

PARISH OF
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST,
CAMBRIDGE.

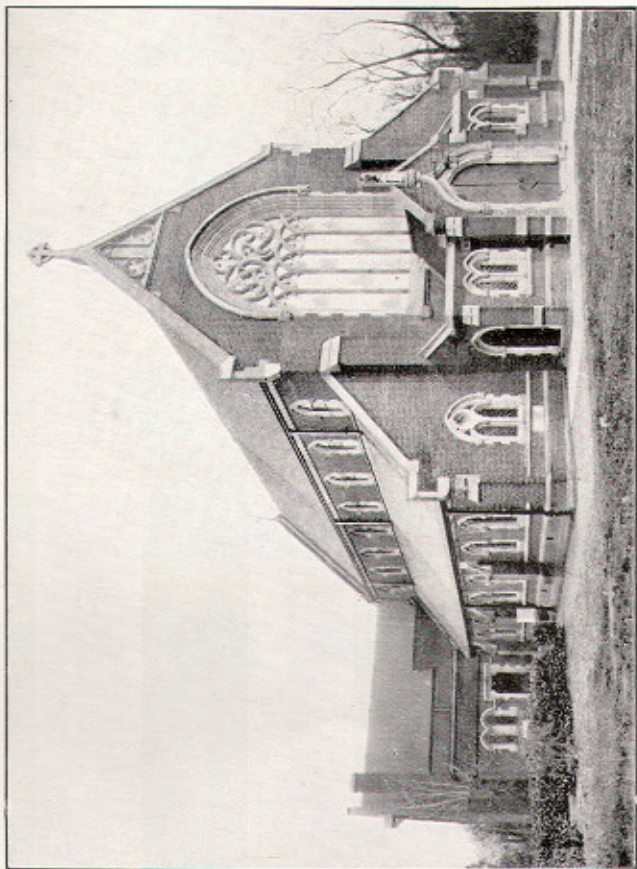
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A BRIEF RECORD OF ITS FORMATION,
DEVELOPMENT, AND PRESENT
ACTIVITIES,

By I. G. ELWORTHY.

PRICE - 6d.

The proceeds from the sale of this pamphlet
will be devoted to the Church Funds.



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PREFACE.

We are very fortunate to possess and secure the services of Mr. I. G. Elworthy for this little brochure. He has known this parish in its infancy, and watched, with love tempered with enthusiasm, its development and progress. No person better justified than he, in balanced judgment and proportion, could be found to write anyhow the Alpha—the inception of our venture as a separate Parish Entity. I heartily commend this account for its conciseness and accuracy to our parishioners and friends.

J. C. PATERSON MORGAN,

Vicar.

June, 1931.

PARISH OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, CAMBRIDGE.

A BRIEF RECORD OF ITS FORMATION,
DEVELOPMENT and PRESENT ACTIVITIES.

IT was in the month of November, 1891—November 5th (39 years ago)—that the first meeting for the promotion of a Church in the District then known as "New Cherryhinton" and Trumpington, was held at Cavendish College, Hills Road; then a College comprised within the jurisdiction of the University, but afterwards acquired by the Governors of Homerton College, London, and now known under that name. At that meeting a Committee was formed for the purpose of providing a Church for the District, and collecting the necessary funds for the purchase of a suitable site, and later for:—

- (1) The erection of the Edifice;
- (2) Provision for a Parsonage House; and
- (3) Provision for a Sunday School.

The proposal, which was submitted to the then Bishop of the Diocese, Lord Alwyne Compton, met with his warm approval and support, as it did also with that of the Archdeacon of Ely, Archdeacon Emery, after which steps were taken to form

Committees for the purpose. Several Heads of Colleges and prominent University Clergy, as well as influential lay Churchmen, consented to serve on the General Committee, over which the Master of St. Peter's College, Dr. Porter, presided as first Chairman.

The original Executive Committee consisted of the Vicar of Cherryhinton, Canon Beck, Messrs. Joseph Clark, J. H. Flather (late Master of Cavendish College), J. Jenkin, and I. G. Elworthy—of these, all but the last named, who acted as Secretary, have passed to their rest.

A vigorous campaign was then started for collecting subscriptions, and soon the Committee had sufficient funds in hand to acquire two plots of ground—one in Cavendish Avenue, which was selected as the site for the Church, and one in Blinco Grove, as a site for School and Parsonage House.

Very soon after this a Small Hall (timber built with iron roof) was acquired by the Treasurer, Mr. Joseph Clark, and erected on the Blinco Grove site, and was soon opened as a Sunday School. This formed the nucleus of Church work in the District of "New Cherryhinton."

In the meantime, owing to reduced membership, Cavendish College was closed, and an application was made to the Solicitors to the Trustees for permission to hold services in the Chapel of the College temporarily; this was granted, and the first service was, I believe, held on the First Sunday in Advent,

1892. Previous to this, the local Committee had met and made some preliminary arrangements for these services.

A Voluntary Choir was formed, an American Organ was hired, and a Voluntary Organist and Choirmaster came forward in the person of Mr. G. A. Peck who, with much painstaking effort and ability was responsible for the musical portion of the services for several years.

One difficulty, however—and that a rather serious one—was the regular provision of clergy for the proper conduct of these services. Canon Beck, the Vicar of the parent Church of St. Andrew's, at Cherryhinton, was nominally responsible—but he had no Curate—was resident some two and a half miles distant, and the claims of his own parish, a rather populous one, left him little time to secure the necessary clerical help from Sunday to Sunday. It therefore fell upon some of the lay members of the Committee to perform this duty, amongst them, the writer of these "memories." The appeals thus made met with a most generous and ready response from several of the University Clergy. Most of those good men have since passed away. Amongst them were Canon Stanton of Trinity, Professor Mayor of St. John's, Canon Churton of King's, Rev. Lang, Senior Fellow of Corpus, and the Rev. (afterwards Canon) Hargrove, Vicar of St. Matthew's, who was the preacher at evensong at the first Sunday gathering. He was a "real friend in need" in those early days, and undertook to supply

us with clergy for one service per Sunday for three months.

The attendance was very gratifying, the number of Communicants increased, and it was hoped our little community had found a home for a fairly long period, but before twelve months had elapsed the College was sold, and we were informed the Chapel would only be available for our purpose for a short time.

This, it was feared, would be rather staggering to our efforts, but turned out to be really a blessing in disguise, as it stirred us up to fresh and more active efforts. The question was, to where should we migrate? The natural reply was, to our School Room in Blinco Grove; but this was too limited in size to accommodate the congregation already formed, which numbered from 100 to 130 each Sunday.

It was then decided to enlarge the School Room and adapt it for the purpose of public worship. This was done at a cost of upwards of £100, the bulk of which was raised by our energetic Treasurer, the late Mr. Joseph Clark, a generous helper and true friend to the District and Church for many years; in fact, up to the time of his death.

During the period of our occupation of Cavendish College, an event of extreme importance in the history of the District occurred. In the early part of 1892 the Committee received a letter from the Rev. John George, who, I believe, was then residing at Bristol, stating he had seen in one of the Cambridge papers

the account of a meeting held for the purpose of providing a Church for this new district, and offering his services as Curate-in-charge, voluntarily, to assist in forwarding this important and much-needed work.

The offer was accepted with warm thanks, and this was the advent of one who afterwards became our first Vicar, and who did so much towards the development of the spiritual life of the district and its constitution as a separate Ecclesiastical Parish, also the provision of the first Section of the Church, of which he ultimately became, as before indicated, its first Vicar; in fact, he might very rightly be termed "the Father of the Parish," but this is rather anticipating events.

The members of the Executive Committee, which had been formed in 1891, were steadily but persistently pursuing their work, and the migration of the congregation from Cavendish College to the School Hall, Blinco Grove, in no way retarded their efforts. Provision had now been made for regular Sunday services, morning and evening, and Sunday School classes were started for the afternoons.

Concerts, entertainments, lectures, etc., were arranged at frequent intervals for the week evenings, all with the object of arousing the interest and securing the help necessary for creating a substantial Church Building Fund.

In the Autumn of 1893 a big Bazaar was held in the Corn Exchange. It was most artistically arranged, each stall representing a scene from one of Shakespeare's plays, and several of the younger helpers

were garbed in the periods of the respective plays. It aroused considerable interest, and indirectly materially helped the work, but the expenses attending the installation were so heavy that the amount actually cleared was rather disappointing. However, nothing daunted, several ladies of the district formed working parties for subsequent "sales of work" and provided well filled stalls. These sales, which were held periodically, were the means of raising very considerable help for the main fund, and thus the work went on until the early part of 1896, when it was felt that the Committee might safely make a start with the building of the first section of the Church. Previous to this, plans had been invited, and approximate estimates furnished by sundry well-known architects, and after careful consideration, Messrs. Gordon Lowther and Gunton were appointed for the work.

It was decided, in the first place, only to proceed with a section of the scheme, viz., the erection of the Chancel and the first two Bays of the Nave. The work was commenced in the Spring of 1896, and the first memorial stone was laid by Lady Alwyne Compton, wife of the then Bishop of Ely—Lord Compton—on May 4th, 1896.

This Section was completed, and the Building consecrated by the Bishop on December 15th, 1896.

Amongst those present at that service were the Incumbent, Rev. J. George, the Bishop of Ely, Lord Alwyne Compton (who preached the first sermon),

the Master of Trinity, Dr. H. Montague Butler, the Archdeacon of Ely, Archdeacon Emery, the Treasurer, Mr. J. Clark, and sundry members of the Committee, including Mr. J. Jenkins and the writer of the present record.

Several gifts towards the furnishing and appointment of the Church were made, but it is impossible, after this lapse of time, to give a full and accurate account of these. One, however, calls for special notice; a short time previous to the consecration, Mr. and Mrs. George celebrated their Silver Wedding; relatives of theirs desirous of presenting a joint gift, enquired of them what form they would like it to take. Their reply was, a pulpit for their new Church.

The result was, the gift of the present handsome carved stone pulpit, which formed a very welcome and valued addition to the beauty of the Building. Another important addition to the Church was the carved oak choir stalls, the gift of the late Mr. J. Leach, of City Road; other valuable presentations were made later, one of the most important being the stained glass window, the gift of Mr. Julius Drew in memory of the Rev. G. S. Drew, his father and the father of Mrs. George. The subject of the design is "The Last Supper," after the world-famous picture by Leonardo da Vinci. It is thought that the window is one of the most beautiful to be found in any of the modern Churches of Cambridge.

Following the consecration of the Building, regular services were commenced, and a surpliced Choir was

formed, with an American organ for its accompaniment. Mr. G. A. Peck was only able to continue his help as Organist for a short time, after which he left Cambridge, but other help was soon forthcoming. Mr. R. J. Cope, hearing of our need, volunteered for the duty, and his offer was gladly accepted. Soon after this, a small organ for his especial benefit was purchased by Mr. George and presented to the Church, and at this he presided for many years. His labours, which were entirely voluntary, were much appreciated, and his loss was much felt when he resigned. For many years after this, he was a strenuous worker in St. Paul's Parish, where he died, much regretted, a few years ago.

In September, 1903, Mr. George, after eleven years of self-denying, painstaking and successful work, resigned the living. His decision was received with the unanimous regret of the congregation and by the real sorrow of those who were most intimately associated with him in the work of the Parish. He was succeeded by the Rev. A. E. Love, who held the living for about eleven years, *i.e.*, from September, 1903, to November, 1914. During his Vicariate, steady progress was made with the development of the Church, and a northern transept was erected forming provision for Clergy and Choir Vestries and an Ambulatory to the Chancel. The funds for this work were all raised by an Executive Committee under Mr. Love's chairmanship.

The Memorial Stone for this extension was laid by Mrs. F. H. Chase, wife of the then Bishop of Ely,

on October 29th, 1908. She passed away a short time ago, surviving her honoured husband, the Bishop, only a few years.

Another organ was also provided, unfortunately a second-hand instrument which did not turn out to be a very satisfactory purchase, and which is quite inadequate for the size of the present building.

Other useful work for which the Parish is indebted to Mr. Love was the augmentation of the living, for which he worked very hard and persistently and with appreciable success, so much so that before he left the income was considerably increased. He was succeeded by the Rev. G. F. Jackson, of Looking, Somerset (with whom he exchanged livings in the Autumn of 1914).

Mr. Jackson, who was instituted to the living in 1914, had an uphill task to carry on the conduct of a new parish, as apart from the current needs of the District, various schemes for its development awaited him; but the Country was then in the throes of the Great War, and most attempts at Church extension were paralysed. When he came, there were debts upon the Vicarage and the Church Institute, which had hitherto blocked the way for new efforts. He therefore set to work to get these wiped off, and after some years of patient labour succeeded in so doing, but it was not until some time after the termination of the War that he felt able to renew the scheme for Church extension. However, the opportunity came at last; a fresh Committee was formed who laboured

with steady persistence at the work of raising funds. After a residence of thirteen years in the parish, frequent illnesses added to advancing years, convinced him that he must seek a lighter Cure, so in November, 1927—thirteen years after his induction—he exchanged benefices, with the consent of the Marquess of Hertford and the approval of the Bishops of Coventry and Ely, with our present Vicar, late Rector of Arrow and Vicar of Weethley, Warwickshire.

Although disappointed at being unable to complete the work of the western extension before leaving, Mr. Jackson had the satisfaction to feel that under his chairmanship the fund had reached over £2,000, and that the other project, with which he was associated, viz., the provision of a new Parochial Hall, had so far matured that the Hall was completed and formally opened on the eve of his departure from Cambridge. It was not, however, finished free of debt; several hundred pounds remained to be raised, but the Committee of the Mothers' Union, a very enthusiastic, capable and painstaking body, to whose efforts the parish is principally indebted for the provision of this very necessary adjunct of parish work, helped to considerably reduce the charge upon it. The sums thus raised were augmented by several liberal and substantial donations from various members of the congregation, so that by the end of the year 1930 the Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. W. R. Elworthy, was able to announce the Building free of debt.

Our present Vicar, Mr. Paterson Morgan, on his appointment succeeded to an arduous position; as already indicated, there was the debt upon the Parochial Hall to clear, and further funds for the extension of the Church to be collected, the latter amounting to somewhere about three thousand pounds; but the energy and enthusiasm with which he hrew himself into the work became infectious to the congregation in general, and to the Special Committee in particular, so much so that by the Autumn of 1928 the accumulated Church Fund was considered to be sufficient to warrant the commencement of the western extension, the foundation stone of which was laid by the Rev. G. A. Weekes on All Saints' Day (November 1st), 1928.

The ceremony of cutting the first sod of the extreme limit of the western extension had been previously celebrated on September 30th of that year by a special service conducted by the Archdeacon, Bishop Price, and the cutting of the sod was deputed to the writer of this memoir. There was a large congregation present on that occasion.

The Building was completed by the following June, and on the 13th of that month consecrated by Bishop Price, Archdeacon of Ely.

Details of the architecture and decorations (stone carvings, both exterior and interior) can be found in the Book of Parish Records, kept in the Church Vestry, access to which can be had on application to either of the Wardens.

Some idea of the corporate life of the District may be gathered from a perusal of the list of organizations which appears on the front page of the monthly issues of the Parish Magazine. Amongst them is the Parochial Church Council, the Sunday School, Choir, Communicants' Guild, Mothers' Union, the Church of England Men's Society, the Finance Committee, the Church Fund, etc., etc., etc.

Since its formation—now nearly forty years ago—the District has grown enormously, and further developments will undoubtedly follow; to meet the demands upon them, the Clergy and Lay Workers must not only continue but increase the efforts already put forth to maintain the reputation which it has held for such a long period as a parish of real and earnest vitality; that they will do so is the earnest hope and the confident opinion of the writer.

I. G. E.

June, 1931.

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