

EARDISLAND PARISH CHURCH

ST. MARY'S, EARDISLAND, like most of our village churches, is a building of several periods. Its characteristic feature, the long aisleless nave, is the oldest part and dates from about the year 1200. This, with a tower at the West end, made up the original church - the East end serving as a chancel. The present chancel was added in the Fourteenth Century, when the South porch was also built and the three-light window inserted in the middle of the South wall of the nave. The old tower, to which had been added a steeple, fell in 1728 and was replaced in the same year; it is said at a cost of £155.

In the last hundred years the principal event in the history of the building was the restoration of 1864, during which a new and wider arch was made between the chancel and the nave, a new tower arch was made, the organ chamber added and the nave re-roofed. The beautiful Fifteenth Century screen appears to have originally been the Parclose screen of a Chantry on the North-east of the nave, and after the removal of the Chantry altar the screen remained and enclosed the large Burton Court pew and was at that time painted white. At the restoration of 1864 the paint was cleaned off and the screen removed to the Chancel, where it stood in front of the organ. On the erection of the existing organ in 1920 it was removed to the tower arch, where it still stands.

Additions since 1864 have included the stained glass in the East window, which was given by those generous benefactors of the church, Mr. and Mrs. John Clowes of Burton Court, as a thank-offering for the return of their son from the Boer War in 1901.

The North wall has three lancet lights; the small South doorway which is now blocked up was the original priest's door. The piscina and aumbry still remain, and also a Holy Water stoup by the South door and sedilia in the Chancel.

The church clock was erected in 1873, the cost being £65 plus £9.4s.2d. for erection. The money was raised by voluntary subscription, organised by Mrs. John Clowes. Judging by the Churchwardens' Accounts, the clock seems to have been a fairly expensive proposition:

"1889 - Repairs to Clock .. £2.2s.0d.
1902 - Church Clock £1.5s.0d."

And according to Mr. Harvey, on one occasion this was printed in the Parish Magazine:

"To the people of Eardisland
It is a disgrace
To have a Church Clock
Without 'ura' face."

Presumably, then, there was another clock before 1873, as the present clock has a face.

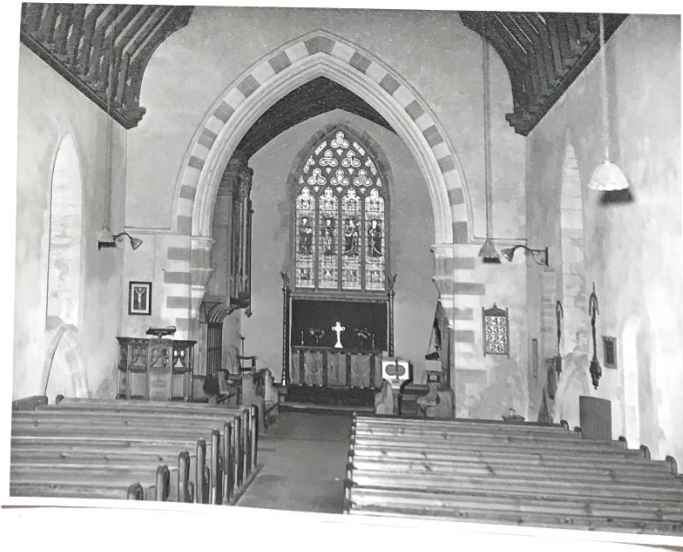
The clock was recently silent for about two years, from 1950 till 1952. It was cleaned, and the regilding was done by Mr. Leslie Evans in 1953.

The Mural tablets follow the usual pattern of their period

To face Page 73.



Chancel, St. Mary's, Cardisland.
about 1900.



To face Page 74.



EARDISLAND, in the County and Diocese of Hereford, is a large and poor parish nearly six miles in length. The Church, which is a fine example of the Architecture of the Middle Ages, has been pronounced by the County Surveyor, and by the Architect appointed by the Committee, to be in a very dangerous state of dilapidation. It is earnestly hoped that sufficient funds may be raised to *restore* this interesting old Church.

Contributions to the Restoration Fund will be thankfully received by B. L. Sanders, Esq., Churchwarden, or by the Rev. J. H. Black, Curate, to either of whom it is requested this card may be returned not later than February 1st, 1864.

Church Restoration Appeal, 1864.

NORTH NAVE ROOF.

For many years this roof has been in a state of disrepair, and a source of continual anxiety. A scheme for its renewal ten years ago had to be abandoned, owing to the war. Since then we have been constantly patching up, but this has been a costly process, and nothing but the complete renewal of the roof can prove satisfactory.

MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP OF HEREFORD.

I have been asked to commend this Appeal for the funds required for various repairs and renovations at Eardisland Church, and I commend it most warmly.

Many parishes in this Diocese are faced with very heavy expenses in connection with the fabric of their Churches, and I am impressed by the way in which parishioners themselves set to work to raise the necessary money, with as little help as possible from outside.

I hope the appeal will be successful, and that the work will be carried out without unnecessary delay.

T. HEREFORD.

To carry out this threefold scheme of extension and restoration, will, it is estimated, involve an expenditure of **£2,000**. Of this sum about £250 is already in hand. A very great effort, therefore, confronts us, but to neglect the well being of our fine 12th century Church, of which we are justly proud, is unthinkable.

Church Restoration Appeal, 1950.

What will YOU do to help us carry out the work?

No gift will be too small, but we feel that we must stress the magnitude of the task, and we hope that you will send us a generous contribution.

It will take some time to carry out the whole scheme, but much of it can be put in hand as soon as funds permit. Any delay in issuing the appeal can only lead to further deterioration and increased costs. We feel sure that, even in the difficult circumstances of to-day, you will encourage us by your utmost support NOW, to go ahead with the work as early as possible.

Please send your gift, which will be very gratefully received, to any one of the undersigned. May the time soon come when we may join together in our beloved Church to give humble thanks to Almighty God that His House of Prayer is once again restored, and made sound for many generations to come.

O. EVERY (CAPTAIN)
T. G. SMITH } *Churchwardens.*
L. EVANS, *Ringing Master.*
A. B. W. GREENHOUGH, M.C., M.B.E. (CAPTAIN)
P. E. ROCK, *Vicar.*

August, 1950.

74.

and in the main commemorate squires of old. One which is rather different in context reads:

"In memory of Joseph Trumper. He died the 7th day of December, 1740, aged 35.

Let none with sorrow be opprest,
At thirty-five I went to Rest,
Leaving my wife and children dear
To serve the Lord whom I did fear."

In 1834 an organ was bought by Miss Mary Anne Evans of Burton Court; it was so built that it could be played either in the usual way by hand or mechanically with a barrel and handle. At the restoration in 1864 the organ was placed in the Chancel. This organ was sold for £20 to Mr. Laurence Greenhough and is still in Staick House, and the existing organ was then erected as a gift from Lt.-Col. and Mrs. P.L. Clowes of Burton Court, in memory of their son, Lt. Warren Peter Clowes, who was killed in the Great War on March 30th 1918. The present organ was first worked by electricity in September 1949. The church was first lighted by electricity in 1931.

The font was the gift of Miss Elizabeth Evans in memory of her sister, Miss Mary Anne Evans, who died in 1850. There is no record of what became of the old font, but there is a drawing of it, taken from Dingley's "History from Marble", hanging on the West wall of the church, and a copy of this is reproduced opposite. The font cover was the gift of the Revd. P.A.H. Birley at Michaelmas 1936.

Extensive alterations and repairs were carried out in 1920, at a total cost of £1,758.4s.6d. These included the installation of the new organ - a gift from Lt.-Col. and Mrs. Clowes - the alteration of the floor levels of the Sanctuary and Chancel, and the re-paving of the Sanctuary with stone. Work was also carried out on the Altar, and new altar furniture was provided. Since that date various repairs have been carried out to the fabric of the church from time to time; and work is about to commence (June, 1955) on extensive re-tiling of the North Nave roof, at an estimated cost of £1,064.

The churchyard having become too small for the requirements of the Parish, a piece of land was given in 1950 by Capt. Arkwright of the Court House Farm, and the necessary work on the churchyard wall was carried out.

For the past few years it has been the custom to hold a Summer Sale in the School and the Recreation Ground, for the Restoration Fund.

There are two Charities which are allotted by the Vicar and Churchwardens though, in the opinion of the Charity Commissioners, neither is strictly an Ecclesiastical Charity. Both are distributed in bread to the poor of Eardisland on Candlemas Day. The income from the Alexander Froysell Charity (Alexander Froysell, died 16th December 1730: left £50) is £1.6s.8d., and from the Mary Marlowe Charity (Mary Marlowe, a native of Leominster, died 9th December 1778, aged 87 years) is 11s/7d. A third charity, known as the Court House Charity, has been allowed to lapse. An account of it is given elsewhere, as it is not an Ecclesiastical charity.

The existing Parish Registers date back to 1615, and have

much to tell us of those who have been born and married and have died during the last hundred years. Interesting entries are the ages of those who have died, which are a remarkable testimony to the longevity of the inhabitants and make credible the well-known story of Meg Goodwin (the 'Wench of Eardisland') who is said to have taken part in a Morris Dance before James I in 1609 at the age of 109. In the Woolhope Transactions of 1890 the Revd. Joseph Barker, who was then Vicar, related that in a little over a hundred years the deaths recorded had included no fewer than thirty-eight people aged 90 or over, among them several centenarians. He also mentioned a Widow Hill who died in 1676 at the reputed age of 111

It is interesting to examine the Churchwardens' Accounts and compare present day cost of upkeep with that of years ago. For a great number of years the Church cleaner was paid £2.12s.6d. a year, raised in 1903 to £3 and in 1905 to £4. The cleaner is now paid £10. The heating never seemed to be more than £3 a year: in the Parochial Church Council's last current Account we have

"Light and power ..	£5. 0. 0.
Fuel	£23. 2. 0."

We could find no entry for fee to Organist till 1904, when the sum of £12 per annum appears; to-day this figure stands at £20. We no longer have a paid Parish Clerk, however, so our Accounts shew a saving here. Salaries paid in the past to the Parish Clerk were £5.5.0. (before 1870); £6.6s.0d. (1870) £7 (1895); £10 (1903). Our last Sexton and Parish Clerk, Andrew Powell, was paid £16 a year at the time of his retirement in 1940.

One of the great Festivals of the year was, of course, the Harvest Home Thanksgiving, of which an excellent account appears in our Magazine each year. We quote from that of 1872:

"The Festival commenced with Morning Prayer at 11.30 in our old Church. There was a capital congregation... and the choir... acquitted themselves well in leading the chanting and singing... The Church had been very nicely decorated... Immediately after Service the employers and labourers repaired to a large tent erected in Mr. Coates' field and dined together on Old English Fare, the Chair according to request being taken by J. Clowes, Esq.... A fair and welcome sight it was to see Landowners, farmers, labourers, parsons and people seated at the same board and partaking in happy harmony and friendship together of the good things Divine Providence so bountifully bestows... thanks to the employers of labour for providing such a treat as this for their workmen. Dinner being well over all went to see Punch and Judy... Then while football and other sports went on began the Great Tea-drinking (for the cottagers' wives and children) which passed off admirably. All were now ready for the dancing which was kept up with great spirit both in the tent and the Schoolroom, musicians having been provided from Kidderminster and Shrewsbury for each party, and so passed the hours till the first stroke of 9 o'clock..."

Another account - for 1871 - recounts that 122 sat down to dinner, and about 500 partook of tea. The same report ends with the cryptic statement: "It is very comforting to

know that it had a more quiet and orderly ending than was ever known before." Another - for 1874 - says: "...the two policemen present said they had never seen a larger or more orderly Harvets-Home gathering." The Accounts for 1874 tell us that 169 lbs. of cake were consumed! - and a football purchased for 11s/-. And in 1882: "The bill of fare comprised goodly joints of roast and boiled beef, roast and boiled legs of mutton, vegetables and plum puddings."

The practice of having the Service in the morning and a dinner immediately afterwards for farmers and their employees seems to have stopped sometime between 1884 and 1888. The following extract comes from the report for 1888:

"...after the Service there was tea for all Eardisland cottagers' wives and children, football and other games, and dancing in the Schoolroom till 10 o'clock... At one time there seemed misgivings that the annual Harvest Festival would be shorn of the usual tea-drinking, but more than £7 was collected, sufficient not only for tea, plum cake, music, etc., but leaving a fair balance for a little festival gathering contemplated at Christmas."

The pattern reported for 1888 seems to have been followed faithfully for very many years, right up till the beginning of the Second World War. An effort was made to revive the Harvest Tea after this War, in spite of rationing and restrictions generally, but the numbers attending had dropped badly and other factors created difficulties. The habit of working on the farms all day and every day seemed to have taken such a hold that it was found advisable to hold the Service in the evening, instead of the afternoon; and under these circumstances it seemed pointless to keep up the Tea for a mere hundred or so people. The last Harvest Thanksgiving Tea was held in 1951.

The collection at the Harvest-Home Thanksgiving, always the biggest in the year, was for a very long time given to the Winter Coal Fund. This fund, along with the Clothing Club, went on well into this Century, and ceased only between the Wars when neither was any longer required. Reference to these Clubs is made more fully elsewhere.

Mr. Barker started a Parish Magazine shortly after coming to Eardisland - probably in 1868. This continued until approximately 1887, selling in the beginning at 2/- a year, and after 1881 (when the membership was only 56) at 2/6d. a year. The Leominster Deanery Magazine was initiated in 1888, actually in Mr. Barker's home, and from that date onwards Eardisland's notes appeared there. Unfortunately for the purposes of this history we have been able to find only six numbers of Mr. Barker's magazine.

It seems fairly certain that Eardisland has always had a good choir, and an entry in the Parish Magazine for June 1871 states that "18 members of our choir journeyed to Hereford to the Choral Festival on May 25th." Although in this account mention is made specifically of "the lads", it is reasonable to suppose that girls also attended practice and helped in the Services, for in the Magazine for June 1889 we are told that our Choir consisted of 4 basses, 4 tenors, 2 altos, 7 boy trebles, and 5 female trebles. It would seem, however, that the girls were of so little account in those days in the social

fabric that they were never allowed to go on the Choir outing, for the September number of the same year reports that the Choir had a most enjoyable outing to Ludlow - "15 Choir members and their friends, in 4 vehicles." It seems that in the later days the choir-girls did go to the Choral Festival at Hereford Cathedral, but not to the Choir outings until well on in this century.

Earlier magazines give accounts of the most enterprising outings, to places as far away as Cardiff and Bristol (for the latter, leaving Leominster by train at 5.14 c.m.): "money (for spending), 5 Choir Men, 5/-; ditto for 12 Choir Boys, 6/-." The Outing of 1883 was to Liverpool, and it is recorded that this was the third Choir Outing to this City. They left Eardisland at 4.30 a.m., walked to Leominster, which they left by train at 6.40 a.m. - and returned to Eardisland on foot from Leominster at 2 a.m. the following day!

In this Century, until about 1940 the girls assisted in the Church Choir, attending the Choir practices, but they sat in the front pews, and only the men and boys were surpliced. The Choir got new cassocks and surplices in celebration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, in 1897. These were worn for the first time at the special Accession Day Services.

This brings us to a comparison between Church Services, then and now.

Mr. Barker, it seems, was very keen on Public Catechising, and in 1871 he announces in the Magazine:

"Our Lent Catechising. This will go on each Sunday in Lent, as in former years, after the Second Lesson at Evening Prayer; and, all being as we hope, the following will be the order of catechetical instruction:

2nd Sunday in Lent.	Plain repetition of the Catechism.
3rd " " "	Sixth Article of the Creed.
4th " " "	Seventh " " " "
5th " " "	Eighth " " " "
Sunday before Easter.	Ninth " " " "

Services in his day were as follows: Sundays at 11 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. (6.30 p.m. in Summer). Other Holy Days, at 11 a.m. During Lent, Morning Prayer on Wednesdays and Fridays at 11 a.m., and Evening Prayer daily at 5.30 p.m. Holy Communion on the first Sunday in the month.

Clearly there was a Sunday School in those days, for awards were made every year for attendance at Church and Sunday School and Choir during the year; the prizes usually being a Bible or a Prayer Book, and, for the Choir, Hymns A. & M. and the 'Pilgrim's Progress'. A Children's Service was started by Mr. Barker during Lent, 1898, and it is almost certain that during his time in Eardisland the Sunday School was well attended. Great numbers of children were confirmed, too, in those days: in 1871, 15 boys and 16 girls. On this occasion, "for the first time within living memory" the Confirmation took place at Eardisland, and in addition to the local children 12 from Pembridge, 11 from Kingsland, and 2 from Bodenham were confirmed.

Mr. Worsey, who succeeded Mr. Barker in 1902, was a young man and obviously a very enthusiastic worker. During his

Vicariate Services were held at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. each Sunday, and there was Communion at 8.30 a.m. and after Mattins on alternate Sundays. There was Sunday School every Sunday morning in the School at 10 a.m. (66 children is mentioned as the figure on one occasion), and a Children's Service was held every Sunday afternoon at 3 p.m. when Baptisms also took place and mothers were invited to attend. There was also Morning Prayer at 10 a.m. on week-days. He started, too, a Bible Class for men and youths, and another Class for "Girls and Women who are not members of the Mothers' Meeting". Both met every week, as did the Mothers' Meeting, which is mentioned as well established in the Magazine for 1897. Branches of the Band of Hope, and of the Girls' Friendly Society, were started in 1903.

Mr. Worsley was succeeded in 1905 by Mr. Aldridge, and Services were held at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. each Sunday, with Communion at 8.30 a.m. every Sunday. Sunday School was at 10 a.m. and the older children marched to Church afterwards for the 11 o'clock Service; all sat together at the back of the Church, with their Sunday School teachers (as many as 5) at the end of the pews, the boys on one side and the girls on the other. There was a Children's Service in the afternoon at 2.30. Babies were christened at this Service, and many who are now middle-aged remember singing always "We are but little children weak". The Service was held at the West end of the Church, again the boys being on one side and the girls on the other.

When Mr. Birley came in 1917, Sunday Services continued to be held at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m., and Sung Eucharist every second Sunday was introduced. There was Holy Communion every day at 8.30 a.m., and Evensong every week-day at 7 p.m. Sunday School was still at 10 a.m., and this continued until Mrs. Birley's death in 1938, when the numbers had in any case fallen very much. Children's Church, too, had to be discontinued when Mr. Birley took the living of Stretford, and this was not revived till Mr. Rock came, in 1938.

Now Children's Church is held at 10 a.m. each Sunday and is very well attended. There is no Sunday School, but many of the older children stay on for Mattins. Our Sunday Services are held still at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m., with Holy Communion every Sunday at 8.30 a.m. and on Holy Days. There is also Communion on the first and third Sundays of the month, after Mattins.

Choir activities have continued in this Century, the Choir Outing having carried on till this last War. It has not been revived, but every Christmas the Vicar's Party for members of the Children's Church takes place and is greatly enjoyed. Recently - 1955 - the St. Mary's Youth Club has been started by one of our parishioners, for young communicants. It is very flourishing and well attended by the young people of the village.

The Mothers' Union, which had lapsed, was re-started in 1939; it meets once a month and has a good attendance of young mothers in the village, as well as the older ones.

Our Church has indeed seen many changes in the last hundred years. The large congregations of the past have



gone, and their places have not been filled. That is a lot which has befallen most churches. But though congregations are smaller, the Church remains a centre of worship, as it has been for so many centuries, and on special occasions such as Christmas, Easter, and Harvest Thanksgiving Service we have evidence of its abiding place in the affections of the parishioners. A religious revival, for which we all hope, may bring back those who now use it but seldom. In the meantime we may thank the not small band of faithful and voluntary supporters for their continued care of the Church and all that belongs to it, to make it what we see to-day - a building worthy of the Parish and those past generations who loved it as the House of God.

List of Vicars during the past hundred years:-

1816 .. Frederic Rudge
 1867 .. Joseph Barker
 1902 .. Frederic William Worsey
 1905 .. Richard Spencer Aldreidge
 1917 .. Percival Alfred Hugh Birley
 1938 .. Percival Edward Rock

Mr. Barker seems to have been the first Vicar to live and work in the Parish; previously the work was carried on by a Curate- in-sole-charge.

The Patronage of the Benefice is now in the hands of the Bishop of Birmingham, who acquired it from the Bishop of Worcester on the division of the latter diocese in 1905.
