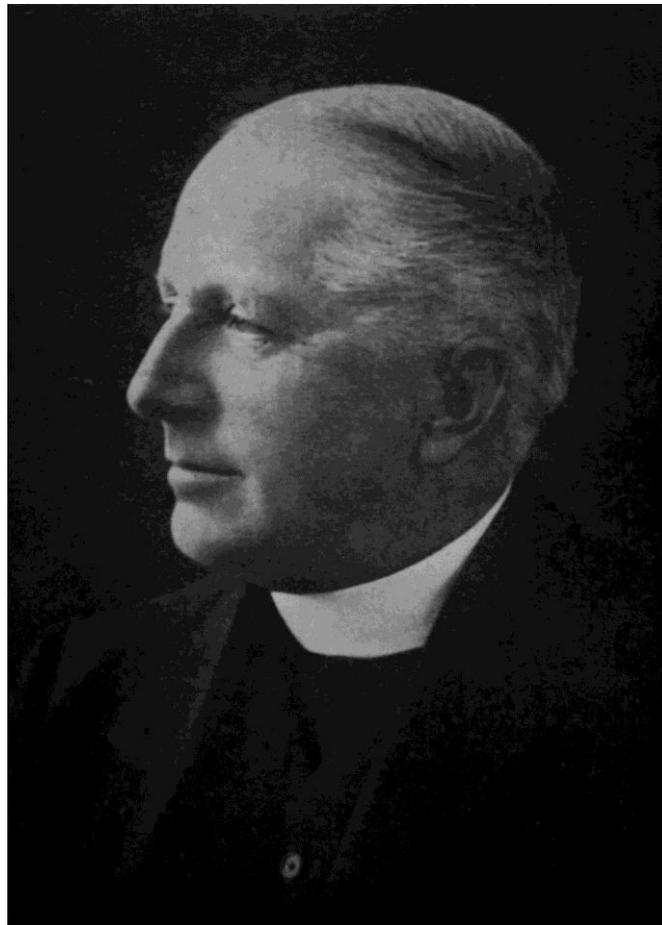


‘A TIME TO BUILD UP’

AN ACCOUNT OF THE 1892 – 1894

ENLARGEMENT OF ALL SAINTS

CHURCH



As written by Rev Edward Hardcastle, Vicar of All Saints 1891 – 1901
and printed in the Parish Magazine for those years

Foreword by Tom Peryer
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INTRODUCTION

The writer of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament ruefully acknowledges that ‘there is nothing new under the sun’. One of the unchanging characteristics of human beings is the innate desire to imagine and create. That desire is seen in every age and culture in the huge range of artistic creations as well as in the creation of buildings – whether modest homes or extravagant palaces. It is particularly visible in the building of places of worship, including the adaptation of existing places of worship.

At All Saints, in the second decade of the twenty first century, we are turning our attention to the reimagining of the buildings entrusted to us – especially our parish church. We are not the first to want to adapt the building to serve a different generation in a different time from when it was first built. But changing the old and bringing in the new is never without controversy and that is not necessarily a bad thing. Not everything old is outmoded; not everything new is a great improvement. But almost no buildings, apart from those which are archaeological ruins are preserved exactly as they were fifty, a hundred or centuries ago. That is just as true of All Saints Church as it is of any other historic building.

This booklet is the story of one significant chapter in the history of All Saints. It is a record of the 1893 major extension and renewal of All Saints Church, exactly 60 years after it was built. It was a time when the Vicar and the Church community believed it was right to take down stones and, more importantly, a time to build up – as that same writer of Ecclesiastes observed. As the members of All Saints Church (in 2015) contemplate a similar task, we can find much in that story which is so similar to the one we are now seeking to write as well as noticing the many changes in church and society over the past 120 years.

This booklet consists of a series of extracts from the All Saints Church monthly magazines for 1892 – 1894 as written (largely) by the vicar during the 1890’s – the Revd Edward Hoare Hardcastle. But before getting into the monthly reports of the progress of the restoration project as it was known, it is helpful to have a bit more of the background.

THE FIRST TWO ALL SAINTS CHURCHES

No one knows when the first Christian place of worship was built in Weston but it is quite possible one existed when William the Conqueror landed in 1066. The earliest known reference to a church in Weston is found in a Papal document dated 1156 and the earliest known vicar of Weston, Jordanus, became vicar in 1297. It is likely that, in the fifteenth century, the existing church in Weston was demolished and a new one built. All that remains today of that second church is the present tower, which makes it over 600 years old. It was a small church serving a small village two miles outside Bath and it seated only 176 people. At some point, the name was changed from All Hallows to All Saints.

THE REVD JOHN BOND ARRIVES AND ALL IS CHANGE

In 1826, the Revd John Bond, aged a youthful 23, arrived to take charge of the 'dilapidated' church of All Saints and its poor parish – 'the wash-house of Bath' as it was known. As a young man with connections in high places and being financially very comfortable, you might have expected that he would stay for a short period before moving onto a grander parish and promotion up through the ranks of the Church of England. But not a bit of it. Weston became the totality of his life's work and he only stepped down from being vicar after 56 years in the post at the age of 78. He shares with John Phelipes (a fifteenth century vicar of Weston) the record for being the longest serving vicar in Weston. Although the memory of him has long gone, his impact remains in the physical structures he brought into being – the present All Saints Church, St John's Church Lower Weston, the Men's Club and Reading Room (now Weston Library) and the new school buildings (now the All Saints Centre). The Drinking Fountain in the High St was erected as a memorial to him in his fiftieth year as vicar of Weston.

John Bond was clearly a man of action and at a meeting of the Church Council (then known as the Vestry) less than a year after his arrival, he proposed the enlargement or complete rebuilding of the parish church. Revd Bond may well have been a classic case of a 'young man in a hurry' because he started the demolition of the church before he had all the money to build its replacement – a fact which brought him into a major public dispute with one of the principal church members – Thomas Leir. Nevertheless, in 1830, the Bishop laid the Foundation Stone for the new building. Two years later the work was complete which seems a long time to complete a building half the size of the present one. Perhaps the work could only go on when there was money to pay the builders!

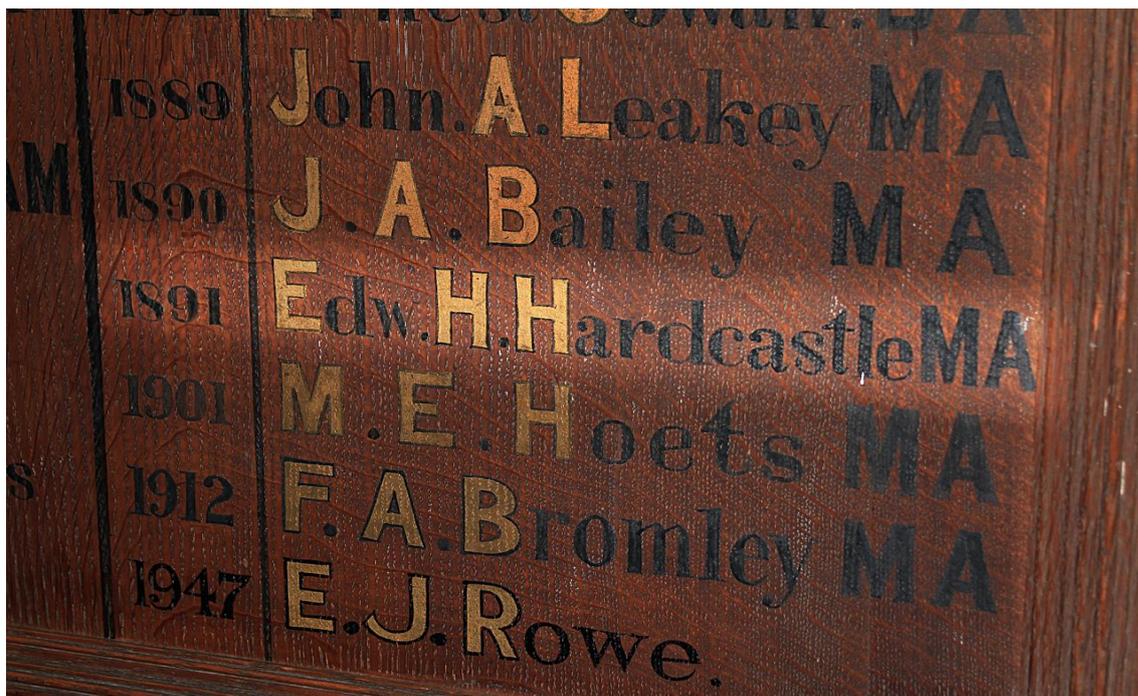
The architect of the new building was a local man, John Pinch, who also designed St Saviour's in Larkhall and St Mary's in Bathwick. The new church for Weston was simple in design and consisted of the area occupied by today's nave (the main congregational

seating), a 'thin' chancel and the gallery. There was no organ at the time. Some forty years later (in 1876), All Saints Weston was extensively described in a book called 'The Church Rambler'. Although the writer was a great admirer of John Bond, then celebrating his Jubilee Year, he was no admirer of the vicar's taste in building, as he observed that the 1832 building by John Pinch was built '*at a time when the art of churchbuilding was lost*'. Another nineteenth century publication referred to it as '*very ugly, although the churchyard contains many interesting monuments*'.

ENTER THE REVD E H HARDCASTLE AND A NEW PHASE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

After John Bond retired in 1881, All Saints went through a difficult ten years during which the church fell into a decline. John Bond's successor, Revd Cowan was 'an extreme Calvinist' but that did not stop him spending every winter in the French Riviera; he stayed (or perhaps stayed away) for seven years. A much better priest, Revd Leakey, succeeded him but unfortunately he died within a year or two of his appointment, as did the next vicar. So it was that that in 1891, the Revd Edward H Hardcastle, aged 29, was appointed to his first parish as Vicar of All Saints; he arrived as a newly married man, full of enthusiasm and spiritual life – a second John Bond. Immediately, he set about reversing the '*depression of spirit*' which he felt the parish had fallen into. Within a few months, he had resurrected a scheme to enlarge the church – a proposal that had originated with the vicar Revd Leakey, who had not lived long enough to bring it about.

In his first year in Weston, Hardcastle suffered a harsh blow which must have confirmed



VICARS OF WESTON LIST

to the parishioners their belief that there was some sort of curse on the parish; his young wife was taken ill and died in January 1892. The parishioners must have wondered how long it would be before the vicar joined her in death. But in fact he did not die and despite his great loss, he continued with the project to enlarge the church, along the lines proposed by Revd Leakey. At the same time, along with other innovations, he appears to have started a monthly parish magazine which had four pages of local reports and notices, alongside a much larger national insert containing stories, mini-biographies of Christian figures and reports of missionary work. Every month from 1892 to the final payments in 1894, Revd Hardcastle reported on and pressed the cause (especially in respect of the money needed) of what he called the Church Restoration. The following pages are the complete record of those reports.

Tom Peryer April 2015



THE CHURCH RESTORATION 1892-94

FEBRUARY 1892

Some good progress has been made in the elementary stages of this great under-taking, since the issue of our last number. Month by month we shall keep our readers well informed of all that is being done. At present our position is this. The provisional Committee appointed by the Vestry¹ in January 1890, has considered the plans which were drawn up in the course of that spring, by Mr E. H. Harbottle, of Exeter, who was selected to be Architect on the recommendation of the late Rev. J. A. Leakey. A few improvements have been suggested, and the Architect has now instructions to make, as soon as possible, complete drawings to present to the Vestry. We must postpone therefore all details of the proposed plans till the Vestry has considered them and authorised their being carried out. Neither can we at present form an estimate of the probable cost. We are sure, however, that the work will not be completed to the Glory of God until we have spent over £3000, towards which about £2200 is now promised or paid. That is certainly a grand beginning! But we must not forget that the list includes most, though not all, of the names of those who are able to give the largest contributions, and, as everybody knows, it will be the last thousand pounds which will cause a little hard work in collecting. As every one, however great and small, rich and poor, intends to do all they can, we have no very great anxiety as yet about the money being forthcoming. It must be the daily prayer of us all, hence-forth, that in this work, begun, continued, and ended in God, we may glorify His Name, and with His help bring it to a successful issue. We think this is a good maxim for giving:

Consider most God's claims.

Consider less your needs.

Consider least what others give.

The subscription list will be published next month.

¹ The Vestry is the equivalent of today's Parochial Church Council (PCC)

MARCH 1892

We publish the first list of subscribers to this great work. All must be thankful to see that such a grand start has been made. In the course of Lent, everyone in the Parish will be invited to give what they can afford, and we hope to be able to publish next month a long list of subscribers, and a large addition to the fund. We are glad to say that most of this large amount has already been paid into the Bank. Subscriptions will be gladly received by the Vicar or churchwardens, or may be paid into Tugwell's Bank.

	1890	1892
	£	£
Mrs. Fraser	100	1,000
Rev. J. Bond	100	
W. Carr, Esq.		100
The Misses Pinder	100	
Rev. A. Thompson		100
Mrs. Watson	100	
E. S. Fletcher, Esq.	100	
Mrs. Ford	50	50
Mrs. Home	50	50
Miss Pigott	50	
Rev. H. H. Mogg		50
Rev. W. Leir	50	
W. S. Goodenough, Esq.	50	
A. E. Pole, Esq.	40	10
Miss Reid	25	25
C. H. Gabriel, Esq.		50
Mrs. Johnston	25	
Miss Cooke	25	
Rev. E. H. Hardcastle		20
Mrs Ward	20	
The Misses Warde		20
Mrs. Hall	20	
	1890	1892

Mrs. Marden	10	10
Rev. Greathead		10 10s
C. B. Thring, Esq.		10
	£915 0	£1,505 10s

Total £2,420 10s.

The following valuable gifts have also been promised: The Misses Pinder, Carved Oak Pulpit. Mrs. Home, Brass Lectern. Miss Cochrane, Altar Cloth.

APRIL 1892

Church Architects are proverbially slow, and ours is no exception. Perhaps he is all the more sure. The final plans have not yet been received but they are daily expected, and will be open to inspection in the Reading Room, on *April 4th to 9th*. The Vestry, of which due notice has been given, will be held in the course of the week, and a Meeting will be held in the Infants' Schoolroom, on *Thursday, April 7th*, when the Vicar hopes to explain the plans with the help of his lantern². Will all who are interested try and come? If there is not room we will have another meeting. We do not ask 'Who will help to carry through this sacred work!' We ask rather, 'Who will not help!' For surely it is the work of all, and the interest of all. Good people of Weston this is your business, not the Vicar's only, or the Churchwardens, or that of the richer people in the parish. God is the Father of all, and His House is the home of all. Let all give what they can to the glory of God, "not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver."

We are thankful to record a considerable increase to the List of Subscription, and we know that there are many who are ready to give freely, but are only waiting to be asked.

Brought forward from last month	£	s.
	2,420	10
E. Scott Fletcher, Esq. (in loving memory of Harriet M. Hardcastle)	100	
Miss Barrow	50	
Mrs. Bannatyne	25	
Mrs. Gabriel	20	
Rev. J. Buttanshaw	10	10
A. Browning, Esq.	10	10
Mrs. Doherty	10	
	£	s.

² The lantern refers to the magic lantern that could display pictures and images it was a favourite tool of speakers of the day; later superseded by slide projectors, overhead projectors and powerpoints

Rev. H. Bartram	5	
Mrs. Cawthorne	5	
“A Friend”	5	
Mrs. Denton	5	
Mrs. Tudor (Paid 1890)	2	10
Mrs. C. Smith, ditto	2	10
Mr. E. Russell	2	2
The Misses George	1	
Mr. W. Godwin, jun.	5	
<hr/>		
Total to date	£2,674	17

MAY 1892

We are very glad to be able to report good progress during the past month. Our position at present is as follows: - The citation from the Chancellor of the Diocese will remain on the Church doors till May 9th, after which we shall receive the faculty giving us full power to carry on the work. In the meantime the specifications are being prepared by the architect, and we hope to be receiving tenders from the five or six selected Contractors almost as soon as we receive the faculty. Thus it seems probable that a beginning will really be made by the first week in June at the latest, *i.e.*, if nothing unforeseen occurs to disappoint us.

As will be seen, the subscription list is increasing at a steady and encouraging rate. With sums varying from fifty pounds to a few shillings, more than £250 has been added, and no small portion of this has been, we know, the result of much self denial, as well as of loyal devotion to the cause. The individual subscriptions are printed in the order in which they have been received.

On Thursday, April 7th, the Vicar exhibited the plans of the new building to a large audience with the help of the lantern. Everybody seemed deeply interested, and the slides, which had been photographed from the plans for the occasion by Mr. Ashman, of Old Bond Street, Bath, gave complete satisfaction. At the close of the Meeting, a representative Committee of the men of Weston, under the leadership of Mr. Trickey, volunteered their services as collectors.³ They have some of our most active and zealous young women to help, and we believe they will receive a warm and generous response to their appeal. May God bless all our efforts, and lead us on step by step till the work is completed to the glory and honour of His Name.

³ The men led by Mr Trickey had volunteered to go door to door throughout the parish seeking contributions from every household. At the time there were 466 occupied houses with a population of about 2,250 (see page 16).

The following is a statement of sums collected and given for the Font to be erected in the Church, when restored, to the memory of the late Mrs. Hardcastle⁴. The idea of the young people giving the Font originated with her, and she had already collected some money for the purpose. No more beautiful memorial of a holy life, or more suitable offering to God from the young, could be imagined.



ARCHITECTS PROPOSAL

⁴ Mrs Hardcastle was the vicar's young wife who had died only three months previously. The money for the font (the one at the West End of All Saints did indeed come from all the children of the Sunday School).

JUNE 1892

We are glad to be able to announce a further increase of £119 to the Fund, which has now reached well above £3000. Meanwhile we are all anxiously looking forward to the commencement of the building. We shall not, however, have to wait much longer. The Architect has prepared the plans, specifications, quantities, etc, and is in communication with the selected contractors. Six first class firms, 3 selected by the Committee and 3 by the Architect, have been invited to send in tenders for the work and the lowest will probably be accepted.

Mr. H. Trickey, and his collecting committee must be congratulated upon their success, and heartily thanked by all who have the welfare of the Church at heart, for so readily undertaking the task of collecting from house to house. Such a task is not always an easy one; but when we look at the result, and see so many signs of self denial, and see that the heart of Weston is in this sacred cause of promoting God's Glory, we are sure that they have found more happiness than difficulty in their work. Let us add that if any of those who have not yet been able to give to the work, should at any time wish to do so, or to add to what they have given, the collectors who have already called will be glad to receive the offering.

JULY 1892

As I write some days before the issue of the Magazine, I can express a very strong hope that a commencement will be made in the Church Restoration before this reaches your eyes. The prolonged delay has been very trying to us all, and we can only take comfort in saying that as far as we are concerned it has been unavoidable. Messrs. Stephens & Bastow, of Bristol, is the name of the firm which has been selected.

Alas! It is no use hiding from ourselves the fact that somehow or other we shall need nearly another £1,000 before the work is finished. The lowest tender was considerably higher than the estimates,⁵ and when we have included the expenses of Architect and Clerk of the Works we shall not be much on the right side of £4000. Still, it was the unanimous and strongly expressed wish of the Committee that oak should be used throughout, and that the work should be all of the very best. I am sure this is the right spirit. We cannot allow any sham or second rate work in God's house, and the money, we feel certain, will come. The Committee expressed full confidence in that point, and if we now start the work from the very highest motive, *i.e.*, of doing honour to God, we shall surely find that He will send all we need for the completing of the work.

The General Election claims a large share of attention just now, and it requires some faith to believe that, in times when the party spirit of the country is raised to fever heat, any voice will be heard but the loudest. There is however a still small voice in the heart of every elector which ought to be heard by all who call themselves Christians. It is the voice of conscience and it says, "Love one another." Many people forget that it is possible to love a man without agreeing with him. If every true English voter would take for his watchword "Fear God, Honour the King, Love the brotherhood," we should not have much anxiety for the country.

⁵ There is nothing new under the sun – tenders coming in higher than estimates being one of them!

The following is the Census return of the population of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Upper Weston.

No. of Houses	466
Uninhabited houses	36
Males (including Weston School)	1,018
Females	1,204

Total Population, 1891	2,222
Population, 1881	2,250

AUGUST 1892

It must have rejoiced the hearts of all whose hearts are in the Restoration of the Church to see a real commencement being made last week. We trust that everything will go on smoothly and rapidly. It is of course, necessary, as we all know, to disturb some of the graves, and we must all sincerely wish that it could have been avoided. I am glad to say, however, that the task has not been nearly so difficult as was anticipated. I have very carefully watched the work, and am quite satisfied that the greatest care is being taken by the foreman and workmen to see that everything is performed with reverence and honour to the dead. What remains it is found necessary to remove have been carefully interred just outside the new building. It is very satisfactory to see that the work is being done by Weston men, and I sincerely hope the skill and muscle of the Parish will be employed throughout the whole of the building.

And now that the work is well started, and I have no longer any anxiety on that point, I feel it necessary to go away for a rest and a change. The past year has been an eventful one to the Parish, and as we look back I am sure we must be thankful for many blessings as well as humble for many failures. I shall go away with a feeling that the opening chapter in my ministry has been brought to a close; may God forgive its deficiencies. We might all have done much more, we might have been more faithful, more hard-working, more zealous, but, in spite of ourselves and our failings, we know that the Lord has given us His blessing. And now in the midst of our daily work, let us listen to the Master speaking, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile." Thus He addresses His disciples. Mark, it is not "Go" but "Come." *Come with me* and rest awhile. I wish we could all do this more often, and, taking the Master with us, get away from the cares and worries of daily life now and again for meditation and communion with Him.

I shall be glad to rest and glad to return to work. Work hurts nobody. It is anxiety and responsibility which wears us out, and to bear a heavy burden of sorrow beneath everything else, is no light task. But Weston has been very

good to me, and I have found more friends, and received more kindness, than I ever deserved, so that I hope, please God, to return full of new strength to a very happy and blessed work with you and for you in the autumn and winter campaign.

Believe me, dear people,

Your faithful servant in Christ,

Edward H. Hardcastle

SEPTEMBER 1892

We are glad to be able to report decided progress in the work of restoring the Church. Last month a start was reported in the Magazine, under favourable circumstances. Now, we are pleased to say, all the principal work of removing the remains found in digging the foundations is finished. The work of digging the trenches was completed about a fortnight ago. By the time this is in your hands, all the foundation walls, except the large portion where the heating apparatus, and entrance to the crypt will be, will be finished. And then the actual building of the walls will go on quickly and well, we hope.

The East wall of the present Church has not yet been touched. The contractor considered it would be best to remove it later than he at first thought. Probably it will come down shortly now. We spoke of this last month, and of the alteration needful in the Church in consequence.

We make a correction in the subscription list of last month. The following sums were collected by Mrs. Hall: - Rev. H. E. Miles, £5; Mrs. Mylne, £1; The Misses Armitage, 10s; Mrs. Hall sends us this month:- Miss Miles, 10s; Mrs. Miles, £1; Miss Watson, £1; which sums she has collected. Total £9.

This brings the sum total up to £3,145 5s 7d, which has been given or promised. A good deal is required before the £4,000 is reached, which is the very least we must aim at getting. There must be many readers of the Magazine who could afford to follow the example of some, and give again.

OCTOBER 1892

It is very satisfactory to be able to report good progress in the building. When we remember that ten weeks have not yet passed since the work began, when we remember also the difficulties of the excavating, and the amount of work there is below ground, we may well be satisfied at seeing the plinth line completed and the walls already rising above it.

With a view to clearing up a few wrong impressions which seem to exist, we think it well to make one or two plain statements with regard to what really is being done.⁶

The floor measurement of the present Church is 2,550 square feet; the area of the new portion will be 2,100 square feet, consequently Weston Church will be almost doubled in size.

The new building will be seated to hold 200 people.⁷ There will be a certain amount of loss in the old portion, owing to easier sitting accommodation, but as there will be an increase of space for chairs it is quite safe to say that the Church when finished will comfortably hold nearly 200 more than it does at present, in addition to which we shall have a beautiful chancel, together with a spacious vestry and organ chamber. This will be a grand addition, and though we do not suppose that a larger and more beautiful Church will necessarily become filled all at once, (let us make no mistake about that; changed lives and belief in Jesus Christ – nothing else – will fill the Church), still it is splendid to think that we shall have a Temple raised to God which will be more worthy of His Name, and a home where all our people who believe in, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man in Christ, may meet together.

⁶ It would seem that not everyone in the parish knew or understood what was happening and not everyone was happy with the changes.

⁷ The writer means that the extension to the building will accommodate 200 people; total capacity including the gallery was around 600.

It is right that all our works should be *begun, continued, and ended* in the name of God, and therefore we have fixed October 18th, St. Luke's Day, as the occasion of laying the Foundation or Memorial Stone. The stone will be laid by Mrs. Fraser, widow of the late Bishop of Manchester, and very thankful we are to secure the services of her who has always had her heart in Weston, and has come forward so liberally to help us with our Church. The ceremony will consist of a short service inside and outside the Church, and the time will probably be about 12.30 o'clock, when most of the working people of the Parish can be present. In the evening there will be a service with a sermon by a special preacher. The arrangements will be made known before the day, but in the meantime let us all look forward to October 18th as an eventful day in the history of the Parish.

NOVEMBER 1892

On Tuesday, October 18th, in splendid weather, the Corner Stone was laid by Mrs. Fraser. The Church was well filled for the first part of the service. The choir, which appeared for the first time in surplices,⁸ together with 25 Clergy from the Parish and neighbourhood, coming in procession from the Vicarage, sang the opening hymn as they proceeded from the west door to the seats at the east end of the Church. The prayers were read by the Vicar, the lessons by Canon Brooke, Rector of Bath Abbey, and the Rev. Preb. Buttanshaw gave a short address, which was followed by the hymn, "Holy Offerings," when a collection was made for the Restoration Fund. The Choir and Clergy, preceded by the Mission Choir, and followed by Mrs. Fraser, the Church-wardens, and Members of the Building Committee, then moved in procession to the Stone singing the processional hymn, "To Thee, O God, we fly." There was a large number of people waiting in the Churchyard for the second portion of the service, including all the School children, who were placed in front under the care of their teachers. After a short address by the Vicar (who said that, just as the Corner Stone binds the building, so Christ our Corner Stone, and Christ alone, can bind all hearts together, and enable all classes and all interests to meet as a Parish united in the service of God)



FOUNDATION STONE

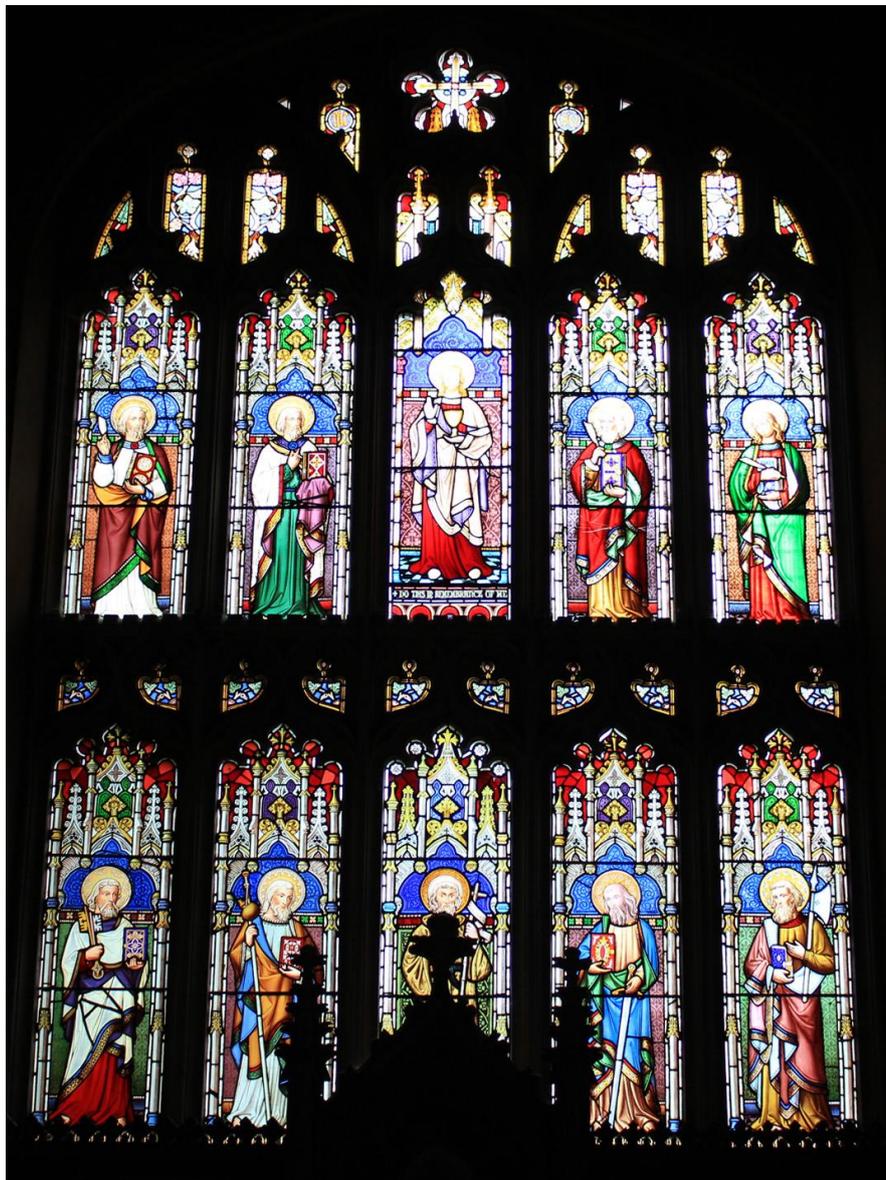
⁸ The robing of church choirs did not start until the second half of the nineteenth century as churches became more 'High Church' and copied Cathedral practice. Choir robes arrived quite late in Weston.

the Stone was laid with due ceremony by Mrs. Fraser, with the solemn words, "In the faith of Jesus Christ we place this Corner Stone, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." During the singing of the hymn, "The Church's one foundation," a collection was made among those outside, and several ladies presented purses of money. The total sum collected for the occasion (some of which was sent in afterwards) amounted to over £100. Before and after the service the bells rang out a joyful peal.

We are glad to say that, a large hoarding has been erected across the east end, with a recess for the altar, which will effectually keep the Church warm until the new building is roofed in. We must congratulate Mr. Russell and his men for this excellent piece of work, and for the rapidity with which it was completed.

DECEMBER 1892

Slowly and surely the work progresses, and it has now arrived at a stage when we can form some idea of its general appearance when finished. For the sake of our absent readers we may say that the walls have reached to about six feet from the top, and if we have fair weather the roof will be on in January. Mrs. Home has most generously undertaken a great improvement in the east window, which will have five lights instead of four, and the new lights in the centre will contain the figures of our Blessed Lord and John the Baptist.



EAST WINDOW

JANUARY 1893

We have not much to report this month, except the receipt of a generous donation of ten guineas from our Bishop.

The tracery of all the windows is now completed, and we think that all will agree that it is beautiful and infinitely superior to the old. The weather has been very kind to us, for scarcely an hour has been lost up to Xmas Eve.

Looking back upon the past year we cannot but see how wonderfully God has prospered this work. Many things which seemed to present great difficulties have been overcome without much trouble. Most of the money has been raised, and it now seems probable that the Church will be opened in June, free from any very considerable debt. The total amount raised (as we write) is £3,317, and we expect some Christmas additions to this. Now with the New Year we start again with every determination to carry out this work we have taken in hand. Nearly £800 is still required, and judging from the experience of the past year, we believe it will not be long in forthcoming.

MEMORIAL FONT FUND

The children and young people of the Parish (and all who are interested outside) are reminded that they have undertaken to see that the Church has a very beautiful Font. The fund is steadily growing, but it does not intend to close until quite £20 have been added to it. In the meantime preparations are being made to find a nice open space in the Church to receive the font, that the rite of Holy Baptism may always receive due honour and reverence as the Sacrament of admission into the Church of Christ.

FEBRUARY 1893

We have only space this month for a very few words about this great subject. We can report good progress, though the frost stopped all work for some weeks. We are glad to announce a gift of £50 from Col. H. and Mrs. Thomson, and £20 from Rev. J. Bond,⁹ making our total £3387.

Now we must all begin to consider what more we can do. Cannot we possibly open the Church free of debt? What a grand thing if we could! Lent is at hand, let us get together all we can, and *make a great Easter Offering to God of the whole debt.*

⁹ Revd John Bond although more than ten years into retirement and well into his 80's was still making donations to various good causes in the parish and church he loved so much.

MARCH 1893

You must forgive me for bringing out the Magazine so late this month, but Lent has brought so many things to think about, and to do, and February is so sparing of its days, that March has come almost suddenly upon us.

What are we all doing this Lent? Are we trying to make it a quiet time for thought and self-discipline? Let our fasting or self-denial have two practical objects in view.

(1). A proof to ourselves that we are masters of ourselves, and not slaves to our inclinations and habits.

(2). A method of laying by for some good work we have at heart. There is no doubt about the object of our saving this year. We have a heavy bill to pay for the Church Restoration, and we are inclined to say – “I wonder how it will ever be paid.” There need be no wonder if we all do our part. There are some who can give of their abundance. There are not a few who could give £5 at Easter, a great many could give £1, a great number could find their half-crown, and nearly all could give something. All we want is to have our heart in the work, to believe that we are doing something to the glory of God, and we shall finish the work and never feel the poorer.

“Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel and the captains of thousands and of hundred, *offered willingly* and gave for the services of the house of God . . . And they with whom precious stones were found, gave them to the treasure of the house of the Lord . . . Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with *perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord.*”

Let this be our spirit, dear people of Weston, and then we shall have no need to ask where the money will come from, for it will come from the hearts of people who love to glorify God, and to praise His glorious Name.

Does anyone say that the sacrifices of God are not silver and gold, but “a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart?” True, a thousand times true; but when our hard spirits and hearts have been broken open by the Spirit of God, it is wonderful what riches are found inside them.

There are two things for which I ask the special prayers of all who believe in prayer.

Firstly – That God’s blessing may rest upon all those who are to be confirmed at Kelston, on March 15th. We have about 33 candidates.

Secondly - That the cottage meetings¹⁰, which are being held in eight centres in the Parish, may be the means of helping some of us to live truer Christian lives.

There has been very slow progress during the past month, mainly owing, we presume, to the bad weather. Now at last the roofing is commenced, and we hope that by the end of March we shall have everything covered in. We beg to acknowledge the sum of £20 from Miss Cooke, £1 1s. from Mrs. Edwards, 5/- from Miss Phayre, 1/- from Mr. Southard, making the total £3408 7s.



¹⁰ These cottage meetings appear to be early fore-runners of Home Groups.

APRIL 1893

The work has now arrived at a very interesting stage, and we can all form a fairly good idea of what the Church will be like when finished. The best view is from the North-East side of the Church Yard, from which aspect the general effect is very good. It will be a great improvement when the ornamented parapet has been carried round the new building.

When will it be finished? That is the question we are all asking. Well, 'finishing' is a long word when applied to Church building, and we hope this Church never will be quite finished, because it must grow more beautiful as the life of the Church in Weston flows deeper and stronger in the hearts of Weston people. We have, however, informed the builders that we intend (D.V.) to open the Church about Midsummer's Day, and there seems no reason why we should not do so, though the interior work may not be quite completed.

When will it be paid for? That is another question, and the answer must come from ourselves. We must all do something more, according to our means. Let us make a good Easter offering to God for His House, and then we shall see how we stand.

How shall we be the better for it? That is also a question which some, no doubt, are asking. Why spend so much money on stone and timber? "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands." Could not we find some more practical and sensible way of spending all this money? Good people of Weston; there have always been some who think like this, but we don't think with them. Shall we open our Bibles and see what our Blessed Lord thought about it, for the very same thing was said in His hearing by His own disciples. A certain woman had poured upon her Master some ointment, "very precious," "very costly," and when the disciples saw it they had indignation, and said "To what purpose is this waste? this ointment might have been sold and given to the poor." Jesus said "Why trouble ye the woman, she hath wrought a good work upon me,"-"Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall

also this that this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her.”
Matthew xxvi 6

The disciples of Jesus have always learned from this incident that *nothing is too costly, too precious for the master*, He loves our offerings, not because they are worthy of His Name, but because they come out of loving, faithful hearts. That is why the Church, the Bride of Christ has always built beautiful Churches – beautiful according to her means – and poured her treasures at the feet of her Lord and Master. If we ever hear anybody say, “To what purpose is this waste,” we must have a good answer ready.

MAY 1893

Slowly and surely the work proceeds towards its completion, and though we dare not say it is fixed, we believe that the Church will be re-opened at the end of June.

In addition to this we publish a list of things already given or privately subscribed for.

New Organ – Memorial Gift (fully subscribed).

New Font – Children's Memorial Gift (fully sub.)

New Pulpit – Memorial Gift, the Pinder family.

Brass Eagle Lectern – Mrs. Home.

Centre Lights for East Window – Mrs. Home.

Centre Panel for Reredos – Mrs. Fraser.

Altar Cross – Mrs. Poppelwell.

Carved Oak Litany Desk – Miss Archer Thompson.

Brass Alms Dish – Miss Richardson.

Oak Altar-Table – The Vicar.

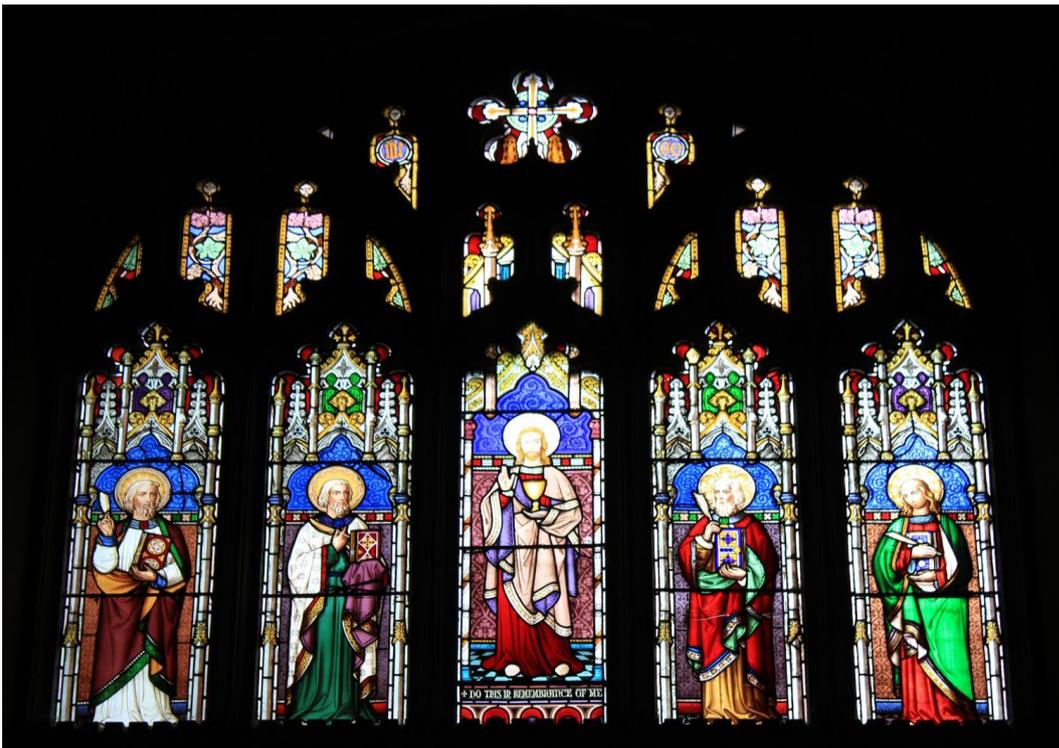
Embroidered Altar-Frontal - Mrs. Hayes Robinson.



ALTAR CROSS



MEMORIAL FONT



EAST WINDOW



REREDOS



PULPIT

When we come to consider all that has been subscribed and given in a short 18 months we need not fear, surely, that we shall have our further needs supplied all in good time.

What are these further needs? First and foremost between £500 and £600 for Church Building.

(It is pleasanter and easier to make special gifts than to subscribe to the General Fund, but this is a temptation we have to withstand. We must *first* do what we can towards paying off the debt which we have voluntarily undertaken, *then* we may proceed to beautify the House of God with gifts).

Brass Altar-Rails.

Ornamental Gas Brackets for Chancel.

Our readers will see that these things are necessities. There are many other things not so essential, and smaller things not so costly which we may ask for at another time.

Let us be truly thankful to God for prospering this work which we are doing in His Honour, so far in excess of our expectation. One by one our difficulties, which seemed great, have melted away, and we are drawing near to the fulfilment of that which has filled the hearts of many Weston people for a long, long time. We must not be disappointed if the Church is opened before it is finished. In any case we cannot rest until the Churchyard looks very different to what it is at present.

It will not be safe to place the new organ in the Church until the end of the summer, and the font will have an opening to itself at a later date.

JUNE 1893

The opening of the Church is fixed for June 29th, (S. Peter's Day), and in good time before that date you will receive full information about the opening ceremony, and the day's proceedings. I will only say now, that I trust we shall all make it a really joyful day in Weston. We do not all agree about everything, perhaps we do not even all agree about the Restoration of the Church. There are some, no doubt, at any rate I hope there are some, who loved the Church as it was – the Church of their fathers, the Church of their childhood, the Church of their Baptism, of the Confirmation, of their Marriage, the Church in which they have been taught of God for years, the Church of old memories which grow sweeter as they grow older – well, we shall not forget them, we shall “weep with those that weep,” because we all love old associations, and old memories, and we are all more or less suspicious of new ideas. But at the same time when we look around and see what the old ideas have done, we begin to think that there is always room for improvement, and so we rejoice when we see the Church improved, and hope that it means improvement in other ways, and so we ask those with whom we have wept to rejoice with us who do rejoice. Let us then all unite on the opening day, and with one heart and one voice, glorify God our Saviour.

A WORKING MAN TO WORKING MEN - THE NEW CHURCH¹¹

So I hear that our Church is to be closed soon. The new Church, beautiful and glorified for the better worship of God, is to be re-seated with splendid new oak seats, quite altered, and quite different from the old Church; The new Church is to be opened on June 29th. Is this so? Well! Well! It's still the old Church only improved like. If you chaps have been to it, regular afore, come to it, regular then. It may be easier to realize we're in God's presence. It may be easier to listen to the sermon in comfortable new seats. Don't go to sleep in them, or get slack in your new worship. Kneel down to say your prayers, and sit tight to hear the word of God. And, too, those parsons of ours don't want to see those fine new oak seats, they want to see them covered up with folk, and mind you not only women folk. There's no better Church decoration

¹¹ This piece was not written by the vicar but another occasional contributor who wrote pieces specifically addressed in a manly way to men, usually in a colloquial way with a touch of dialect writing.

than a row of good strapping men in their Sunday black, setting off the fine carved seats ends. And, look you, what's of a vast more importance, God would a deal sight sooner see a plain deal bench full, then the finest of oak seats empty.

I guess there'll be a fine new organ, and the Choir will be a bit grander now. Well! It aint all Choir and organ, mind; 'tis good to hear the men's voices, saying of their Amen, so be it, as if they meant it, and singing with a bit of soul that lifts the music up from the earth to Heaven.

Yes, don't you men forget to come to put some heart into your worship and singing, and may be that'll help the parson to give us something worth hearing.

JULY 1893

THE WORK (ALMOST) COMPLETED

It's with sincere thankfulness that we leave the great work of restoring the Church Fabric behind us, and know that there has been "something accomplished, something done." We ought to be deeply thankful to God for having brought us successfully and happily to the completion of our work. We started out to accomplish no light task, and we determined to carry it out in no shabby or half-hearted manner. We believed in the sacred motto "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," and we believed that this work of building a Temple to God was to the glory of God. Consequently we are sure that He has prospered our handiwork.

We have now a Parish Church more worthy of His Name. It is not elaborately built, but it is *well* built, and there is nothing about it of the nature of a sham. Everything is intended to last for centuries, and to tell, in ages to come, the same story which the Parish Churches of England tell to day – of a church which has lived through all the changes and chances of the national life; and of Churchmen, who believe that the glory of God is worthy of nothing less than the best offerings they can make.

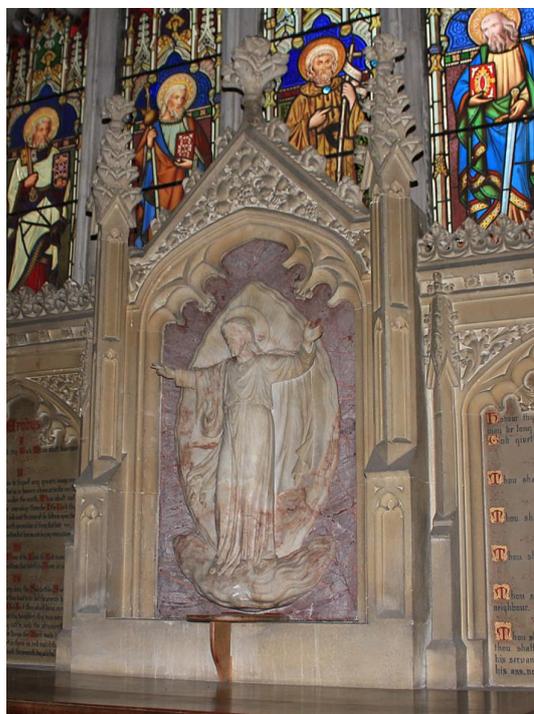
I spoke of the completion of the work. In one sense it is complete, but not in others. It is true we have more or less accomplished the work we have had in hand. But as long as we love the House of God we shall continue to render it more and more worthy of His Holy Name. The Church Fabric is one of the outward and visible signs of the inward and spiritual life of the Parish. When that life is dead you generally find the Church is shabby, when life is healthy and hearty, you find the Temple of God growing in brightness and beauty. Let us never say, then, "we have completed our work," but rather, "what more can we do?"

But we must remember also, that not only this work, but all external work, however beautiful, is incomplete, indeed it is nothing, it is worse than nothing. It is idolatry, unless the real spiritual life of the Parish is growing more strong and more beautiful with it. God is glorified *first* in true, brave,

faithful lives, *then* in outward offerings. “Ye also as *living* stones are built up a *spiritual* house.” If that is true of us, and we must see that it is true, then all external things are acceptable to God.

THE RE-OPENING AND CONSECRATION OF THE PARISH CHURCH

St. Peter’s Day, Thursday, June 29th, will long be remembered as a red letter day in the history of Weston Parish. Though the early morning was dull and grey, the clouds soon cleared off, and the weather was everything that could have been desired. Great efforts had been made to get the Church ready in time, and, as far as the interior was concerned, the new building was surprisingly complete. All who saw the Church for the first time must have been delighted with its beauty. The new stone pulpit, the handsome brass eagle lectern, the new lights in the East window, the Altar with its beautiful new Altar cloth, and, most striking of all, the exquisite sculptured figure of our Ascending Lord in the centre panel of the reredos¹² – all gifts of Weston people – were ready for Consecration to God. The new oak seating with richly carved panels, the choir stalls with their stately poppy heads, the stone work with its handsome arches, and floriated capitals, and the



REREDOS

¹² The reredos is the stone decoration at the far end of the chancel beneath the East Window.

splendid oak roof¹³, all combined to tell the same story of reverence, and beauty, and reality, which have their home and their consecration in the House of God.

The Service commenced at 11 with a procession from the Vicarage which entered the West door with the singing of the hymn, "O God our help in ages past." The Choir, arrayed in surplices and cassocks, the handiwork of many kind friends, led the way, and was followed by over thirty of the neighbouring Clergy, including the Rural-Dean and Bishop Bromby who, in the unavoidable absence of the Bishop of the Diocese, performed the ceremony of Consecration. Then followed the Chancellor of the Diocese, the Registrar, the Churchwarden and Sidesmen, and the Members of the Building Committee, who have patiently and zealously followed the various stages of the work for the past eighteen months and more.

The Consecration ceremony commenced with the 24th Psalm, during the singing of which the Bishop, accompanied by the Vicar acting as Chaplain, dedicated with prayer the several portions of the new building, and all that it contained, to God's service for ever. The legal formalities being over, there followed a bright Service of shortened Morning Prayer, in which Rev. H. R. Moule read the prayers, and the Rev. E. J. Harford, late Rural-Dean, the



CEILING DETAIL

¹³ The roof in the new part of the building is oak but the ceiling in the nave (in the 1832 part of the building) is plaster with parts painted to look like wood!

lesson – Solomon’s great prayer at the Dedication of the Temple. The music was perfectly simple and familiar, so that all could join. The Service concluded at the 3rd Collect, and then after the singing of the Old Hundredth, the Communion Service followed. The Sermon was preached by the Bishop, and the offerings were collected during the singing of the hymn, “Holy Offerings.” After the prayer for the Church Militant the beautiful hymn, “Christ is the Foundation of the house we raise” was sung, after which the Clergy and many of the congregation remained for the Celebration of Holy Communion.

THE PUBLIC LUNCHEON

After the Service a large company numbering over 200 sat down to the Public Luncheon¹⁴, which was most efficiently provided by Mr. Fisher of Bath. The guests included the bishop, the chancellor, many of the clergy, the Builder, (Mr. Stephens,) the Choir men, Bell-ringers, and the foremen and workmen upon the building. Many ladies were present, among others Mrs. Fraser, who has contributed so largely to the work. After Luncheon the Vicar proposed “the Queen” and “long life and happiness to the Prince George and Princess Mary.” Then followed “The church and the Diocese,” to which Bishop Bromby responded, after which Prebendary Harford proposed “Prosperity to Weston,” coupled with the names of the Vicar and Churchwardens. The Vicar having taken the opportunity of thanking all those who had contributed in various ways to the success of the undertaking, Mr. Trickey also responded, and then after the toast “the Architect, Builder, Foreman and Workmen,” to which Mr. Harbottle Reed, in the absence of Mr. Harbottle, the Architect, responded, the company broke up.

¹⁴ There is no further information as to where 200 people sat down to this public luncheon (although it may have been done in two or more sittings). The tea, which was served to 900 (!), took place in Mr. Wright’s field – wherever that was – and in the Vicarage Garden.

THE FLORAL CANTATA

The chief attraction in the afternoon was the Floral Cantata, given by the girls of Day and Sunday Schools, under the leadership of Miss Annie Smith¹⁵, who took the part of 'Spring.' The girls numbering about 120 marched through the village, headed by the Band, into the Vicarage Garden, and a remarkably pretty sight it was. They were divided into 12 divisions, each representing some well-known flower. We congratulate and thank most heartily all the many kind ladies who created such wonderfully beautiful varieties of paper flowers. The space in front of the Vicarage was packed with a most appreciative audience, consisting of parents and friends, and seemingly half the Parish besides. The 'bunches of flowers' came forward in turn to sing their song, and to present themselves to 'Spring,' and in conclusion the children formed a grand circle, and danced round the May pole, while those in the centre plaited the coloured ribbands with great success. Altogether it was a most charming entertainment, and everybody, girls as well as audience, enjoyed it thoroughly. We owe a great debt of thanks to the Misses Edwards, Miss Woolford, and many others for all their labour, and also to Miss Annie Smith and all the girls for doing their part so well. By the kind consent of the parents the girls repeated the performance to another delighted audience on Saturday afternoon.

THE BOYS' SPORTS

In the meanwhile the whole of the younger male population of the Parish had been drawn away by the "Pied Piper," in the shape of the Industrial Boys' Band, to carry out the excellent programme of Sports provided for them by the Sports Committee. The boys, each armed with a flag, had a grand march to the field, and many people accompanied them. We have no space to give the names of all the winners, but it was delightful to see the zeal and the order in which the programme was carried out. All thanks to Messrs. Cornell, Dawe, Wilson, W. Harding, W. Smith and Dr. Jones. For their great help in organising the Sports, and our special gratitude is due to Mr. Cornell and Mr. Wilson for their great labour in selecting the prizes and managing the flag department. At five o'clock the boys marched back

¹⁵ Annie Smith was the only child of the widowed Mrs Smith. She was aged 19 or 20 and appears to have been a lovely person much involved in the life of the church. Tragically within a year or two she died leaving her mother totally bereft.

through the village to Mr. Wright's field, where all preparations were made for tea.

THE PARISH TEA

There never was such a tea, we should think, and Mr. Fisher managed it splendidly. Nearly 300 children and 600 adults were provided with enough and to spare. The elders of the Parish, *i.e.*, all over 60 years of age, as well as the youngsters were freely admitted. This reminds us that we have to thank many kind friends for so generously contributing to the expenses of the day, which we believe amounted to over £30. The time after tea was spent very happily in the field, until at 7.15 the band played "God save the Queen," and then the bells of the Parish Church were ringing for Evensong. We are glad to say there was a large congregation, and a hearty service, the Rev. North Pinder preached a beautiful sermon on the Worship of the Church, which was all the better because it came from one who loved Weston and spoke to Weston hearts. Thus ended this happy day, and truly we must thank God for blessing all our poor efforts, and for bringing us together as a united Parish, and for giving us new heart and hope for His Service in future. To all who rallied round the Clergy and helped to make everything pass off so happily, to Churchwardens, Sidesmen, Bell-ringers, Choir, District Visitors, Day and Sunday School Teachers, Band Boys, to Miss King, Miss Shaul, Miss Ellen Smith and staff, for undertaking the Infants' Tea in the Vicarage Garden, which we had almost forgotten, to Mr. Dawe for his hard work as Hon. Secretary, to the Committee of Management, and to Mr. Wright for the loan of the field, we accord our most hearty thanks. It is a grand thing to find so many willing helpers as we have in our Parish, and as we live together may we all pull together to carry through all our Master's work as we have been permitted to do on the great occasion.

We publish with much thankfulness a list of the offerings since last month. It will be seen that the contributions during the last week in June amounted to about £300. It is not possible until the Architect and Builders have sent us their full account to say exactly what it is the amount of our debt upon the Church, let us hope next month to make a clear statement, and then we must all make one more effort go clear off the debt by the end of the year.

THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR SEATING¹⁶

We hope the Sunday Morning congregation will, in the course of a few Sundays, become quite accustomed to the new seats, and the new plan of seating. The Vicar and Churchwardens have taken great pains, after full consideration, to carry out what seems to them the best plan. The arrangement is not necessarily a permanent one, but must be looked upon as tentative for the present. It remains to be seen how many unassigned seats will be required; at present nearly all the seats in the North Aisle are entirely free to anyone who wishes to sit there, and there are also a considerable number of seats in the Church which have not been assigned to the regular congregation. We feel sure that the members of the regular congregation will do all in their power to assist the convenient seating of all who come, and this can be best done by coming regularly, punctually, and if possible by informing the Parish Clerk if they are going to be away for any length of time. It has been thought right and proper that the children of our Sunday Schools should have places on the floor of the Church, and for the present it is arranged that the boys of Weston School shall occupy the gallery. Those who are not parishioners or who, being parishioners, do not wish to have regular places, will greatly oblige by either occupying seats which they know are unassigned, or by waiting till some can be found for them. As far as we can see there is room enough and to spare in the Church for all who are likely to attend the Morning Service.

¹⁶ At this time, seats were allocated to individuals although the practice of pew rents had been stopped by 1893 – pew rents plus church rates levied on householders in the parish had been the main source of income for churches.

OCTOBER 1893

WESTON CHURCHYARD¹⁷

I wish to write a few words on one special subject this month – our Churchyard. We have talked and heard much of our Church of late, and we all rejoice to see it as it is, but we are not going to forget that the Church stands upon sacred ground, which was consecrated, many centuries ago, by a Bishop of our Mother Church of England, and has been the hallowed resting place of Weston parishioners for succeeding generations. At present, our Churchyard is no credit to the Parish. We all know this, and we are all ashamed of it, and, I believe, that I am only speaking for the whole parish, when I say, that the time has now come, when we ought to take this matter in hand. You have all seen what a good, strong, united feeling can do for the Church, now let us see what the same hearty determination can do for the Churchyard. I know there are difficulties, but the best thing is to start the work, and let the difficulties take care of themselves. What are the difficulties? I only see two. First, we must have funds. It may be said, that we have not yet paid the bill for the Church; but I feel sure, that most people will agree, that it would be a pity to put off this work. The Winter is the time to do it, it will give employment to Weston men, and by next Summer, we shall be reaping the fruits of our energy. Let me explain how matters stand. The Churchyard is at present in the hands of the Burial Board, which is bound to keep it in “decent order!” The Burial Board is willing to do all it can. But the matter must be carried through to completion by voluntary contributions. We cannot be satisfied with only “decent order;” we want to see the Churchyard in first-rate order, and as quickly as possible, so we must assist the Burial Board by subscriptions. I feel sure that many will be ready to help. It is not a large sum we require now. The first thing is to remove the broken and nameless tombstone, in fact, to do the rough work, and £50 will go a long way. When the heavy work is done, then will come the question of ‘beautifying,’ but it is not the question for this Winter. I will gladly receive contributions, large or small, and, as all classes are deeply interested in this matter, I hope many will help accordingly to their means. I believe the first difficulty of “funds,” will not prove a serious one.

¹⁷ Having nearly completed the work of improving and extending the church, Revd Hardcastle now turned his and the parish’s attention to the neglected churchyard. At this time there was no green space in the village for the children to play on, so they used the Churchyard as a play space which was seen as a problem.

The second difficulty, and the last, is the children – bless their hearts, they have not a square foot of turf, where they can play in peace, a fact which I hope will sink very deep into the heart of the parish, because it is a very serious one, which certainly ought to be remedied somehow. Still, much as we feel for our children, we cannot have the Churchyard made into a playground, and we are not much inclined to spend our money upon it, unless we have some assurance that it will not be wasted. This is our second difficulty, and, I believe, it will be overcome. Possibly it may be necessary to rail in a portion of the Churchyard, but the best kind of railing and the cheapest, is a good, healthy, public opinion, which will not allow God's acre to be desecrated. The matter is in the hands of the parents of the parish, and I most earnestly invite them to press this upon the children. In the meantime let us get to work; we shall be able to manage the children difficulty.

REFLECTIONS ON THE RESTORATION PROJECT

It's almost finished now – at least, when organ, font, and choir screens are in their places, Weston Parish Church will have been enlarged and restored according to the architect's designs. It will never be finished; so long as you love and reverence it as God's House – your home, there will always be something to do. But when was the work begun which has gone on these many days before your eyes? We can hardly say.

Some 60 years ago, your old Vicar, Mr. Bond, found the little old village church too strait for the use of the place. It had been built when the present tower was built, say about 1450. It was old, it was pretty, but it was too small. There may have been, indeed almost for certain there was, a House of God on this spot before that, else why should the coffin of Geoffrey¹⁸ have been buried there, (the inscription on the lid is certainly much older than the tower,) if it were not God's Acre then where God's House stood?

¹⁸ Geoffrey's coffin refers to a stone coffin which was discovered when the 1830-32 church was built. The lid of the coffin is now in the chancel area of the church. It has a Latin Inscription referring to a priest or abbot called Geoffrey who was buried in it and the coffin is dated to the 12th and 13th centuries.

Undoubtedly for over 600 years God's name has been worshipped on the spot you worship in now.

So the old Church vanished, and a new one was built, the one you all remember so well. Then some 20 years ago, again the House was too strait,



GEOFFREY'S COFFIN

and plans were prepared, which exist to-day, for enlarging the Church. This fell through, however, and nothing was done till Mr. Leakey came to be Vicar. He brought the experience to bear on the plan which he had learned at Topsham. Plans were prepared by Mr. Harbottle, and money came in, but God called the master mind away, and then, for two years death followed death, and, though meetings of the Building Committee were held, nothing definite was done. And now God has given rest from change, and one of Mr. Leakey's plans – altered and enlarged very much it is true, but still his – has been chosen; and the work has been done and the building built, and so through these many days has one planted, and another watered, and God has given the increase. As the little rough Church which was before even the present tower, has grown into the stately House of God you worship in, so may imperfect lives grow into a perfect Christ like life of good living which may abound to the honour and glory of God.

NOVEMBER 1893

THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS

I hope that the Magazine will be in your hands by All Saints' Day, the Dedication Festival of our Church. All Saints' Day is a truly beautiful day to Christians. It tells us that all who are living in Christ, or who ever have lived in Him, are alive in Him to-day. It tells us that we are not merely lonely mortals struggling for a living which is sometimes hard to get, and for a happiness which is never satisfied, and who will pass away and be no more seen; but that we may each one have a place in the great multitude which no man can number. This is the message of All Saints' Day, and I say it is a glad message to the faithful.

I could not possibly choose a more appropriate day for asking you to help in the work of restoring your Churchyard to a condition worthy of its name, 'god's acre.' We have already received some most generous help, and I have no doubt whatever about so good a cause being carried successfully through. But I should like to know that Weston people have a hearty interest in the honour of their Parish Churchyard. This can be shown by many people giving *something* even though it be but little. The collections throughout the day will be for this object, and boxes will be placed in the shops to receive any offerings that are made. If any Parishioners see the mounds or tombstones in which they are interested likely to be disturbed, I shall be most glad to know, and can promise that their wishes shall be carefully attended to.

The past month has been a quiet one, and as I am without a curate I suppose it is best not to start too many things. Mr. Shepherd has been a great help, and I feel sure that his time among us has proved and will prove a blessing to many. The Sunday Evening Mission Services are much valued, and I believe they may be the means of bringing to God some broken and contrite hearts which He will not despise.

DECEMBER 1893

We are glad to say that good progress has been made with the renovation of the Churchyard during the past month. Some trees and shrubs will be planted as soon as possible. If anyone would give us some more good turf, we should be very grateful for the gift. The Vicar would be very glad if those who see the mounds or gravestones in which they are interested, likely to be disturbed, would communicate with him.

We gratefully acknowledge the very generous gift of two beautiful Prayer Books for the Reading Desk and Sanctuary, from the Rev. Stanley Boyd.

The Organ will scarcely be ready by Christmas. This is what we are now told after having been promised for months past that it should be ready. It is most disappointing if true.

There is no reason to doubt that the font will be in its place this month. It will be dedicated and used for the first time on the Sunday after Christmas Day.

JANUARY 1894

THE NEW FONT

The New Font, given in memory of the late Mrs. Hardcastle, by the children of the Parish and other young people who knew her, was dedicated to the Service of God on Sunday, December 31st, at the Children's Service. The Font is made of Caen stone, and is of the perpendicular style. It is almost perfect of its kind – simple, chaste, and beautiful in design. Mr. Steele, of Bristol, undertook the work, and has executed it with great skill, while Mr. Bullock, of Weston, has been responsible for the base. Due reverence will be shewn to the old Font, which has been used at the Baptism of all this generation, though it is not yet settled what to do with it.



FONT PLATE



MEMORIAL FONT

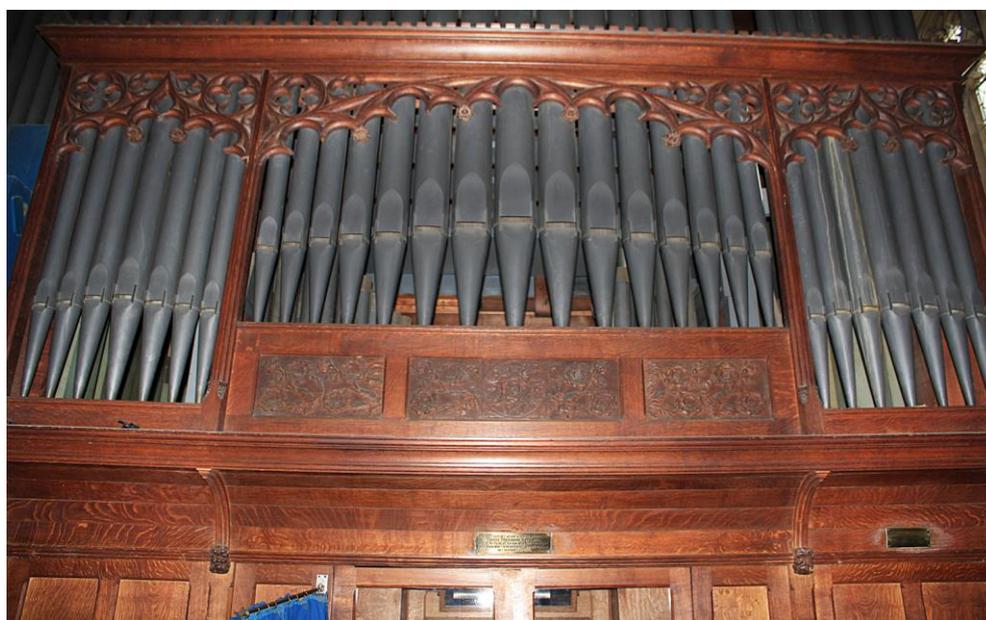
CHRISTMASTIDE 1893

The Christmas of 1893 will be remembered by the Church folk of Weston as a very bright and happy time.

The first note was sounded at the Children's Service, on Christmas Eve, and then followed the Dedication of the New Organ¹⁹ at 3.30 p.m. It was most satisfactory to see the Church so well filled with Weston people, and such a hearty interest taken in the event.



MEMORIAL PLAQUE ON THE ORGAN



ORGAN

¹⁹ The new organ was also dedicated to the memory of Mrs Hardcastle as can be seen on the brass plate on the organ console.

The clergy and choir having taken their places, the short Service of Dedication followed. There was no music of any kind. It consisted of some appropriate versicles recited by clergy and congregation, the reading of xcii. Psalm, the lesson, taken from 2 Chronicles, xxix verses 25 to 29, concluding with prayers. The special prayer of Dedication was as follows: "Sanctify, O Lord, we beseech Thee, because Thy mercy endureth for ever, and let it be blessed and hallowed. In the Name, etc."

Then followed the Lord's Prayer, and the Benediction: "When the minstrel playeth, the hand of the Lord come upon you, and bless you, and strengthen you for evermore. *Amen.*"

Then choir and congregation stood up, and all joined in that grand hymn of praise, the Psalm 150, accompanied by the organ. There could not have been a more appropriate, impressive, or sacred Dedication than this united burst of praise to God. Then followed the Anthem. Mr. G. H. Mills, Organist of St. Andrew's, Bath, then gave an excellent recital, fully bringing out the power of the organ. Mr. Hood, of St. John's Choir, Bathwick, sang "Sing ye praise," and "Comfort ye." The service concluded with the hymn "O God, our help in ages past," and the Blessing.

The organ is made by Mr. Sweetland of Bath, and we can truly say that it fulfils our highest hopes. Nothing that human hands can make is worthy of the glory of God; we can but offer our best, and this beautiful organ will be accepted as a humble thank-offering, for the gift of her life, in whose memory it is raised.



ORGAN 1

Christmas Day opened fine and mild. It was true happiness to see a congregation of nearly 60 people in Church, at 7 a.m. in the bright moonlight morning, to receive the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. At 8.30, there were more than 80 present, and at mid-day, 73. We cannot help seeing cause for hope and encouragement in this. Numbers are not everything, but they tell us something; and when we see that, on Christmas Day 1891, (shortly after the Mission,) only 75 came to Holy Communion, and this year there were 210, we may surely hope, that Christian truth is making its way, that prejudices are gradually being removed, and that Church life is growing stronger in the Parish, especially as the great majority at the two early celebrations consisted of our own working people in the Village.

Boxing Day was celebrated by a Public Tea and 'Social Evening,' and everything went off splendidly. The Schoolroom was gorgeously decorated with innumerable flags, (the property of the Vicar,) set up with great taste and labour by willing helpers. 150 sat down to tea. We must give all credit to Mr. Shepherd and to Nurse Wilkie for their splendid management, and we heartily thank Mr. Bowden, Mr. Howell, Mr. Albert Stagg, and also many

other kind people, who gave their time and their hearts, for the great cause of making other people happy. This applies also to the 'Social Evening,' which, we believe everybody, who helped to cram the room full to overflowing, thoroughly enjoyed.

NOTES AND NOTICES

The beautiful new oak screens were placed in the Church by Christmas Eve, and have immensely added to the richness and dignity of the chancel. The west side of the organ will have to be improved; but 'all in good time.'

MARCH 1894

The time has now come when we must put forth our energies once more to clearing off the debt upon the Church. We are going through hard times, and most people are poor just now, but still, '*self-sacrifice*' is a wonderful word, and a wonderful worker, and it asks us to do something more than give what we can spare, but rather to *go without something*, that we may have wherewithal to offer. How are we denying ourselves this Lent? Let all do something, and we shall speedily demolish the debt. The Vicar will gratefully receive any Easter Offerings for the Church, and the collections throughout the day will be given for this object.

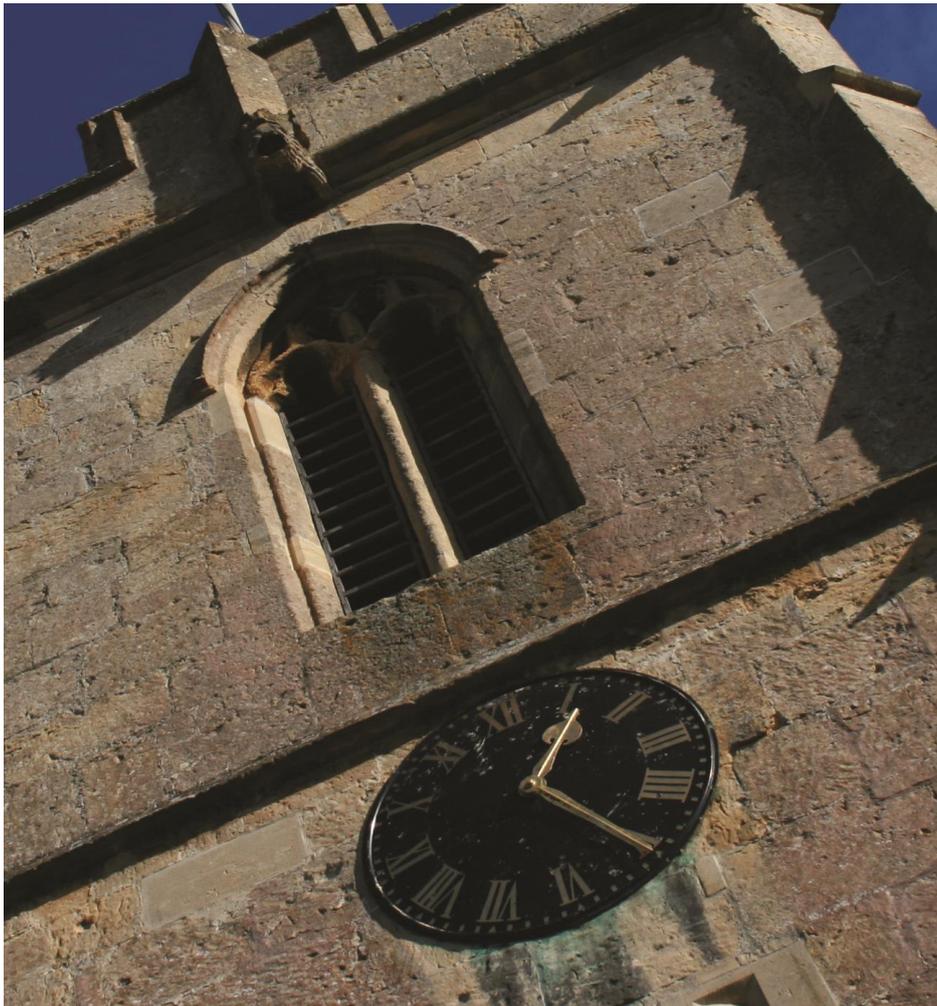
The winter work in the Churchyard will now be stopped, and what remains to be done must be completed at some future time. An immense improvement has been brought about, and with the exception of the footpaths, which sadly need attention, everything has given satisfaction. We are certainly not going to the expense of railing off the turf at present. Why cannot we "trust the people," trust ourselves, and even the children to respect the Churchyard? We believe that we can, and we believe that Weston people are unanimous in wishing to see 'God's Acre' a credit to the Parish. One working-man has offered to take voluntary charge of a flower bed: will any more of our Weston gardeners make the same offer? Let us have a bright Churchyard, and let us teach and trust our children to respect it, and let us do without unclimbable fences which every boy, who is worthy to be called a boy, will seek every opportunity to climb.

MAY 1894

Mr. E. H. Harbottle²⁰ paid a visit to the Church in the course of the past month, and expressed himself quite satisfied with the condition of the work after its first winter's trial. The interior walls have been thoroughly cleaned down and all damp marks removed. The Architect and Builder are now engaged in adjusting various items in the accounts, and we hope very soon that the Building Committee will be able to make an exact statement with regard to the debt. We are able, however, to give a fairly accurate estimate of our present position. It is as follows. The Builders' contract amounted to £3,959, and after various additions and deductions decided upon by the Committee in the course of the work, the account will be just about £4000. In addition to this, £130 has been spent on fees and extras, the latter including gas-fittings, hassocks, panelling of walls, re-seating of gallery, etc., all of which were approved by the Committee, and were quite necessary. Thus the cost of building has amounted to about £4,130. The Architect's bill, according to the rough figures he has given, amounts to £250, including everything. Thus the total cost of the Restoration has been, roughly, £4,380. This, we all agree, is a large sum, larger than we anticipated at the first. But when we remember that we took the lowest estimate out of six competitors, who ranged up to £700 higher, and that at a time when building was very slack, and builders were anxious to do the work; when we remember that the contract has only been exceeded to a very small extent, though most important improvements have been made in the plan, such as carving the bench ends; when we remember, moreover, that we have built not for to-morrow only but for the centuries to come, and that we have built to the Glory of God, and have thought it right to give God our best; when we remember these things we shall probably all agree that though the cost has been great, it has not been too great, the money has been well spent, and not one of us is the poorer. The total amount already raised is £4165, which leaves a debt of about £215. This is no great burden, but we do not wish to have it hanging upon us longer than necessary.²¹

²⁰ Harbottle was the architect.

²¹ This was not quite the last update on the Restoration Project but all the remaining entries relate to paying off the remaining debt which was achieved in 1896 (by which time other projects had started such as extending the church school.)



POSTSCRIPT

E H Hardcastle did not stop at the enlargement of the church and the improvement of the churchyard. By the end of his ten-year ministry in Weston (1891-1901), he had brought about an extension to the school and built a parish hall (still in use); he even used the gift of £200, which he was given on his leaving the parish to fund 'a much needed enlargement of the Rectory'. His last year was a particularly happy one as he married Alice Goschen, daughter of Viscount Goschen and they were married for 41 years. In 1901 he accepted the offer of a parish in Canterbury and later became Archdeacon of Canterbury, which was his final post in the Church of England. Hardcastle died in 1945 at the age of 83.

Towards the end of his life he published an autobiographical account of his life under the self-deprecating title 'Memoirs of a Mediocrity'. It is not likely that the people of Weston thought of him as a mediocrity when he left them. Of those years in Weston he wrote:

'My ten years at Weston was a time of marked progress. The truth is, it is easy enough for an average and sufficiently keen young man, with the affections of a friendly people to help him, to bring up a decadent parish to a fair standard of Church life and social decency. There comes a time of opportunity to every parish to pull itself out of the muddy ruts caused by years of neglect and conservative disposition to remain as it always has been. That was the case of Weston. The time of opportunity had come and only a fool would have failed... With the turn of the new century everything seemed to come to a time of change. A new century, a new Sovereign, a new wife and nearly ten years of fairly successful work in my first parish, through most of that time lovingly and most capably assisted by my sister Kate who had devoted herself to the parish, winning universal friendship and affection... We had a great farewell: and with mingled feelings of gratitude and sorrow, I took leave of the parish which had taught me so many lessons, which had generously put up with my shortcomings and mistakes and given me, without fail, its loyalty, sympathy and affection.'

After his departure, changes continued to be made to the church. A grateful parishioner paid for a memorial to Edward Hardcastle, namely a carved wooden screen 'dividing' the chancel from the nave. Taking it down in 1988 when the Church was reordered was to prove more controversial than when it was first erected. In 1911 a vicar's vestry was added and the choir vestry extended. The last major addition to the church was the creation of the Memorial Chapel in 1921 to honour men from Weston who had been killed in active service.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

All Saints is now wrestling with the challenge of how best to preserve and adapt its buildings for the present and for the future. This is so that they can continue to be a place where people can meet with God, encounter the claims of Jesus Christ on their lives, grow in discipleship and be a place to celebrate the joys of children and marriage as well as to mourn the loss of loved ones. We may not use exactly the same words as Edward Hardcastle or value the same things in a church building but his desire to build up a living church was every bit as strong as ours. His adherence to a vision, especially when he had just experienced great personal loss in the death of his young wife, should be a source of encouragement to us. May God grant us wisdom to know what to do for the best and may He also inspire a great spirit of generosity amongst us all.

Suggested donation for this booklet - £3

Free to download online

<http://www.allsaintsonline.org.uk/all-resource-list/a-time-to-build-up-church-history-booklet/>

Obtainable from the Church Office

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