Monk, Verger, is called up as a naval pensioner and by November Evening Services are moved to 3.00pm.

We now leap forward to 1961. Canon Duke-Baker, is Rector, with three Assistants including The Reverend Slater living at 5 Grove Road. One Assistant is Priest in Charge at our daughter church of St Albans. The Browns have ceased to advertise

but there is an advertisement for Margaret E Brown, teacher of pianoforte and singing, at 40 East Street. Sir Dymoke White is no longer Churchwarden and the posts of Organist and Verger appear to be vacant. That ends our look at past magazines and perhaps someone is busily storing up "*Faith Matters*" for a similar exercise in the years ahead!

Mike Dodsworth