



# ***St. John's Parish Church***

FARNWORTH and KEARSLEY

150 Years of Service

# A HISTORY OF ST. JOHN'S

FARNWORTH - WITH - KEARSLEY  
CHURCH and PARISH  
1826 - 1976



The Church about 1826

THE PARISH CHURCH OF  
FARNWORTH - WITH - KEARSLEY  
In the Diocese of Manchester  
1826 - 1976

VICAR AND OFFICERS 1976

Vicar  
Rev. H. F. Fox, B.A.

Church Wardens  
Mr. A. T. Nowell, J.P., Mr. L. Sanderson

Secretary to the Parochial Church Council  
Mr. A. Ratcliffe

Treasurer  
Mr. L. Howard, J.P.

Organist  
Mr. W. L. Myers, A.V.C.M. (Hon.)

Planned Giving Scheme  
Chairman - Mr. J. Thornley  
Recorder - Miss N. Thwaites

St. John's Day School  
Head Teacher - Miss M. Heeney

# Preface

FROM THE BISHOP OF MANCHESTER  
(the Rt. Rev. P. C. Rodger, M.A.)

I am glad to greet the parishioners of St. John's as they celebrate the 150th anniversary of their church (21 years older than the Diocese of Manchester), and I look forward to joining in those celebrations when I come to visit St. John's on 19th September 1976. Quite often, as I drive along the motorway I catch a glimpse of the flag fluttering bravely from the tower, and I hope and believe that this is symbolic of the spirit of the folk underneath!

The history which this booklet records spans a period of almost unimaginable change, so great that we may wonder whether those Christians who built a church in Farnworth in the reign of King George IV would have anything in common with the children of the jet age. And yet we believe in the communion of saints': the same Lord, the same Gospel, the same Sacraments, are ours in the vastly changed conditions of today. This is why a 'history of the church' is always more than a historical record, though of course it includes that. Since its theme is the dealings of God with men and women it is a little meeting-place between time and eternity. In one of the best headlines of the New Testament we read 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and for ever'. My prayer is that you, the Christians of St. John's will go forward into the future with courage relying on that unchanging Master.

*Patrick Manchester*

November 1975



# **Foreword from the Vicar**

This small booklet is offered as some record of the life and work of St. John's Church Farnworth and Kearsley over the last 150 years. I am very much aware of its omissions, which so small a booklet imposes upon it. But if we were to publish a booklet at an economic price rather than a book of history such brevity was essential. I am aware that many individuals and organisations who have played and still play a great part in the life of the parish are not mentioned. I hope that they will accept my apologies for this shortcoming.

My thanks are due to so many who have supplied material and loaned photographs for this publication. But above all my thanks go to Mr. R. Brownlow who researched and wrote this booklet. Any credits are due to him alone and such mistakes as are inevitable are my responsibility.

I hope that this booklet will not only be a small record of the service of St. John's church over the last century and a half, but an inspiration to all who read it to renew their faith, so that St. John's may continue over the next 50 years to be a centre of Christian worship and community service for the towns in which it is set.

*November 1975*

*H. Frederick Fox*

## **Author's Preface**

One hundred and fifty years ago this year the Right Rev. Charles James Blomfield, D.D., the Lord Bishop of Chester of that time, came to Farnworth to consecrate the first Church of England edifice in the town - the Parish Church of St. John's. The Vicar, officials and parishioners are preparing to celebrate fittingly the 150 years' record of service and in this booklet we attempt to give a history of the cause throughout this long period.

# Beginnings

The first religious denomination to establish themselves in the township to make converts and to erect a Bethel were the Independents or Congregationalists in 1808. Prior to that time the greater portion of the inhabitants, who numbered about 400, were noted for their profanity and ignorance, and those who did observe the Sabbath generally held services in the privacy of their own homes or journeyed to Peel Chapel, Little Hulton (now St. Paul's Church), or to Ringley Chapel (now St. Saviour's Church). There were also among them a few stalwarts who, providing the weather was favourable, walked to the Parish Church at Bolton.

It was not until about the year 1823 that a movement was set on foot for the erection of a Church of England edifice in Farnworth. The chief mover was Mr. Benjamin Rawson, of Darley Hall, who was so eager to see the scheme carried out that he set his own men at work to prepare a portion of his land within the Darley Park walls, in the vicinity of what is now Rawson Street, for the erection of the Church. After some stone had been carted upon the ground the matter was allowed to remain in abeyance for a few months, and the site was ultimately given up. Another site - the one upon which the Church now stands - was subsequently chosen, the land being given by Mr. Rawson.



Darley Hall

It is chronicled that the reason why the Church was not built upon the Darley Park estate, and not far from where the Town Hall now stands, was that the building of this Church and Stand Church were in contemplation at the same time by the Church Building Commissioners, the plans for both being ready together. It was originally intended that the Church erected at Stand should be built at Farnworth, and that the smaller of the two should be erected at Stand. Both plans came into the hands of Canon Slade, the then vicar of Bolton, who raised objection to the one meant for Farnworth as providing an edifice that would be too large for the town's requirements for many years to come.

Thus Whitefield people got the Church meant for Farnworth. Dissatisfied with the alteration, it is stated, Mr. Rawson thereupon refused to allow the lesser church to be built to the front of his land, but promised to give the back land upon which the Church now stands.

In this way also Farnworth's Church was built in Kearsley, the proper designation being Farnworth-WITH-Kearsley Parish Church" and not "Farnworth Parish Church" as it is so often called. The Church actually stands in what was the township of Kearsley, the Church yard wall dividing the two townships. The vicarage is in Farnworth.

The church, which is of the perpendicular style and built of local stone, was one of the first erected by the Waterloo Charity Commissioners, out of a grant of a million pounds made by the Government. The money came from the same fund as that out of which Holy Trinity, Bolton and Stand Churches were built - this "Trinity" of Churches being consecrated within three days of each other.

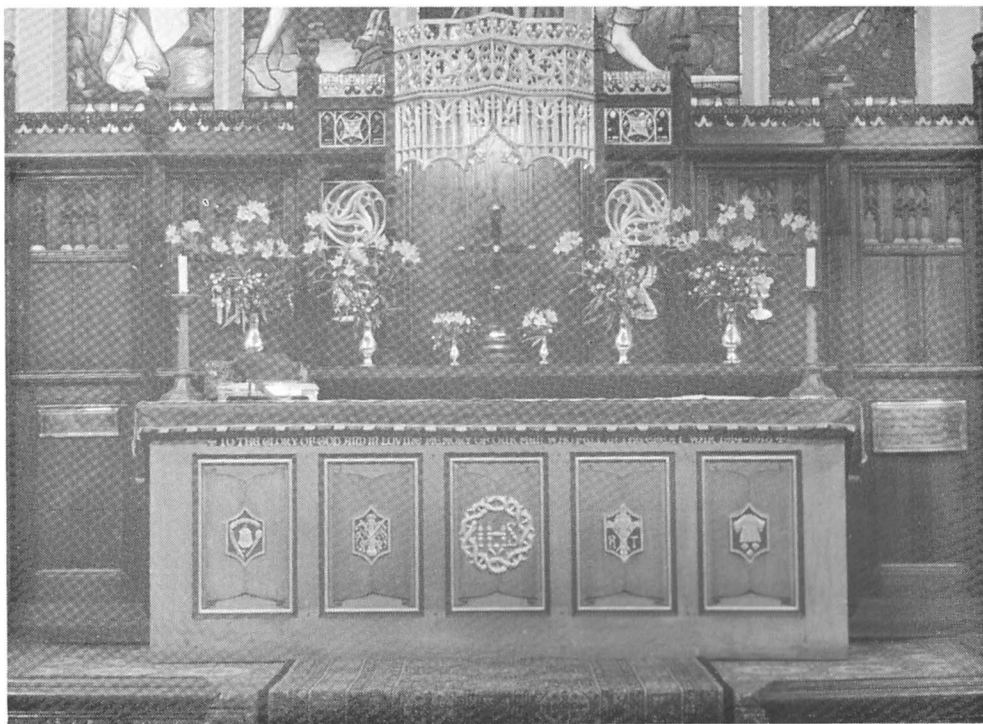
The foundation stone was laid on Thursday, March 4th, 1824, by Mr. Benjamin Rawson. A dejeuner was given by that gentleman to his friends and a free table - cold collation and wines - was hospitably thrown open to anyone who cared to partake of it.

A procession was formed from the Bowling Green Inn, Halshaw Moor, and proceeded to the green in the Park before Mr. Rawson's residence where the processionists were joined by Deputy-lieutenant, Magistrates, clergy, gentlemen of the township and neighbourhood, various lodges etc. The ceremony was begun by the singers and some of the scholars of the Sunday school belonging to the Parish Church of Deane singing the Old Hundredth Psalm, accompanied by a Bolton Band and joined in by many of the company present.

Afterwards a glass case, containing some gold, silver and copper coins was deposited in a cavity in the stone and covered with a metal plate, on which was engraved the following: "The first stone of this church, erected at the entire expense of the fund under the management of His Majesty's Commissioners for the building of additional churches and dedicated to St. John the Evangelist, was laid by Benjamin Rawson Esq., on Thursday, the 4th of March, 1824, being the fifth year of the reign of His Majesty King George the Fourth. The site was given by Benjamin Rawson, Esq. The Right Rev. George Henry Law, D.D., Bishop of Chester; The Rev. Thomas Brocklebank, vicar of Deane; Philip Hardwick, of London, architect; John Wight, clerk of works; Thomas Heaton, contractor."

Mr. Rawson spread the mortar with a silver trowel, on which was the following inscription: "Presented to Benjamin Rawson, Esq., by John Wight, Clerk of the Works at St. John's Church, at Kearsley, in the parish of Deane and used by him in laying the first stone of that fabric, March 4th., 1824." At the conclusion prayer was offered by the Rev. T. Brocklebank and after the singing of the National Anthem, hearty cheers were given by the many thousands of spectators.

It is interesting to state here that the apex stone of the steeple was laid by the same gentleman on Sept. 25th, 1825, when an address was given by the Rev. T. T. Brocklebank.



Recent view of High Altar.

The Church was built at a cost of £8,000 and contained 620 free seats and 328 rented seats. At the consecration the Lord Bishop of Chester preached from the latter part of the 26th Verse of the 14th Chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians: "Let all things be done unto edifying".

The living was first in the gift of the Lord Chancellor and afterwards the Hulmeian Trustees, none but a graduate of Brasenose College, Oxford, being eligible for presentation, a condition laid down in the will of the late William Hulme, the exhibition founder, of Kearsley, who was born in 1630 and died on October 29th., 1691. It was on the resignation of the Rev. W. Burns that the living passed into the hands of Hulme Trustees and in accordance with the terms of the Trust many succeeding vicars have been Hulmeian exhibitioners.

## Early Events

The first entry in the Church books is headed: "Commencement of the proceedings relative to the Church lately built by Government funds at Kersley, near Halshaw Moor, in the parish of Deane." Then follows this notice: "Notice it hereby given that there will be a meeting of the churchwardens and inhabitants of the parish of Deane held in the vestry of the said parish church on Friday the 28th. instant, at eleven O'clock in the forenoon to take into consideration the best mode of erecting a fence about the yard of a new church in Kersley, in the said parish, with such articles as are customary and requisite for its being opened for Divine service and to lay a rate upon the inhabitants of the said parish to defray the expenses which will be necessarily incurred in carrying the aforementioned objects into effect. Dated this 23rd day of April 1826." Appended to this entry is the statement that "The above notice was read in the church and posted by me, Abraham Boardman, parish clerk."

The Rev. T. Brocklebank presided over the above mentioned meeting when it was resolved "That the fence be a sod fence, planted with quickthorns and well railed and that cast iron gates and stone gate-posts be erected."

It was also decided to furnish the church with books, surplice and other articles requisite for its being opened for Divine service and the following gentlemen were appointed to carry out the resolutions:- Messrs Thomas Seddon and Harry Pennington, of Westhoughton; James Fletcher, Hulton; Peter Seddon, Middle Hulton; Francis Charlton, Little Hulton; James Doodson, Farnworth; Thomas Green, Rumworth; Thomas Grundy, Kersley; John Markland, Heaton; Joseph Ridgway, Horwich; and Peter Ainsworth, Halliwell. It was ordered that a rate or assessment of £100 should be levied upon the inhabitants of the parish to defray the expenses of carrying the above resolution into effect.

At a meeting of the Church Committee on May 26th 1826, it was resolved to purchase a cotton velvet covering for the communion table, candles for the pulpit, books, matting, carpeting, hassocks etc; and it was also agreed to procure a safe, the price not to exceed four pounds, for the keeping of the register, books, plate etc. A bell was ordered to be purchased at a cost not exceeding £20. The gentlemen appointed to make the purchases were: Mr. Adam Gerrard, Mr. Henry Cross and Mr. George Lomax, Mr. Cross being also appointed treasurers. The £100 was made up from the following sums, which the Churchwardens of the respective districts named had to pay in on or before the 19th June following: Westhoughton £25, Over Hulton, Middle Hulton, Little Hulton, Halliwell, Horwich and Heaton, each £8 6s 8d; Farnworth £10 14s 4d; Rumworth £7 2s 10d and Kersley £7 2s 10d.

The first baptism took place on October 15th, 1826, the Rev. R. C. Burton being the officiating minister. The names of the children were Thomas and Eliza, son and daughter of James and Ann Tildsley, collier, Farnworth; and Rebecca, daughter of Thomas and Anne Wallwork, collier of Kearsley. The first interment took place on the same day and was that of a  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years old child named John Arstall, who died October 12th, 1826. The first marriage did not take place until four years later - August 2nd, 1830, the couple being a widower and widow named Thomas Pedley and Mary Robinson. The Rev. T. A. Ashworth performed the ceremony.

Another meeting of the Churchwardens was held on Jan. 10th, 1827 when they decided to lay another rate or assessment for a sum of £223 to defray the whole of the expenses which had been incurred in furnishing the church as required by His Majesty's Commissioners.

There appears to have been some unpleasantness at a meeting on March 27th, 1831, for on the usual resolutions being proposed for the passing of several items in the accounts amendments were put and carried. One of these was to the effect "that the apparitor be allowed



nothing for his surplices." The meeting allowed an account of £12 1s 8d "for putting the church in mourning upon the death of the King."

On May 4th, it was proposed that a rate of 1d in the £ be laid for the apparitor and also for clearing all other expenses, but an amendment was proposed "That no rate at all is necessary."

The minutes of Dec. 1st 1832 show that a difference of opinion existed among the inhabitants as to their being subject to pay certain expenses, the latter claiming a rate for these expenses as a legal right. It was ultimately agreed that the expenses in connection with the cleaning of the church, repairing same, the purchase of bread and wine, keeping the churchyard orderly, should be paid for by public subscription "in order to avoid litigation for the time being and promote good feeling."

The vicarage was built at a time when the Rev. T. A. Ashworth was vicar (in 1831) by Thomas Bonsor Crompton, of the Farnworth Paperworks. The residence was enlarged about 1875 at the expense of the Hulme Trustees and was remodelled and entirely renovated as part of the Centenary effort.

The "Select" vestry held its first meeting on Wed. April 18th, 1832 when there were present: Messrs George Lomas, James Troutbeck, Thomas Grundy, James Dootson, George Cottingham, Benjamin Cooke, James Howarth and the Churchwardens with the Rev. T. A. Ashworth in the chair. James Hulbert, of Kearsley Hall Farm, was appointed a member of the vestry in place of Ralph Fletcher, The Hollins, the Haugh, deceased and Nathan Eckersley, farmer, succeeded Thomas Cross, who resigned.

In May 1836, the select vestry comprised John Bentley, "Birch House", Farnworth, George Lomas, "Birch Hall, Farnworth, Thomas Bonsor Crompton, paperworks, Farnworth; Benjamin Cooke, Halshaw Moor, Kearsley; James Crompton, Kearsley; Thomas Grundy, Joseph Bowker, Abraham Hargreaves, Nathan Eckersley,



Joseph Hulbert and Robert Seddon (all of Kearsley), James Howarth, James Dootson, Samuel Tonge, James Rothwell and Thomas Bowden (Farnworth), William Hill (Farnworth Bridge), Robert Dawson, James Robinson and Nathan Coucill (Halshaw Moor).

Considerable changes took place during the next 28 years and in April 1864 the vestry consisted of: Rev. W. Burns (Vicar), Messrs William Hargreaves, Harrison Blair, Joseph Leach, John Crompton, Thomas Barrett, James Warburton, Nathan Coucill, Thomas Bowden, Peter Thornley, Donald McDonald, W. S. Holden, J. Wigglesworth, Johnson Martin, Henry Crompton, John Nuttall, John Gerrard, Peter Bradburn, John Greenhalgh, Walter Almond, W. A. Hayman and John Hall (solicitor).

Dr. Kershaw was appointed a member in 1875 and he continued to render excellent service to the church in a variety of ways over a long period of years.

## **The Bells**

The Church had been built 18 years when a peal of six bells was provided by public subscription to replace the old bell. The bells which were cast by Mears and Son were rung for the first time on Feb. 2nd, 1845 and for the last time on Sunday night, Jan. 22nd, 1899. A peal of eight bells, cast by Thomas Blackburn, of Salisbury, were first rung on Sept. 23rd 1899. When the first peal was brought to the Church they were decked with evergreens and preceded by a band, but on this occasion the largest bell was filled with beer. The bells were inaugurated by a service at which the Rev. H. J. Elsee, of St. George's Church, Bolton, was the preacher. The cost was about £540, the donors being Mr. Joseph Leach, Mr. Joseph Watson, Mr. George Coope, members of the choir, Dr. Pickford and family, Mr. W. Porritt, Mr. J. Cardley and Dr. Morris. As part of the Centenary scheme mechanical ringing was installed.



Re-casting bells 1954

# Improvements

The Rev. W. Burns, who was vicar for 30 years, soon after his selection in 1836 set to work to restore the church, which was considerably out of repair, dry rot having set in. The alteration was effected at a cost of over £120. In 1859 the church was thoroughly repaired and beautified, some additional free seats provided and the pulpit and prayer-desk, which formerly stood in the centre were removed to either side of the chancel-arch.

Gas was introduced during Mr. Burns incumbency, whilst his son (the Rev. W. H. Burns) had temporary charge of the parish (about 1863). Before the Centenary this gave place to electric light.

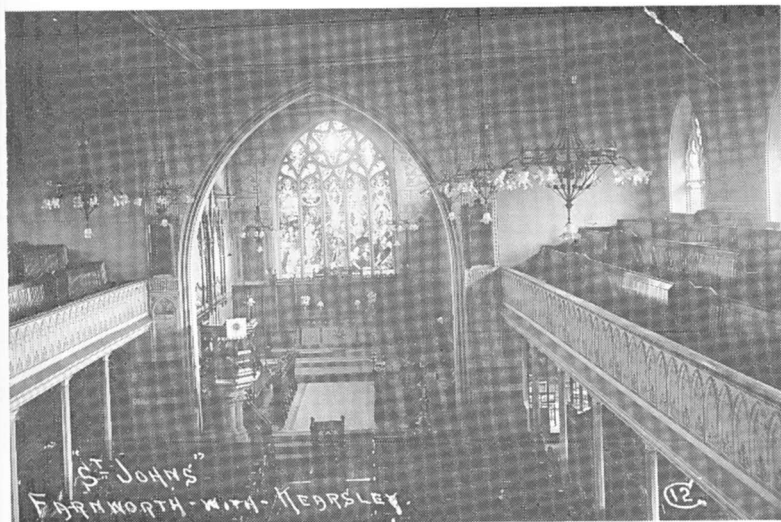
At a meeting on April 3rd, 1866, the churchwardens were requested to ascertain from the vicar whether the report that he was to resign his office as vicar of the parish of Farnworth - with - Kearsley from the 5th, instant be correct. It was also decided "that when necessary or as soon as the living is advertised as vacant Harrison Blair and William Hargreaves wait upon the Hulmeian Trustees and represent to them that there had been no resident vicar in Farnworth for some years and that an active and useful man is much needed and that they will send us one of their best men."

The petition was answered by the appointment of the Rev. W. H. Taylor who, it is said, certainly possessed the desired qualities of activity and usefulness.

In 1866 additional land was given by Miss Rawson and Mr. Rideout for burial purposes and in 1867 the whole was enclosed by a wall at a cost of £1,300.

During his ministry Mr. Taylor undertook the restoration and improvement of the Church at a cost of £5,574 which was raised entirely by voluntary subscriptions. Prior to the alterations the tower stood out from the body of the church. The gallery was entered by two spiral

staircases, the tower end being occupied in the centre by organ and choir pews and at the sides by childrens pews which ran almost to the roof, the girls being on one side and the boys on the other. The side galleries were not much different from what they are now, except that they have been lowered to allow of a view of the chancel. Below were straight-backed pews of varying sizes, with open benches for 'ordinary' worshippers. The old font was at the entrance to the centre aisle near the tower and a three-decker pulpit, at first at the other end of the aisle, was afterwards removed to one side of the chancel with the reading desk at the other. The chancel was only a small one, being a recess about seven feet deep and the communion rails came well out into the church.



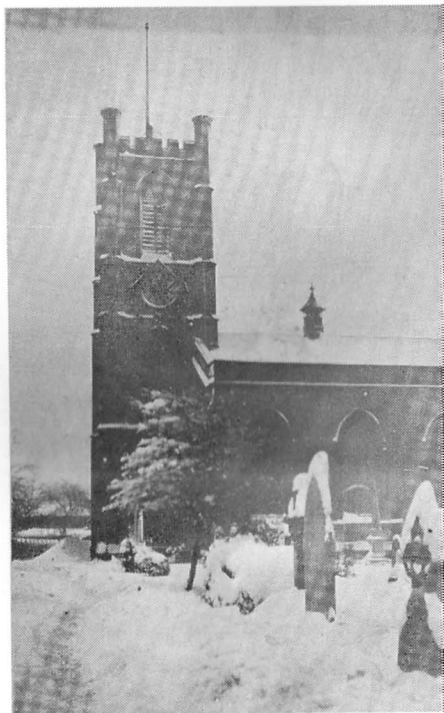
Interior  
prior to 1914

During the alterations the porches on each side of the tower, the chancel, the Crompton Chapel and the vestries were added. The contents of several of the graves had to be removed, the space being required for the foundations. The other graves where excavations were not required were left untouched and the consequence was that the remains which previously were outside the church are now under the chancel. The church was reopened on Sept. 25th, 1873, by Bishop Fraser.

It is related that before the alterations an attempt was made one night to set the church on fire. A would-be incendiary broke the lead lights of the vestry window and pushed inside a railway sleeper, well saturated with spirits of turpentine, which had been set on fire. Happily the timber fell behind the table and burnt itself out, doing damage of little consequence. A reward of £20 was offered, but the culprit remained undiscovered.

About the turn of the century the Crompton chapel was used as a choir vestry. Shortly afterwards a choir vestry was excavated under the organ, but this proved to be both inconvenient and unsuitable, the surplices and cassocks being damp and not fit to put on on many occasions. It was then proposed to adapt the Crompton chapel definitely as a choir vestry, but in order that it could perform the two functions an oak screen was to be put up. This was made to

fold back during the week to form oak sides and reredoes and the daily services continued to be held in the Chapel. On Sundays the screen was closed and the Chapel became a choir vestry. The Church was redecorated and over £300 spent on pointing the exterior with mastic.



Exterior winter 1940

## Organisations

In that first 100 years a variety of organisations gave excellent assistance to the Church. In addition to the Sunday school there was a strong Men's Bible Class,

Mothers Class and Girls Friendly Society. The Mutual Improvement Society was founded in September 1895 and soon made a wide reputation in this part of Lancashire. Each year it grew in popularity, excellent fare being served up year by year during the winter months in the shape of first class concerts and entertainments, which were intellectual and educational treats. Tours



M.I.S. Trip to  
Channel Islands

were organised for the summer holidays and grew to tremendous proportions. Whilst speaking of the M.I.S. one must mention the name of Mr. R. Blease, the indefatigable secretary, who was always happiest when engaged on work for the "Mutual".

The Church House was opened on September 10th, 1904 and performed a useful service in the Church's history. Cricket and Football teams formed part of its activity and the club was a member of the Bolton and District Church House Billiards League. A tennis club had a court next to the bowling green adjacent to the



church yard, whilst during the coal dispute in 1926 a second court was laid on derelict ground behind the vicarage. At one time there was a Church Lads Brigade.

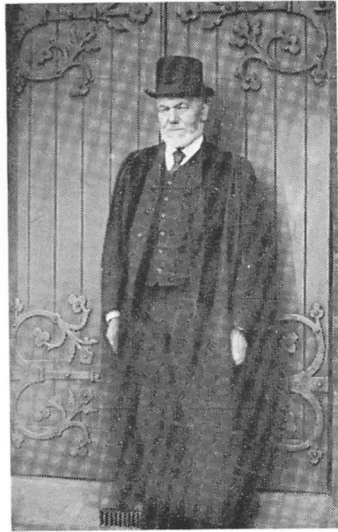


Tennis Group 1950

## G. Holme

Up to the Centenary there had been 12,348 burials in the churchyard, nearly 21,000 baptisms and about 5,500 marriages. Mr. George Holme was intimately associated with the church for more than three-quarters of a century, was sexton for 62 years, clerk for 54 years and was present at probably two - thirds of these burials, baptisms and marriages. On the occasion of his jubilee in 1905 he was the recipient of a gold-mounted walking stick, an illuminated address and a cheque. For

many years he also did practically the whole of the lettering on the gravestones and in 40 years is said to have made only two mistakes. In one instance he missed out the letter "r" in February and in the second case spelt niece as "neice". His death occurred on March 4th, 1926 at the age of 83.



Mr. George Holme

## Schools

In 1834 steps were taken to build schools, the first of which were erected in Church Lane, Kearsley, by the aid of public subscriptions, the builder being Mr. Gideon Coope. A nucleus for a school had been formed just previously by the Church of England Sunday School movement which commenced in what were then known as "Royleys Cottages" situated in King Street. The school was transferred from there to a hayloft over the stable connected with a house in Church Lane. This place was vacated on the erection of a school, which at first was



a plain oblong building. In 1842 owing to the increased number of scholars, it was altered in shape by the addition of two wings. Mr. James Winward was the first superintendent.

In 1837 the Rev. W. H. Burns had applied to the Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury for permission to use the Sunday school, and a grant from the National School, for day School purposes. Permission was granted on condition "that there should not be two separate schools - a Sunday school and a day school - but one, a Sunday and daily school." The first headmaster was Mr. Rutter.

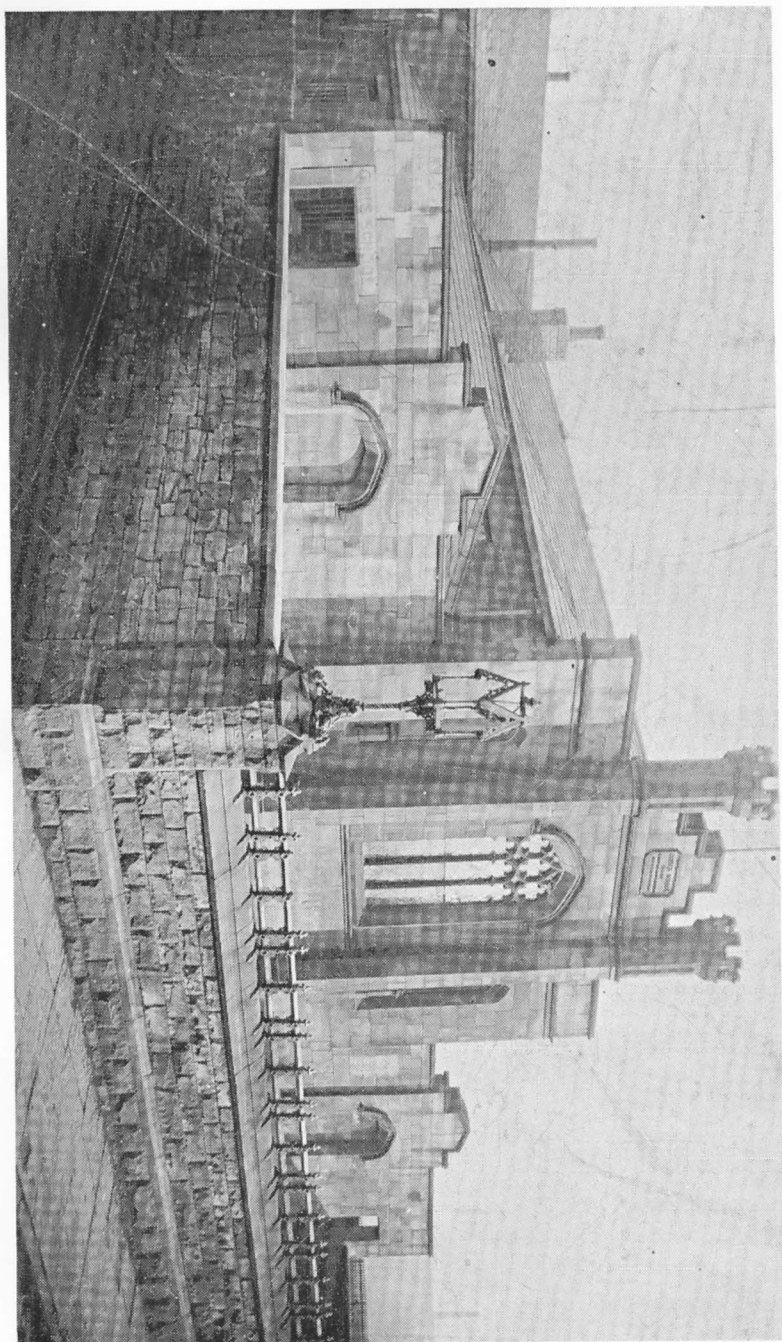
In 1838 a gallery was erected at a cost of £23, and a year later an infants school was built, the cost being set down as £147 18s 9d. The schools were further enlarged in 1842 and 1846, the cost being £341 7s 6d. The roof of the boys' school was rebuilt in 1849, a classroom added and the infants school enlarged.

An organ was placed in the school in 1854 and a new gallery was erected in the boys' school in 1857. Twenty five years later an old cottage at the rear of the premises was taken down, a new boys school erected and the girls school made into classrooms. This cost £800

During the vicariate of the Rev. H. S. Butler, 1894-1900, it was decided to go in for building a new school and a building fund was established. About £1,500 was raised and this was doubled by a bazaar in May 1900. Two years later that part of the school built in 1882 was pulled down and on the site together with a portion of

Walking Day  
1940





The old school 1834 - 1902

the school yard was built half of the present premises, the scholars in the meantime being transferred to the Higher Grade School in Mather Street, which was opened by Mr. J. W. Sumner.

The work occupied about 12 months, after which the other portion was similarly treated and on March 14th 1904, the entire structure was put into use, being formally opened on April 8th by the Bishop of Manchester. The total cost with a Church house in the basement was £8,700. A new cloak room was added in July 1910.



Parish School Class 1905. Mr. Howard - Headmaster.

In 1926 there were 562 scholars on the registers of the day schools, but ten years later (Jan. 1936) this had dropped to 356. Commenting on this the vicar, Rev. W. E. Davis-Winstone remarked that Housing Schemes were playing havoc with the parochial system owing to the movement of population. Soon the school would be half empty and this was considered a serious matter, especially when the new school was built. A likely solution was said to be a Church Senior School but this never materialised at St. John's but later became a reality at St. James's.

Since Mr. Rutter the successive headmasters have been; Mr. Bowden, Mr. Blackburn, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Baker, Mr. Richard Pickering, Mr. C. F. Howard who was appointed assistant headmaster in May 1881, headmaster in 1887 and served for the next 34 years until he retired in 1921. Following him came Mr. J. E. Hall, Mr. C. Gaunt, Mr. J. H. Howard, Mr. A. Keeling and the present headmistress Miss M. Heeney.

## **Vergers**

The first recorded name of a verger is that of Mr. Robert Holme who served from 1846 to 1855. He was followed by his son Mr. George Holme who, as already recorded held the position of sexton for 62 years. On his retirement Mr. William Cooke who was a relative, was appointed and he served for 12 years. Then came a long and active association with the work of the Church by the Higham family. Mr. Walter Higham was appointed verger in 1931 and fulfilled the office both faithfully and assiduously for the next 33 years ably assisted by his wife and daughter, both of whom are actively involved in the work of the church today. Mr. Fred Smith occupied the position from 1964 to 1974 since when the work has been done on a part time basis.

# The Centenary



Interior 1926

The celebration of the Centenary was deferred from September 9th, to the more convenient date of October 9th - 17th. On the first evening there was a service for the dedication of gifts and additions to the Church and the preacher was the Ven. T. Sale, Archdeacon of Rochdale.

On the Sunday morning the Lord Bishop of the Diocese preached; a Civic Service in the afternoon was attended by the Urban District Councils of Farnworth and Kearsley and the Rev. R. W. Gordon, M.A., vicar of the parish 1900 - 1912 and then vicar of Blackrod was the preacher and in the evening the sermon was by the Lord Bishop of Hulme.

Monday featured an organ recital by Mr. Norman Cocker, assistant organist of Manchester Cathedral with solos by Master Kenneth Hall and on the Wednesday a service for Clergy, Parochial Church Councillors and church workers of Farnworth and Kearsley was addressed by the Rev. H. S. Butler, M.A., Vicar from 1894 to 1900 and at that time Rector of Mareham-le-fen.

On the second Saturday there was a re-union in the school of past and present members of St. John's parish, followed on the Sunday by Mattins and Sermon by the Rural Dean, the Rev. S. C. Carpenter, B.D., vicar of Bolton; in the afternoon a Sunday School service was addressed by the Rev. R. H. Stephen, B.A., vicar of the parish from 1912 to 1918. The celebrations concluded with Evensong and Sermon by the Rev. J. R. Line, M.A., vicar of Deane, the Mother Church of Farnworth-with-Kearsley.

The Commemoration of the Centenary was also marked by the completion of improvements to the fabric of the church and much other work which needed doing.

The Church was redecorated; the roof was repaired and re-leaded; the outside walls pointed with mastic, and crumbled stone in wall and windows renewed. The organ was cleaned and repaired and a small congregational organ was placed in the eastern wall of the northern gallery. An oak screen was added to the side-chapel so as to make it serve as a Choir vestry. The chapel was also refurnished with chairs and carpets, communion rail, alms dish, kneelers, etc.

The Baptistry was enlarged by the placing of an open pitchpine screen in place of the last short pew with

the extension of the mosaic floor and the removal of a cupboard. The screen was also made to take the brass cross given formerly by Dr. Kershaw and placed for many years upon the reredos. The lighting of the church was simplified and made more effective by strong reflectors to central overhead lights.

Carpets were placed in the Sanctarium and Church, new linoleum in nave and clergy vestry; the Commandments were engrossed and framed and hung on the wall near the Baptistry; the bells provided with a motor driven by electricity to give mechanical ringing for both chimes and change ringing.

The Lych Gate was restored, the pathway repaved and further light provided. Both inside and outside of the Church, various out - of - date gas brackets and standards were removed, while inside much of the electric wiring was 'sunk' in the plaster and otherwise put out of sight.

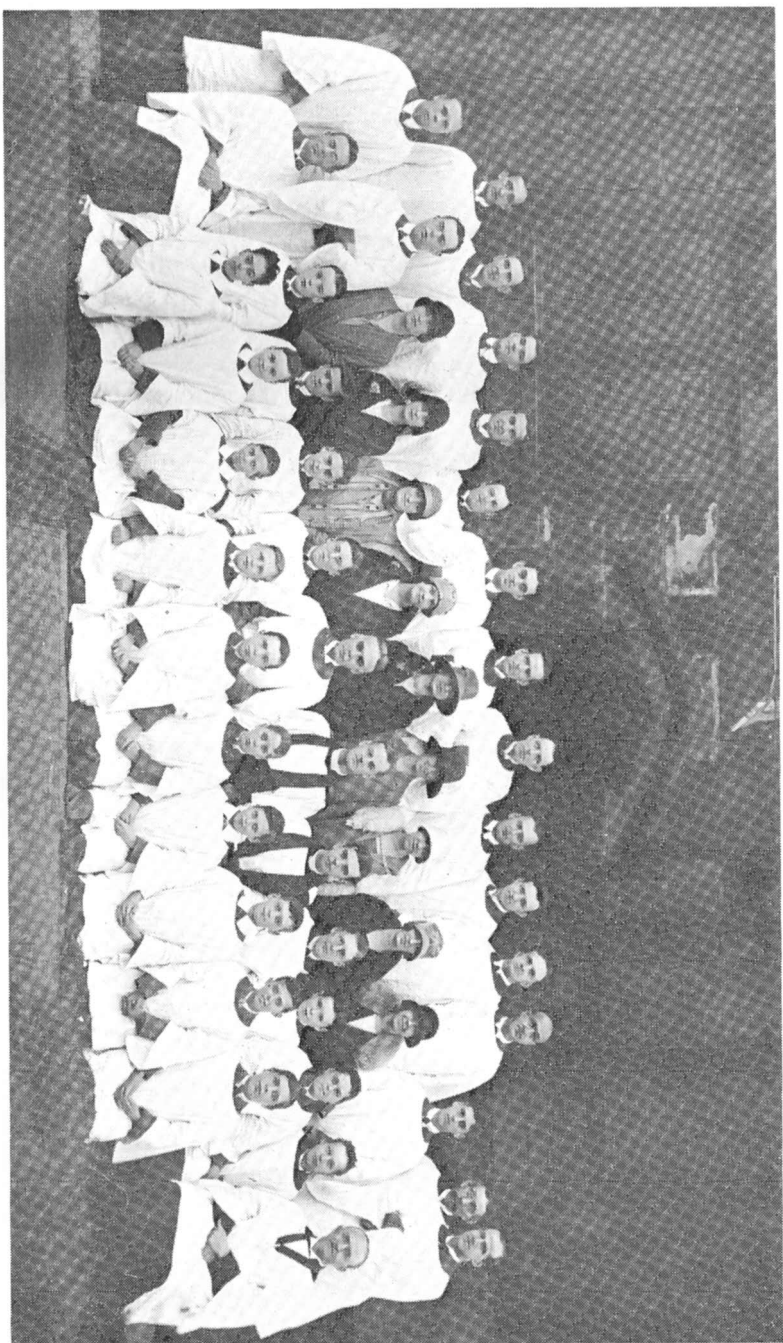
In addition the Vicarage was re-constructed and re-built at the joint expense of Parish and Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

## ***Centenary Council***

In the Centenary year the following people comprised the Parochial Church Council; Miss A. O'Kell, Miss Pickering, Mrs. Oakes, Mrs. J. H. Coope, Mrs. A. Fielding, Mrs. H. Martin, Messrs, J. E. Hall, H. Prescott, J. T. Whitaker, J. McCarter, A. Farnworth, W. Barrett, A. Phethean, B. Howarth and Capt. A. Hill. Mrs. Makin and Mr. W. Tong were later co-opted.

Messrs, F. Tong and H. Clegg were the Wardens and Messrs A. Phethean and E. Shaw the sidesmen Mr. J. H. Coope was Vestry Clerk.





Choir 1926



# **The Last 50 Years**

A special Centenary Fund, of which Mr. C. F. Howard was treasurer raised £3,316 19s 10d by the parish and this was augmented by £1,000 which was received from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. All this was spent on the Church and Vicarage.

In 1927 the Vicar, the Rev. C. W. W. Bramley said the parish could look back on the Centenary of the Church with very great pleasure everything having passed off very well "except the weather." Few parishes could boast of having four good buildings as they had, all of which were in such good repair.

About this time it is reported that after much thought and time had been spent the Prayer Book had finally been revised and whilst the Parish was not bound to use it, it was not for the people to ask whether they liked it or disliked it, but to accept it loyally.

It is interesting to recall that in 1927 and 1928 there were 23 nominations for the 15 seats on the Parochial Church Council. A poll was demanded by three members present and in the first instance this was fixed for Feb. 11th, with Mr. Barnes as "returning officer" and on the second Feb. 5th, in the school from 3 to 5 p.m., and 7 to 9 p.m. with Mr. J. H. Coope as "returning officer".

(Polls were held in several previous years).

As a result of the closure in 1927 of the "Catholic Apostolic Church" in Carlton Street the contents of the Church were offered for the service of the Church of England in Farnworth and every church received some part of the furniture.

Until well after the Centenary Wardens were always nominated at the Annual Parochial Church Meetings and confirmed at the Vestry Meeting later in the year (April), but in 1931 this practice was amended and there ceased to be any need for the appointments to be confirmed at a Vestry Meeting.

The oak reredos which was given in 1887 by Messrs Samuel, William and George Coope to the memory of

their parents, Gideon and Sarah Coope was extended in 1925 to reach the North and South walls. This extension was provided by the Girls Friendly Society which was a flourishing organisation until 1950 when it ceased to exist.

As a safety measure the four pinnacles which were at each corner of the church tower were taken down in 1912.

In 1932 there were 764 names on the Electoral Roll and three years later this figure had been increased to 798. The population of the Parish at that time was given as 12,000. In 1974, after the Electoral Roll had been drastically reduced to make it totally representative, there were 312 names registered but the population had also declined to about 5,000 people.

## ***Sunday School Centenary***

The Sunday School Centenary was celebrated in 1936 and as a memorial of the occasion a Childrens Corner was established.

A Parochial Mission was conducted in the Parish in the same year by Canon Peter Green with Mr. G. P. Lowe as Missioner to the children. It was felt that whilst outwardly the Mission did not appear to have made much difference it had nevertheless made a difference in the minds of the people.



Walking Day 1937

# **'High Church'**

When the Rev. W. E. Davis - Winstone had completed seven years as Vicar he suggested that to mark the occasion a pair of candle sticks should be provided for the altar. Over 100 people responded to the suggestion, but when the matter was raised at the 1937 P.C.C. meeting it caused some division of opinion. On a vote 44 were in favour and 24 against (there were 72 at the meeting) and this led to one prominent official announcing his "retirement from that moment from all offices he held in connection with the work of the Church".

## **High Stile Mission**

High Stile Mission which had been carried on with great devotion and faithfulness in the Black Horse area and which had been self supporting, was closed in 1938. For many years Miss Whittaker and Mr. J. Lomas were the backbone of the Mission which had been a great help to a band of old people who worshipped and found fellowship there for more than half a century.

In 1939 a new boiler house was built and a new boiler installed of greater capacity than the old one.

The Church yard having been the scene of unseemly conduct on several occasions it was decided that the gates be closed from 7.30 p.m. until 7.15 a.m. during the winter months of 1939.

Permission was given in this year for Government officials to use the top of the Church tower for observation purposes when making an Ordnance survey.

# War Years

The outbreak of war created many difficulties in the work of the parish, especially as the Rev. P. A. Wrigley, who was curate left early in 1939 on his appointment as vicar of S. Gabriel, Middleton Junction and the Rev. W. E. Davis-Winstone resigned as vicar on his preferment to the Rectory of Keymer. For the next five years practically everything was governed by the prosecution of the conflict, but the church and parish carried on in a "wonderful way" continuing to prepare and plan for what was coming after the declaration of peace.

In 1942 the Church Council gave considerable thought to a re-introduction of a Freewill Offering scheme to increase the income of the Church and in 1943 started the Friends of St. John's scheme which raised £352 17s 2d, in the first year. Mrs. Stafford was secretary of the scheme throughout and she gave the final report in 1958 when the Wells Scheme was adopted. It was given a good send off at a 'loyalty' dinner in March and at the end of the first year there were 603 subscribers.

St. John's Hockey team won the championship shield of the Bolton Sunday School Social League in 1941.

The railings in the Church yard and school yard were removed in 1942 to assist the war effort.

Part of the school building was set apart for use as a "Refugee Canteen" and for a period Evensong was held at 3 p.m. owing to black-out regulations. The P.C.C. also met on several Saturday afternoons.

A war Charities Committee was very active during the war and raised quite a sum of money, sending Christmas Cards, parcels, letters and half crowns to members of the Parish serving in the Forces. Members of the Council collected subscriptions of 1/- each to cover the cost of the purchase of 200 copies of the new Testament

for presentation to men in the various services. Letters were sent to the homes of all those on the War Charities list as a welcome on their return to civilian life.

The Mayor of Farnworth and members of the Corporation, together with many other organisations attended a Thanksgiving service following V.E. Day in 1945 and in January 1946 the War Charities Committee was discontinued and the balance in the Committees account was handed over to the P.C.C.

Throughout the war the Church and school were "fire watched" by persons performing a similar duty in the surrounding streets.

## **New Trustees**

A Processional Cross, provided as a memorial to the Rev. H. J. M. Hall, vicar from 1939-44, who like the Rev. Thomas Crick, died whilst in office and is buried in the churchyard was first used in 1947.

Also in the same year a toilet and wash basin were placed under the stairs leading to the gallery in the North West porch.

In 1947 the Hulme Trustees expressed their willingness to transfer the Advowson to a body of seven trustees two members would be nominated by the Parish, one by the Diocese and the remaining four by the Hulme Trustees themselves. But in the following year and after Brazenose College, Oxford had agreed to the transfer it was decided to appoint five people as an Independent Board of Trustees. Those appointed were Col. G.G.H. Bolton, Mr. F.A. Willink and Mr. T.K. Travers with Miss Nellie Thwaites and Mr. Leslie Howard as the Parochial Church Council representatives.



Infants Class 1937

# Post War Advances

In 1949 the War Memorial Chapel was completed and dedicated and two years later a new pulpit of carved oak was erected on the existing stone base and a bronze plate affixed commemorating the gift in memory of Mrs. Marshall and Miss Betsy Seddon. The pulpit was dedicated on April 15th, 1951.

Lessons were read by various laymen for the first time in 1950.

A Guild of the Holy Childhood was introduced in 1949 in an attempt to provide greater interest for the children and instruction as to the meaning of the services. In this year there were 36 members.

After more than a quarter of a century the Church was re-decorated in 1951, the organ overhauled, the aisles refloored with plastic tiles and the light fittings in the Nave were replaced. The cost was £1,500.

Three pews at the West end of the Nave were removed and the Wardens pews moved forward to "give space and dignity in the West".

In 1953 the Neon Cross which was an anonymous gift was affixed to the Church Tower.

Fellowship of Marriage  
1950



The Quincentenary of our Mother Church of Deane was celebrated in 1952 and the Vicar, Rev. Llew P. Burnett and the choir and congregation took part in a special service, being transported by coach.

The exterior of the Church was decorated and repairs undertaken to the fabric in 1952 at a total cost of £231.

A Verge was purchased with an anonymous gift of £100 and a commemorative plate provided containing the names of the four vergers who had served during the last 130 years.

After receiving a report that the Church boiler was nearing the end of its usefulness the Church Council decided to order a new one. This was installed in June 1953.

The Mayor of Farnworth and the Chairman of Kearsley Council attended a special service on May 31st, to celebrate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

An avenue of Hawthorns was planted alongside the path from the Lych Gate to the Church; red Hawthorns along the St. John Street boundary wall and four Lombardy Poplars outside the west gate of the churchyard - two in the vicarage grounds and two in the bowling green grounds.

## ***50 Years a Sunday School Teacher***

The 9.30 a.m. Family Communion Service took the place of the 10.30 Mattins in 1955. A year later in view of the growth and impact of Television there was considerable discussion about the time of Evensong on Sundays but no change was made.

Miss Freeman celebrated her 50th, year as a Sunday School teacher in 1959.

Pew Rents were abolished in 1956.



Two standard candlesticks were provided for the Sanctuary by Mr. Fred Ramsbottom in memory of his late wife.

The former bowling green was used as an extension to the graveyard and this was dedicated on October 17th 1955, by the Bishop of Middleton.

A Columbarium had also been envisaged but this was not proceeded with in view of the cost of future maintenance. Provision, however, was made for the burial of ashes in urns or caskets.

That part of the Glebe land next to the bowling green and which was used as a tennis court was converted into garages in 1961. And more were added at a later period.

In 1963 the heating system in Church was converted to oil burning and this was superceeded in 1974 by a new gas fired boiler and a special fund established which has been well supported.

Discussions have taken place over the years and starting in 1963 towards ultimate reunion with the Methodist Church. There have been many joint meetings but "controversial implications" have so far prevented this from becoming an established fact.

The Rev. P. A. Wrigley was appointed Honorary Canon of Manchester Cathedral in 1963 and in 1966 Rural Dean of the new Deanery of Farnworth.

Post Induction  
welcome to  
Rev. P. A. Wrigley



In 1966 when the interior of the Church was decorated morning services were held in the upper hall of the school for a four week period and for evening services worshippers were asked to attend other churches within the Rural Deanery.

Whitsuntide processions were a feature of parish life for many years. In conjunction with other Anglican and Free Churches the united processions were held in two sections traversing the town in opposite directions. These were disbanded during the war years but resumed on Whit Saturday, May 26th, 1945, but in 1968 St. John's discontinued its participation in the processions.

Series 2 Communion Service was first adopted in November 1969.

## ***Synodical Government***

Mr. J. Cunliffe and Mr. N. Chappel were licensed by the Bishop to assist in the administration of the Holy Communion in 1970 and on the retirement of Mr. Cunliffe to Knott End the name of Mr. A. Keeling was added.

Synodical Government was introduced in 1970 and the Parish was greatly honoured when, in 1973, Mr. L. Howard was elected to represent the Archdeaconry of Rochdale on the General Synod.

A recommendation in 1972 that Deanery Boundaries should be aligned with the new Local Authority Boundaries was deferred for five years.

The exterior of the Church was cleaned by sand blasting in 1974 by the former Kearsley Urban District Council.

Bazaars and Sales of Work have figured prominently in the life of the parish and in 1900 there was what was referred to as the sixth "great" bazaar to be held in the schools. This was to raise 'at least £5,000'. Since that day there have been Sales of Work, Gift Week Ends and Gift Days which continued until 1957 and raised on average of something like £700, the 1957 total being £836.

# **Mission Church**

For practically the whole of this century the Church Army has played an integral part in the ministry of the parish and through the Cross Street Mission. It was in 1904 that Captain Naylor was first appointed to St. John's and others who have served in this capacity have been Captains, D. H. Powell, Manby, Hill, Dowland, Connell, Gaden and Burles.

It was in 1959 that Captain Burles reported that the Sunday School at the Mission had ceased to function owing to the sparse attendances; the Youth Group transferred to St. Thomas's and the Band of Cheer disbanded.

Few people were also attending the Sunday services and it was decided to amalgamate these into one Evensong at 3 p.m.

There were three treasurers to the Mission, Mr. J. T. Whittaker, J. Stringfellow and L. Howard.

It was in this year that part of the Mission was leased to the Farnworth Little Theatre and when the Mission closed down completely in 1967 on Capt. Burles entering into a course of study prior to his ordination, the Little Theatre leased the whole of the premises.

## **Wakes**

Farnworth Wakes which first took place in Sept. 1827 and have been celebrated in Sept. every year since with, in the first place, a kind of village fair and afterwards by roundabouts and other entertainments, are believed to have been intended to celebrate the anniversary of St. John's Parish Church.

# **Men's Class of 750**

It is impossible to give a complete catalogue of the many organisations which have been formed within the Church and schools during the 150 years and which have given valuable service to parishioners of all ages, but one thing we have been unable to ascertain is when the Mothers Class became the Mothers Union is we believe in 1919.

A beautifully produced 111 page Souvenir booklet of the 1900 Farnworth - with - Kearsley Parish Church Ye Olde Halshawe More Bazaar in aid of the rebuilding of the Parish Church schools held on Wed., Thurs., Friday and Saturday, May 9th - 12th had the following conditions of admission :-

"No empty purse may enter here,  
Not if you sought on bended knees;  
For every door is barred with gold,  
And opens up to golden keys."

At this bazaar there was a Mothers stall, assisted by members of the Mothers Class and for many years afterwards there was a representative of the Mothers Class on the Parochial Church Council.

Much more information is available about the Men's Class which was established on Oct. 7th, 1900 and for more than 50 years remained a most flourishing organisation.

A copy of a revised list of officers and members published in March, 1907 has come into our hands and provides some useful data and interesting reading. The Rev. R. W. Gordon was vicar and Rev. W.J.C. Scarlin curate, the supervising secretary, Mr. W.B. Richardson; general secretary, Mr. John Chadwick; registration secretaries, Messrs George Eckersley, James Seddon, and J. W. Hall; treasurer, Mr. John C. Coope; organist, Mr. Harold Partington; and stewards, Messrs Joe Berry, Hy. Bowden, W. B. Freeman, William Seddon, Adolphus Smith, D. Snape and C. Taylor.

There were 32 Districts, each with a visitor and in a preface to the booklet the vicar records that the "number at present on the register (close on 750) may be considered as satisfactory. What is not quite so satisfactory is the average attendance which barely reaches 50% of the total membership."

Up to that time the class had met in all 220 times. In addition there had been 71 united services when the church, crowded with members of the Men's and Mothers' Classes and of the Sunday school, "afforded a unique and impressive spectacle."

Although the class was revived after the war its influence became less and less and eventually as a Men's Group ceased to function altogether in 1970.

## M. I. S.

M.I.S. Lecture  
1950



The Mutual Improvement Society has already been mentioned and here again we have received a syllabus for the 1905-6 Session which, as it was the eleventh, dates the commencement of the Society as 1894-5. Mr. R. Blease was hon. sec., Mr. R. Lees hon. asst. sec. and Mr. J. T. Whittaker, hon. treasurer. The objects of the Society are given as "To promote the Moral, Intellectual and Social Improvement of its members." The meetings were held on Mondays and there were lectures and musical and dramatic evenings from October to April.

In addition in those early days Whitsuntide tours were organised and afterwards the M.I.S. June holiday tours became a feature of local life and history.

In 1952 the Society created the Robert Blease Memorial Trust with a gift of £2,000. The P.C.C. has enjoyed the income from this yearly and it has been used mainly in connection with the maintenance of the Church fabric.

The Society was wound up in 1956 and in addition to defraying the cost of the reconditioned clock as a memorial to the work of the Society gave to the Church Council its assets of chairs, cupboards etc. and a grand piano to be placed in Church for the use of the choir-master. In order to accommodate the piano the long pews at the South East corner of the Nave were removed. The remainder of the funds which were over £1,000 were added to the Robert Blease Memorial Fund.

In 1957 a Tablet was erected in school in memory of Mr. Blease.

## ***Family Record***

In the past fifty years many members of well-known local families have given outstanding service to the Church, Schools and the various organisations. These are too numerous to mention in detail, but perhaps we may be forgiven if we refer to one family which has been in charge of the Church finances throughout the whole of

this period. When the Centenary was celebrated Mr. Charles Frederick Howard was the treasurer. He was succeeded by his son, Geoffrey, who held the office until his death in 1959, since when the duties have been undertaken by his bother, Leslie. A truly remarkable family record.

Day School  
Swimming Team.  
Head Mr. Keeling



## Day Schools

Matters affecting the Day Schools in the past 50 years have been many and varied and in this brief review we pick out just a few of the more important points.

In February, 1938, a meeting of School Managers and Head Teachers passed a resolution "That approval be given to the building of a Church Senior School in Kearsley for 200 places." The Board of Education raised an objection to the proposed school and a public enquiry was held.



Following the passing of the 1944 Education Act the P.C.C. again gave consideration to the future of the day schools and the requirements of the Development Plan. It was then decided to join the Barchester Scheme which was a Diocesan plan for pooling resources and extending the period of Government loans from 25 to 50 years. It was reported that the cost of adapting the present building for 120 infants and a nursery class of 30 would be about £5,000 and that of providing a new junior school for about 160 would be about £22,000.

The question was again raised in 1950 at a special meeting of the P.C.C., school managers and parishioners when, in view of the inability of parishes to find the heavy expenditure involved in putting the Barchester scheme into operation it was decided to seek "Aided" status for both infants and junior schools. This was granted a year later and the schools were thus saved for the parish.

On the resignation in 1965 of Miss N. Fletcher as headmistress of the infants school after serving 14 years in that office the day schools became one which was then known as Kearsley St. John's C. of E. Infants and Junior School. Mr. A. Keeling was appointed first headmaster of the joint school.

When St. James's, New Bury, Secondary Modern School was first proposed in 1957 the P.C.C. agreed to give financial support and have assisted in this respect throughout the years. The school was completed and dedicated in Nov. 1961 and the Rev. P. A. Wrigley was appointed to represent St. John's on the first Board of Governors. Our present representative is Mr. Leslie Howard.

Deep concern has been expressed on several occasions that only a small number of children from the school ever attended Church or Sunday school.

A request from the St. John's Branch of the C.E.M.S. for the use of the school after Evensong on Sundays to cater for entertainment for boys and girls was deferred

and eventually postponed. Sometime later approval was given to the suggestion that "Happy Gatherings" be held in the school on Sunday evenings.

The Church is served in 1976 by the following organisations; the Choir, the Sunday Schools, the Mothers' Union, the Scouts, Cubs, Guides and Brownies.

## **The Bells**

Ringling team  
1950



After the presentation of a new set of ropes in 1943 the bells were manually rung on special occasions such as Sermons and Christmas and this was said to have given general satisfaction.

The bells were recast in 1953 and the cost was defrayed by the bellringers; the family of the late Frank and Gertrude Warburton; Mrs. E. G. Botham; Fred and Arthur Watson; Miss Edith Whittaker; John H. Proffitt and Mrs. C. Rostron and Miss Elsie M. Coope, whilst the Tenor bell was provided by the parish to mark the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

For many years the bells have been the special care of Mr. J. Thornley, leader of successive teams of ringers and a devoted campanologist.

# ***Daughter Parishes***

Several parishes have been formed out of St. John's.

St. James's, New Bury, was consecrated in 1865 by Dr. Prince Lee, first Bishop of Manchester; St. Stephen's, Kearsley in 1871 by Dr. James Fraser, the second Bishop of Manchester; St. Thomas's, Dixon Green in 1879 also by Dr. James Fraser; St. Peters in 1886 by Dr. James Moorhouse and All Saints in 1909 by Bishop Knox.

## ***Memorials***

Over the 150 years the Church has been the recipient of many generous financial legacies which have been applied to particular schemes indicated by the residuary legatees or for general Church funds.

The Church is also rich in Memorials.

The East Window was given in memory of Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Crompton by their nephew, William Jackson Rideout, in 1874 and represents the principal events in the life of Our Lord.

There are also memorial windows to Richard Pickering 1832-1908; Samuel Coope; Mary Coope 1895; Charles Frederick Howard 1856-1939; Charles Everitt Waterhouse and Alice his wife 1938.

The baptistry is closely associated with Dr. Kershaw and his family "a beloved physician who gave a lifetimes devotion to God in the parish". The baptistry window was erected by the Dr. in memory of his wife Mary Alice Kershaw, who died August 22nd., 1884 and another one was erected next to it in September 1923 in memory of the Doctor.

The Cross which the Doctor gave and which was on the altar for many years was placed in a central portion of the new screen erected between baptistry and pews

as part of the Centenary effort. An illuminated oak Cross which was the present of the Mothers Union, took its place upon the altar which was also new, the former altar being presented with four frontals to St. Bede's, Bolton.

A brass tablet on the chancel arch is in memory of the Rev. Thomas Crick, M.A. for seven years vicar of the parish. In 1893 the handsome brass eagle lectern was given by Dr. Kershaw in memory of his daughter. In the same year the old organ was taken down and removed to St. Peter's. The present organ was extended in 1926 by an 8ft. open diapason placed in the East end of the North gallery.

In the Crompton Chapel the inscription on the window reads: "To the Glory of God and in thankfulness for the teachings of His Church, this window was dedicated by the scholars in the parish schools, A.D. 1875 - 'Suffer little children to come unto Me and forbid them not' ". The South window is in commemoration of the Jubilee of the Church and a marble tablet in memory of James Rothwell Esq., of Darley Hall.

There are 469 names on the Roll of Honour in the Church porch of those who served in the 1914-18 war and these are in addition to the 65 who paid the supreme sacrifice and which appear on the War Memorial Tablet.

Another Tablet on the wall of the War Memorial Chapel contains the names of 27 men who laid down their lives in the Second World War.

A carved Oak Alms Bowl commemorates John and Annie Allen; a Credence Table George Holme; Prayer Desk Miss Joan Bennett and Fred, her brother who died in the Second World War; An Aumbry in memory of David Jackson and his father; a Sanctuary Lamp in memory of Mr. and Mrs. W. Keeling.

Many other gifts have been presented to the Church and in 1948 the P.C.C. erected a tablet at the West End of the Church as a grateful tribute to the memory of the ever growing list of benefactors of this Church since its formation in 1826.

# Vicars and Curates

The first clergyman appointed was the Rev. Robert Clerk Burton, who was Curate in Charge from 1826-1828 and he was followed by the Rev. George Marriott, who occupied a like position from 1828 - 1830. Succeeding Vicars have been:- Revs. Thomas Alfred Ashworth, 1831-1836; William Burns 1836-66; William Henry Taylor 1866-78; John Worthington 1878 - 85; Ward Travers Burgess 1886-87, Thomas Crick 1887-94, who died in harness; Hercules Scott Butler 1894-1900, Robert Whittaker Gordon 1900-1912; Robert Hume Stephens 1912-18; Charles William Wilberforce Bramley 1918-28; William Edward Davis-Winstone 1928-39; Hubert Joseph Medd Hall 1939-44; Frank Peace Royle 1946-47; Llewellyn Percy Burnett 1947-54; Philip Arthur Wrigley 1954-69; Harry Ogden 1969-72; and from 1972 the present Vicar the Rev. Herbert F. Fox.

Those who have served as curates are :- Revs. George Mansfield (1839), Richard Johnston, John McLindon, William Sutcliffe, W. F. Wicks, W. H. Taylor, William Ffolliott, Holland Lomas, M. Patey, F. N. Newton, William Richardson, Josiah Downing, R. Thistlethwaite, Richard Ellis, Richard Storey, E. H. Aldred, J. J. S. Moore C. J. Stewart, William Lyster, John Curry, J. G. Stowell, W. H. Burns, E. W. Gilbert, Robert Daunt, T. Johnson, J. Smart, Charles Lowe, A. A. Roffe, R. Threlfall, F. E. Waldie, T. Woodhouse, J. A. Winstanley, R. J. Plater, A. W. Taylor, T. Austin, H. E. Burgess, R. H. Lyall, D. H. Pugh, W. J. C. Scarlin, C. J. Saunders, Pugh Jones, S. L. Caiger, H. Dundas, J. A. M. Johnstone, W. E. Pilling, W. G. Cochrane, P. A. Wrigley, J. E. Hall, T. Creswell, Norman Ashby, A. Jones, David Moseley, E. Lever, B. C. Harris and T. N. Howard.

The Rev. J. E. Hall, a former headmaster was some time later ordained Deacon and after assisting in the parish for a period was transferred to work in the Deanery.