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FOR THE PARISHES OF

S. James, Badsey,

With ALDINGTON,

AND

S. John Baptist,

WICKHAMFORD.

EVESHAM:

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THE CHOIR FESTIVAL.

Was the Festival of Parish Choirs at All Saints' a success? Most certainly. Was it all that could be desired? Decidedly not. These two answers are not really inconsistent although they may appear so. There was the usual misunderstanding (a feature in almost every such festival) at the commencement of the processional hymn, but the conductor, organist, cornet players, and choirs inside and outside the church had entirely settled their differences by the time the end of the first verse was reached, and the singing of the remainder of the hymn was of more than average quality. The chanting of the psalms was good, and would have been better had a simpler method of pointing been adopted. The responses were well rendered, and the amens were excellent. This last criticism savours of faint praise, but many a choral service is ruined through inattention to this one small but important detail. Of the more ambitious portions of the service Dr. Roberts's Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in G quite captivated the choirs, and the rendering of these was consequently both creditable and effective. Very little fault could be found with the combined choirs in the opening chorus of Ouseley's anthem, 'O praise the Lord with me,' but in the latter part they were not at all well together. The verse part had been treated with altogether too little respect by those to whom it was entrusted, so much so that one of our Badsey choristers, Master Cecil Crane, who had not seen the music until the day before the festival, was at the last moment called upon to sing the treble part. Unqualified praise might have been accorded to the rendering of the four remaining hymns but for an unfortunate misunderstanding at the beginning of the last one. The Rural Dean (Rev. J. M. Walker, Vicar of Evesham) preached an excellent sermon on 'Music as an aid to Worship.'

Enough has been said to give some justification to the answers given to the two questions asked above. In the event of another similar festival being held, the music, which on the present occasion was not in circulation until February, should be issued to the choirs not later than October, so that advantage may be taken of the opportunities for practice which the long winter evenings afford; a simpler pointing, such as that of the Magdalen Psalter, should be adopted for the psalms; and the conductor ought to pay one visit to each choir before any work for the festival is begun, and not less than two after the music has been more or less mastered. With attention to these lessons taught by experience, the next Festival of Parish Choirs should bid fair to achieve a less qualified success.

After service the choirs adjourned for tea to the Town Hall, where the Badsey choristers were the guests of the Vicar. Mr. John Crane very kindly drove the junior members of our choir to Evesham and back, and the Vicar chartered Mr. Ellison's wagonette to bring home the men.

The Registers and Offerings are held over until next month for want of space.

THE ARCHDEACON'S VISITATION.

The Vicar and Churchwardens of Badsey and Wickhamford were summoned to the Archdeacon's Visitation at Stratford-on-Avon on Friday, June 2nd. The only Churchwarden to obey the summons was Mr. Hooper-Ingledew, who was duly admitted to office.

The Archdeacon's Charge was more than ordinarily interesting, and of a distinctly practical character. To two points in it we venture to call attention.

The Archdeacon said that at this time of the year a considerable portion of his correspondence related to the disposal of money collected in Church. He therefore laid down the law for the information of incumbents and churchwardens alike. Money given at the Offertory (*i.e.* during the reading of the Offertory Sentences) in the service of Holy Communion was at the joint-disposal of the incumbent and churchwardens; should they disagree the decision of the Bishop is final. All money collected at other times (*e.g.*, at Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, etc.) is at the sole disposal of the incumbent. From this it will be seen that funds handed over by the Vicar to the Churchwardens for Church expenses are not to be applied to any but *bona-fide current expenses*, such as salaries, fires, lights, etc., without the Vicar's consent.

The Archdeacon, also referred to the Articles of Enquiry sent a short time ago to every parish in the Archdeaconry, asking for information respecting church pewter. The Vicar sent a description of the two pewter flagons and the two pewter plates belonging to Badsey and Wickhamford, and the Badsey plate was accorded honourable mention. So far as the Archdeacon could tell the oldest pieces of ecclesiastical pewter in the Archdeaconry were as follows:—A flagon at Eckington 1630, a plate at Queenhill 1663, a plate at Norton by Evesham 1679, a flagon at Warndon 1680, a paten at Bishopston 1684, a flagon at Castlemorton 1689, a plate at Badsey 1692, a plate at Brailes 1708, a flagon at Alfrick 1738.

GENERAL NOTICES.

The builders are now at work on the east end of Wickhamford Church, and the architect expects that the whole will be completed by about July 10th. The Vicar is, therefore, arranging for the unveiling of the window as early as possible after that date.

Tuesday, July 25th, is S. James's Day, the Patronal Festival of Badsey. The services will be:

- 5, Holy Communion.
- 10, Morning Prayer.
- 12, Service for the Benefit Societies.
- 6.45, Evening Prayer.

The Badsey, Aldington and Wickhamford Flower Show will be held on S. James's Day, and the Amalgamated Benefit Societies are this year making it their Club Day.

The Vicar hopes to give his annual tea to the Sunday School children on the Vicarage Lawn on Wednesday, July 26th.