

# BADSEY, ALDINGTON and WICKHAMFORD PARISH REVIEW

JANUARY, 1973

PRICE 30p. PER ANNUM

Vicar (& Rural Dean): REV. P. BRABY, M.A.

(Tel. Evesham 830343)

## CHURCH OF ST. JAMES, BADSEY.

### SUNDAY SERVICES:

- First Sunday ... .. Holy Communion 8 and 11 a.m. (said). People's Service 6-45 p.m.  
Second Sunday ... .. Family Eucharist 10-15 a.m. Evensong 6-45 p.m.  
Third Sunday ... .. Holy Communion 8 a.m. Evensong and Holy Baptism 4 p.m.  
Fourth Sunday ... .. Holy Communion 8 a.m. Mattins (said) 11 a.m.  
Sung Eucharist 6-45 p.m.  
Fifth Sunday ... .. Holy Communion 8 a.m. Family Service 10-15 a.m.  
Evensong 6-45 p.m.  
Holy Baptism ... .. See 3rd Sunday. (Parents must see the Vicar personally at least seven days before).  
Sunday School ... .. 10 a.m. Over 8, in Church. Under 8, Meeting House.

### WEEK-DAY SERVICES. According to notice in porch.

- Churchwardens ... .. Mr. D. W. Hartwell, 35, Willersey Road.  
Mr. R. J. Taylor, 34, Badsey Fields Lane. (Evesham 830250).

## CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, WICKHAMFORD.

### SUNDAY SERVICES:

- First Sunday and  
Festivals ... .. Holy Communion 9 a.m. Evensong 5-30 (3-0 Nov. to Feb.)  
Second Sunday ... .. Family Service and Holy Baptism 3 p.m. (all the year).  
Third Sunday ... .. Family Eucharist 11 a.m.  
Fourth & Fifth Sundays ... .. Evensong 5-30 (3-0 Nov. to Feb.).  
Holy Baptism ... .. See 2nd Sunday. (Parents must see the Vicar at least seven days before).

### WEEK-DAY SERVICES. According to notice in porch.

- Churchwardens ... .. Mr. J. E. Parry, Wickham House. (Evesham 830244).  
Mr. H. J. Dunkerley, C.B.E., M.A., Gallipot Farm, Broadway.  
(Evesham 830395).  
Clerk ... .. Mr. C. H. Willis, 35, Pitchers Hill.

## THE VICAR'S LETTER

17th December, 1972.

My dear People,

I am writing on the day that the Bishop of Worcester came with Mrs. Woods to both our churches and gave us such a wonderful Advent message of encouragement and hope. I am sure you must feel immensely strengthened by this morning's services, as Mrs. Braby and I are, to go forward to new ventures of faith and love. We were so thankful that the Bishop made it possible to visit Badsey and Wickhamford before our leaving here. It will be a memory we shall always take with us, and for you it will mean a great deal that you have now met your Bishop and know his care for you; and will be inspired to play your full part, under the leadership of your new Vicar, in the work of Christ's Kingdom in this Diocese.

### Future Plans

The Bishop of Gloucester will institute me to the benefice of Temple Guiting with Cutsdean on Wednesday, 7th February, at 7-30 p.m. We do hope that some of you will be able to come, if the weather is not too severe. From that moment I shall cease to be Vicar of Badsey and Wickhamford, but the churchwardens will be making arrangements for the Sunday services to be continued during the interregnum before Mr. Leak comes. My last Sunday in both churches will be 4th February.

I have been preparing junior candidates for Confirmation since the end of September, before I knew that I should be leaving. This would have been a 6-month course, the date of the Confirmation having been fixed for 28th March. In the interests of the candidates, it seemed best that they should be confirmed before I leave the parish. Our dear friend Bishop Martin, who was to have administered the Confirmation in any case, has kindly consented to come to Badsey Church to confirm our candidates on Tuesday, 23rd January, at 7-30 p.m. Bishop Martin has not been at all well, and has had to cancel his other confirmation engagements for next year. But he was particularly keen to come to us and take ours. We are most grateful to him and it is lovely to think that we shall have this privilege. This will be the Confirmation service only. The Badsey candidates will make their 1st Communion on the following Sunday, and the Wickhamford candidates in their own church on the 1st Sunday in February.

The preparation course will inevitably be curtailed, but Mr. Leak has said that he will be glad to resume classes with the candidates as soon as possible after his arrival here, and also to prepare adults for Confirmation elsewhere later in the year.

### Village Changes

In my final letter next month I want to write something about the ministry today, in the light of my experience here in the last fifteen years. In the little space still available, I should like to say something now about the changes that have taken place in village life.

In these fifteen years the social life has altered almost beyond recognition. Not only have there been great increases in population, but the occupations of people are different. You have only to look through the marriage and baptism registers and compare them with those of the nineteen-fifties to see this. Not often now will you find "market gardener". You will however find that the old families are still sticking together, and that is all to the good: the younger generation are mostly finding jobs in the district, if not on the land, and our R.D.C. have a good record in providing new houses. So that on the whole the young are not moving away. At the same time large numbers of people entirely new to the district have been coming in. In our community they have on the whole found a good welcome; the old rural suspicion of strangers broke down here a long time ago. The injection of new families and a more varied outlook has been

mainly beneficial to the community. The only disturbing feature is that many of the newcomers do not stay long enough for us to get to know them. It is not always their fault that they move around so quickly. It is the same everywhere.

People's use of their leisure time has altered a good deal. Local amateur sport, fortunately, is as popular as ever, and in Badsey is given a great fillip by the wonderful extension of facilities. But indoor activities are very different. In 1957 television was by no means in every home; there was no bingo; no drinking clubs; no gambling machines. Fortunately our village pubs are so good that they still flourish. But people do not get together in real social gatherings in the way they used to. One of our most enjoyable experiences when we first came here was the annual choir supper, at which everyone used to take turns in providing entertainment. They were great days too in the Men's Fellowship which had been started by my predecessor Wilfred Chapman.

But still. The quality of life in Badsey, Aldington and Wickhamford is probably as good, if not better, than anywhere else in England today. I think so anyway. Perhaps I am biased. It is your fault if I am.

Your sincere friend and Vicar,

PETER BRABY

## BADSEY AND ALDINGTON NOTES

### Church Services

Jan.

- 3 Wed. 10-0 H.C.
- 6 EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD. 10-0 H.C.
- 7 Epiphany 1. As for 1st Sun.
- 10 Wed. 10-0 H.C.
- 14 Epiphany 2. As for 2nd Sun.
- 17 Wed. St. Antony; Abbot. 10-0 H.C.
- 18 to 25 WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY.
- 21 Epiphany 3. St. Agnes, V. & M. As for 3rd Sun. 4-0 E. & Baptism.
- 23 Tues. 7-30 p.m. CONFIRMATION by the Right Rev. C. A. Martin, D.D.
- 24 Wed. No H.C.
- 25 Thurs. Conversion of St. Paul. 10-0 H.C.
- 28 Epiphany 4. As for 4th Sun.
- 31 Wed. 10-0 H.C.

P.C.C. Meeting, Tues., 2nd Jan., the Vicarage, 7-15 p.m.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are most grateful to Miss Norah Smith and her mother for the complete re-covering of the kneelers at the Communion rails, and to Mr. Ralph Taylor for fitting the new covers.

**Sunday School Party.** This year it is to be on Saturday, January 13th, at the Meeting House.

The under 8's will start their games at 3-0 p.m., and should be called for at 5-30, after tea.

Older children are asked to come at 4-30. Their party will go on till 7-30.

**Senior Residents' Party.** This will be held in Blackminster County Secondary School on Saturday, January 20th, at 6-0 p.m. All persons living in Badsey, Aldington and Bowers Hill over 65 years of age are eligible for this party. If anyone is accidentally missed by the Committee, please advise Mr. H. Hatcher, 53 Bretforton Road, Badsey, or the Vicar. Transport provided where necessary.

**Mothers' Union.** Wed., Jan. 3rd. 10-0 Corporate Communion.  
Tues., 9th. 2-30 Branch Meeting. Speaker: Mrs. Brinsford, who will talk about the M.U. Report "New Dimensions".

Tea Hostesses: Mrs. Bell (committee), Mesdames Jewell, Hall and Hatcher.  
Tues., 23rd. 7-30 p.m. Parish Confirmation. J.B.

**Young Wives' Group.** No Meeting on January 1st.  
Jan. 15th. Annual General Meeting. Do come along with your ideas.

Tea Hostesses: Mrs. June Barrand, Mrs. Wendy Beasley, Mrs. Marina Dore.

**Sixty Plus Club.** This month's meeting is on Wednesday, 24th, in the Meeting House, at 2-45 p.m.

**Home and Overseas Missions.** The U.S.P.G. boxes contained £66, better than last year. In addition to what has been raised during the year for the training of Saria Joel, the P.C.C. have made the following grants from their funds at the end of 1972:—C.M.S. £35, Bible Society £35, S.P.C.K. £35, Homes for Retired Clergy £15. It has been possible to increase these grants because of improved giving after the Christian Renewal last year.

#### Holy Matrimony

Dec. 2 Barry George Owens, of Fairfield, Evesham, and Christine Ann Redgewell, of Badsey.

**Jottings.** On Sunday, December 3rd Sarah Caswell and Sharon Westmacott were admitted as full members of the Choir.

Heartiest congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Frank Reeves on their Diamond Wedding on 30th December. We wish them both better health in 1973.

We were sorry that Mr. Leslie Reeves had an accident, and relieved that he was not seriously hurt.

Mrs. Daphne Bell has now had the operation to her wrist. We are glad that Cynthia and John, in Glasgow, have a baby boy.

Mr. Charles Tomkins and Mr. G. W. Male have undergone operations in Ronswood Hospital. Mr. John Holding has been having hospital treatment. Mr. Fred Betteridge had to return to hospital for a 2nd operation, but is now making good progress. Mr. O. Ward has gone to hospital after an accident. Mr. Fred Stewart is making an excellent recovery after his serious heart operation. Miss H. Curtis is now in Avonside Hospital. Mr. R. Harker is making a slow but steady recovery at home after his serious accident.

**Servers for January.** 7th, 8-0 G. Toney; 11-0 A. Owen; 6-45 N. Bell. 14th, 10-15 N. Bell (Server), T. Bell (Crucifer); 6-45 M. Clements. 21st, 8-0 C. Tucker; 4-0 A. Owen. 28th, 8-0 S. Gresty; 6-45 M. Clements (Server), D. Barrand (Crucifer).

**War Memorial Flowers.** Jan. 7th, Mrs. K. Cleaver. 14th, Mrs. W. Sparrow. 21st, Mrs. N. Grinnell. 28th, Mrs. A. C. Sears.

**Birthday Thankoffering.** Mrs. F. Knight, 20p.

#### WICKHAMFORD NOTES Church Services

Jan.

- 7 Epiphany 1. As for 1st Sun.
- 14 Epiphany 2. As for 2nd Sun.
- 18 to 25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.
- 21 Epiphany 3. As for 3rd Sun.
- 23 Tues. 7-30 p.m. Confirmation at Badsey Church by the Right Rev. C. A. Martin, D.D.
- 28 Epiphany 4. As for 4th Sun.

**Jottings.** At the time of writing Mr. S. Figgitt and Mrs. M. Digby are in hospital. Mrs. Kingham has returned home and is making a slow recovery. Mrs. Gottfried has been in hospital and her mother Mrs. Summers has not been at all well. Mrs. G. Harrison and Mrs. J. Smith have returned home from hospital.

**Home and Overseas Missions.** The following grants have been made by the P.C.C. from its funds at the end of 1972:—U.S.P.G. £25; Missions to Seamen £20; Leprosy Mission £10 (in addition to collections in phials); Church Army £10; Homes for Retired Clergy £10.

#### FORMER VICARS OF BADSEY & WICKHAMFORD

##### 5. Charles Granville Gepp

The Revd. C. G. Gepp, another Christ Church graduate, the 3rd son of a Derbyshire clergyman, came to Badsey and Wickhamford during the long hard winter of 1887-8. That spring there was a splendid asparagus crop, though local growers did not get the prices they expected because of French imports.

I mention this little background item, because it indicates the economic and social-revolution that had been taking place in Badsey during the last years of Mr. Hunt's incumbency. Strange that the latest inn to be licensed should be called "the Wheatsheaf"! Cheap imports of American corn and a series of disastrously wet summers had brought about the great agricultural depression. Farmers were selling up, but in the Vale of Evesham their land was being bought in small lots by market gardeners. Mr. Hunt himself used to farm his glebe in a small way, but had let much of it in allotments. In 1891 the Evesham Journal was to comment on the National Census population figures: "It will be seen that the greatest increase has taken place in Badsey, where the system of small holdings is much in vogue."

Charles Gepp arrived here from Bradfield College, Berkshire, where he had been senior classics master. He was 47, a tall bearded man of imposing presence. He was, wrote A. H. Savory ("Grain and Chaff in an English Manor"), "a scholar and an excellent preacher of very condensed sermons." These were popular, I am told, not only for their brevity, but because he seemed to have something to say to each type of hearer in the congregation. Mr. Savory added: "He conducted the services with great dignity, but his manner to the villagers was a little alarming." Be that as it may, he was described to me by the late Mr. Albert Crane (who was 12 when Mr. Gepp came) as "a beautiful man, a big 'un." Those were the days when our choir for both villages attended each church on alternate Sundays. One Sunday at Wickhamford Mr. Gepp found he had left his sermon behind, and sent young Albert running across the fields to the Vicarage to get it. That day he must have been in the Vicar's favour; but not long after he aroused the latter's wrath when he let out a great squawk during service: his fellow-chorister Ernest Mustoe had stuck a pin in him. Albert felt the Vicar was less than just to him, and he left the choir.

##### End of the Church School

It must have been particularly sad for Mr. Gepp, as a former schoolmaster, that the National School had to close down early in his time through lack of financial support. Even before Mr. Hunt left, emergency meetings had been held, and numerous appeals made to the parishioners. The money was no longer in the hands of the farmers, but of a number of smallholders making their way. Some of the bigger ratepayers did not live in Badsey, but only held land in the parish. Several were non-conformists. The Department of Education was rightly demanding better conditions and more equipment. The Act of 1891 required compulsory free education. It was clear that the voluntary system would have to be abandoned in Badsey, and the education of the children thrown on the rates. Again and again the parishioners of all three villages rejected the setting up of a District School Board; again and again they failed to produce the necessary funds to maintain the old school in being. In 1892 there were 130 children on the register but the school could only accommodate 120. At last everyone had to bow to the inevitable, and the new Board School came into being. The one gratifying thing for Mr. Gepp must have been that he was unanimously asked by the new School Board (including nonconformists) to undertake the religious instruction.

### The Flower Show

One institution dating from Mr. Gepp's incumbency remains with us today: the Annual Flower Show, associated with the Patronal Festival of St. James's Church. This accorded with the new emphasis on horticulture. The suggestion seems to have come from Julius Sladden, with the Vicar's warm approval. At any rate, the inaugural Show was in Mr. Gepp's very first summer here, on 25th July, 1888. I quote from the Evesham Journal for that week:

"The little village of Badsey has exhibited enterprise in a praiseworthy direction, and the venture has met with a gratifying success. Badsey Wake has for some time become a thing of the past, but this year the idea was mooted of reviving the annual festival, and the new incumbent, the Rev. C. G. Gepp, with the energy which has characterised him since he has been at Badsey, entered heartily into the proposal. A flower show recommended itself as an event which would provide for the enjoyment of the villagers and others whilst giving a healthy stimulus to the ruling industry of the district, and the idea was so well received that the arrangements were soon in full swing. . . . Whilst instituting so great a departure, the original attractions of the wake were not lost sight of, and the annual rural sports, dancing and other attractions were provided. Only in one particular was there disappointment. The clerk of the weather, who has discouraged outdoor gatherings for sometime past, did not make an exception on Wednesday, for rain fell continually. . . . Notwithstanding the unfavourable state of the atmosphere, however, a large number of people from the surrounding neighbourhood visited the show, many doubtless prompted by the laudable desire to give encouragement to the initial effort, and they were rewarded by an exhibition which exceeded both in quality

and number the utmost expectations of the most sanguine promoter of the gathering."

### A time of apathy

Much else was done during Mr. Gepp's incumbency, including considerable restoration work to Wickhamford Church, and extension of the churchyard there. But on the whole this was not a very progressive time in church life in either parish, probably through no fault of the Vicar. Badsey Church bells were silent from 1891 till the end of the century, being in a dangerous state. Parishioners made this into a grievance, but did not turn up at meetings called to consider raising funds for re-hanging. In fact, apart from those endless meetings about the future of the school, they just did not come to meetings at all. Mr. Gepp tried everything. He altered the time of the Annual Vestry from morning to evening. He made frequent changes in churchwardens, so that people could not say it was always the same little group that ruled everything. But all to no avail. Churchwardens, when appointed, just would not go to the Archdeacon's Visitation to be admitted, and the Vicar had to pay their fee. Kindly Mr. Hunt had allowed the churchwardens to appropriate the Easter Offering to church expenses, which was not very helpful to his successor. In Wickhamford in 1893 only one person turned up at the Easter Vestry with the Vicar, so he had to be made churchwarden, but regarded it as a purely nominal position. "There are no funds available at Wickhamford", Mr. Gepp wrote to the Diocesan Registrar, "where the Church expenses come, for the most part, out of the Vicar's pocket." At the Badsey Easter Vestry in 1896, the only people present besides the Vicar were the churchwardens, sexton and parish clerk.

The following March Mr. Gepp was instituted as Vicar of Wood Norton, Norfolk. He died there in 1903.

P.B.

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