



A message to the people of St James, Brownhills, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the consecration of the church.

St James, the Apostle in whose name your Church is dedicated, gave us one of the most telling “one-liners” in the Bible: ‘Faith’ he wrote, ‘without works is dead’ (Chapter 2 verse 20).

What kind of “works” is the Lord calling St James’s and its people to think, pray and act upon in 2001, your anniversary year?

I draw to your attention the four primary purposes of the Diocese of Lichfield: worship and prayer, teaching and nurture, outreach and evangelism, justice and care.

In particular, I commend to your attention and prayers that third purpose: outreach and evangelism. Join in with our outreach events called Springboard and HarvestTime 2001. Bishop Lonsdale led the building of many churches, including St James, Brownhills. The challenge today is to build up people as the living stones of God’s Temple.

With my prayers and good wishes for 2001.

Yours in Christ
Greg Keen

DEDICATION

Dedicated to the church of St James in Brownhills with Ogle Hay. To all who are called to be God's people and belong to him in union with Christ Jesus also, together with all people everywhere who know and worship our Lord Jesus Christ.

PROLOGUE

It is said that life is like a book,
So what sort might it be?
A history or a mystery perhaps,
We will have to read and see;
The story is of twists and turns,
A most interesting text,
It might well be so exciting,
One may wonder what comes next.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this work is to provide both a guide and short history of the Church of St James.

To do this, it should very briefly give some idea of what Ogle Hay was like before 1851, followed by the history of St James after it had been built and consecrated.

It is hoped that this will be a useful record for the general reader who may enquire about the history of the church up to the 150th anniversary of the consecration of St James on the 15th October 2001.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would never have been compiled without the willing help of County Record Offices, Local History Centres, Libraries, Archive Services, Church Records and many local people.

The text has been researched by John Mainwaring (Churchwarden 1990-2000). The sources of information have been many and varied and my thanks are extended to all who so freely helped and encouraged this work.

Owing to the many changes that have taken place in the Ogle Hay area it is possible that some errors and inaccuracies may have occurred. Please accept my apologies if this should be the case.

The sources of inspiration have been the parish and church building which have stood as a testimony to those many people who have worshipped there and who have given their labour, time, money and love to develop and cherish the church of St James.



Looking down Church Road from the front of St James in the early 20th Century

OGLEY HAY BEFORE 1840

In Saxon times the area we now know as Ogle Hay was a forested part of the great forest and heath land of Cannock Chase and a very different place to that of today. There is very little evidence to show what the words Ogle and Hay mean, but it is likely that Ogle came from 'Ogga's Leah'.

It is possible that, as in other names 'Og' or 'Hog' was a small hill raised over the grave of someone buried in ancient times or it could be that ancient farmers had annually buried their food crops to preserve them during the winter, and were said to 'Hog' them. The 'Og' suffix 'lea' or 'ley' means pasture. The origin of 'Leah' more than likely meant 'Hay', a word used to describe a particular area administered by a 'Warde' (guardian). In Norman times the compilers of the famous Domesday Book wrote of Ogle as 'A hide waste' (an area of unused land with very few inhabitants).

We all know that the Watling Street is an ancient Roman Road along which many travellers have journeyed through the ages. Early records show that the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry (Roger de Meuland) acquired some 2,700 acres as landowner but did nothing to develop or change it. At the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1538 the area was seized by the Crown and given over to Privy Councillor Sir William Paget who felled much of the timber to fuel the emerging iron industry with the result that the area became more heath land than forest.

In 1568 Queen Elizabeth I gave this wild desolate uninteresting place to the family of Lord Stafford. He was followed by various land owners until in 1765 a warrener named Richard Gildart bought the Catshill area in 1765 as a rabbit warren. Hence Warren Place and The Warreners Arms (built 1871 and now McDonalds). By 1809 Gildart had become sole Lord of the Manor and Liberty of Ogle which at that time had a population of just eight people. In 1838 an Act of Parliament was passed dividing, allotting and enclosing the common waste land of Ogle Hay.

In that same year Mr Charles Forster-Cotterill (an ex Mayor of the parish of Walsall) bought it for £5500. This ex Mayor was to be the last Lord of the Manor and set about selling and leasing the area in accordance with the Act.

During these years the Lords of the Manor would have seen the Chester Road turnpiked in 1759, a signpost erected at the Rising Sun in 1777, the Wyrley and Essington Canal cut in 1794, and the Anchor Bridge built as the canal was extended to Huddlesford (near Lichfield) in 1797. The Anchor Inn was built around 1796 which, because it was on the Shire Oak side of the canal was actually known as Lower Stonnall in the parish of Shenstone. Ogle Hay Steam Mill was built and opened in 1839.

OGLEY HAY - 1840-1850

These next ten years were most eventful in that Ogle Hay's first public house opened (Shoulder of Mutton) in Church Street, and The Revd James Downes was instituted first as Perpetual Curate in 1841 then as Vicar in the same year at St Peters Stonnall. The only place of worship in Ogle Hay in 1842 was the newly built Primitive Methodist Chapel at Springhill on the Shire Oak to Muckley Corner Lichfield road (A461). The census population at this time was just 222 for the whole of the Ogle Hay area. In 1846 the South Staffordshire Railway was being laid from Walsall to Lichfield with a station at High Street Brownhills being officially opened for passenger travel on 8th May 1849. Ogle Hay and the surrounding areas were growing at an alarming rate now that work was to be found in the many small pits in the district. At this time the Ogle Hay boundary meant that Brownhills bridge (built 1848) and station were outside the Manor of Ogle.

On the 7th October 1849 the Revd J. Downes solemnized the very first Ogle Hay Baptism in the school room. This of course was before the St James Church was built and gives us an idea of the demands made on the Revd Downes as he ministered and journeyed to surrounding areas where churches had yet to be built. Records show that he attended Walsall Wood, Ogle Hay, Brownhills and other places as far away as Burton-on-Trent. How did he do these journeys?

Was it on horseback or did he walk? It will probably never be known. What is known is that it was he who originated a scheme and organised the first meeting of those who were interested in his proposal to build a church in the Manor of Ogle Hay.

A meeting was convened in the Ogle Hay school room on 10th December 1849, at which proprietors, occupiers of land, and others considered the urgent necessity of providing funds for the erection of a church in the Manor of Ogle Hay. The area at this time was comprised of two separate villages namely Ogle Hay and Brownhills. Ogle Hay was rural, and Brownhills an area of rapid development as a result of many small pits being mined for coal. The Manor was a triangular shaped area surrounded by Norton Canes, the Foreign of Walsall, the Chapelry of Hammerwich and the Parish of Shenstone. The Revd Downes was appointed Chairman and in his own words said, "It was a happy and interesting task, which he had imposed upon himself, to create funds for the erection of a church, in this hitherto barren place and to partially endow it." It was unanimously agreed that a church was most necessary as the population had more than doubled since the 1841 census. A proposed site was inspected and it was agreed that a church seating some 400 persons should be built where it stands today. A building committee was elected consisting of the following:- Revd J. Downes, Messrs J. Brawn, W. Hanbury, W. Stubbs, W. Middleton, Round, Chawner, Naden, Bannister, Smith and Stevens. Before the close of the meeting £218-10s-0d had been subscribed to the Building Fund.

On the 7th January 1850 promised subscriptions of £400 had been obtained.

Eight weeks later when the Building Committee met on 2nd March 1850 seven plans and specifications were studied with those of Wolverhampton Architect, Mr G.T. Robinson being accepted. Mr Richard Green was elected as Hon. Treasurer. It was also proposed and seconded that the church when built should be dedicated to St. James.

By 18th March amounts promised had risen to £600, and an application was made to the Lichfield Diocesan Society for a grant towards the Church.

On 22nd April 1850 Revd J. Downes reported to the Building Committee that successful applications for grants had realized £350 from the

Page 1

BAPTISMS solemnized in the ^{School Room} Parish of <u>Ogle Hay</u> in the County of <u>Stafford</u> in the Year <u>1849-50</u>						
When Applied.	Child's Christian Name.	Parent's Name.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
1849 Oct 7 th	William	William and Sarah	Taylor	Ogle	Minister	J. Downes Off. Min.
No. 1 1849	Nov 1 st	Joseph and Julia	Sutton	Ogle	Labourer	J. Downes Off. Min.
No. 2 1850	March 23 rd	Richard and Caroline	Broadbent	Miner	Labourer	J. Downes Off. Min.
No. 3 1850	March 23 rd	Samuel and Mary	Roby	Ogle	Labourer	J. Downes Off. Min.
No. 4						

Copy of first page of Baptism Register
of St James

Lichfield Diocesan Society and £200 from the Incorporated Church Building Society providing that not more than 50 seats were appropriated (i.e. reserved and set apart for private use.) The Architect was asked to advertise for tenders for the building of the new church.

On 8th July 1850 the Committee considered tenders that had been received from the following builders:-

Messrs. Highham of Wolverhampton	£1,400
Messrs. Scott & Collier of Lichfield	£1,176
Messrs. Hemberrow of Wolverhampton	£1,185
Messrs. Hardwick & Son of Birmingham	£1,150

They were found "to exceed the intended outlay," and "were returned for reconsideration between the said builders and architect." Meeting again on 19th July the Committee again examined new tenders but again sent them back requesting that more details be provided. Also the meeting agreed, "To accept, with thanks, the kind offer by Mr W. Stubbs, of the mine right of stone for building of the church with the Committee agreeing to pay at Mr W. Stubbs suggestion the sum of £5 for the same." It is from this minute that we learn that the stone was obtained for a very small sum and perhaps explains why the builder was able to quote only £1150 for the church.

The Committee accepted the tender of Messrs. Hardwick & Son, builders, of Birmingham on the 4th July 1850, "Subject to the addition of a further £37 if it was found necessary to have a boarded ceiling between the rafters instead of lath and plaster as stated in the contract."

Building commenced after the laying of the foundation stone on the 22nd August 1850 by Viscount Lewisham, MP for South Staffordshire. It is not known which stone this actually was, but an interesting note in the minutes shows that:- Appropriate prayers were read by the Revd J. Downes, partly in the School Room and partly on the the marked out ground for the new church. The large assembly was most eloquently addressed by the Rural Dean Revd George Buckeridge. After the ceremony a most elegant luncheon was provided in a large tent by the ladies of Stonnall, Ogle, and Hammerwich, etc. which was presided over by the Revd J. Downes, and attended by upwards of 100 guests, who expressed themselves delighted with the sumptuous entertainment so cheerfully and gratuitously provided for them.

On the 28th August 1850 there is an entry in the Treasurer's accounts referring to those who did not share in the luncheon but were not forgotten:- "Second day. Bread and butter, tea, sugar, etc. for 83 women, 173 children, 36 ladies, and two gallons of ale for the workman".

At their next meetings the Committee were involved in many details, particularly that of raising money, with the following always present:- Revd J. Downes, Messrs. James Brawn, William Hanbury, William Middleton and William Stubbs.

OGLEY HAY - 1851 - CHURCH CONSECRATION YEAR

On 10th January 1851, the builder reported that both the chancel and transepts were ready for the roof.

A letter from the architect was read to the meeting on 10th March 1851 complaining that the Hammerwich stone was inadequate for certain places of the church. After considering this problem the Committee expressed the opinion that it would be most unwise to reopen the contract now that the builders had proceeded so far and that the Architect and builders would have to be content with two large pieces of special stone to bear the weight of the bell tower. The Committee agreed to compensate the contractor for these two pieces only at the completion of the building work and that Hammerwich stone be used in all other parts of the building.

[In this present age we know only too well that the poor quality Hammerwich stone used has crumbled away externally as a result of corrosive acids in the air, requiring expensive on-going phased renovation.]

On 28th July 1851, records show, "the best thanks of the Committee and inhabitants are eminently due and are hereby most respectfully given to Lady Lewisham and Treasurer Mr. R. Green for the valuable presents of magnificent Altar, Pulpit and Sedilia, and to many others for gifts and gratuitous services." This word sedilia needed to be investigated by the writer as it was not understood. It would seem that it means stone seats on the south side of the altar provided for priests and deacons. There is no evidence today to show where these seats actually were and it is therefore assumed that they were removed during a time of renovation at some later date.

On the evening of the day before the consecration, the committee met to tender their thanks to the donors of church furniture, and for all the preparatory work which was being provided for the following day.

The Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, which was opened on 1st May by Queen Victoria, actually ended on 15th October, the same day that St. James at Ogle Hay was Consecrated.

Consecration Day was on Wednesday 15th October 1851. The Lord Bishop of Lichfield (The Right Reverend John Lonsdale) solemnly consecrated the Church of St. James at Ogle Hay. A large influential and respectable congregation gathered from all parts to fill the Church. Among the many were the Earl of Dartmouth and Viscount Lewisham. At the close of the service an unexpected, but never the less much needed, collection of £137-6s-10d. was given. After the intended Burial Ground had been consecrated, a very large party amounting to some 200 repaired to the schoolroom for a luncheon that would have done honour to a nobleman's table. This luncheon under the superintendence of Mrs. J Downes and family had been cheerfully provided by the ladies of Stonnall, Ogle, Hammerwich and Burntwood. Thanks were expressed for the lavish delicacies so tastefully spread and interspersed with beautiful flowers from the gardens of Beaudesert. Thanks were also expressed to the Marquis of Anglesey for his abundant supply of unsolicited fruit and game. On the following day the children of both Stonnall and Ogle were taken to view the new Church where a portion of daily prayers were read by Revd E. Coupland Curate at St. Peters Stonnall. They were then taken in procession to the schoolroom where they finished off the remains of the luncheon, with each

CHURCH OF SAINT JAMES,

OGLEY HAY, STAFFORDSHIRE.

ON WEDNESDAY NEXT, OCTOBER THE 15TH, 1851,

THE ABOVE CHURCH

WILL BE CONSECRATED

BY THE RIGHT REV. THE

LORD BISHOP OF LICHFIELD,

Who has kindly consented to Preach the Sermon on the occasion.

THE SERVICE WILL COMMENCE AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK A.M. AT WHICH

THE CHOIR OF LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL

WILL ASSIST.

The Clergy are requested to appear in their Gowns, and meet the Bishop at the West Door.

The Committee beg to inform the Public that Funds are still wanting to complete the amount necessary for the Erection and Endowment of this Church, although the greater part has been raised by the cheerful and liberal efforts of the Landowners and Inhabitants of the District, aided by the munificence of many Noblemen and Gentlemen unconnected with the place.

It is earnestly hoped the Collection to be made after Consecration &c., will realize the sum still deficient. Contributions will be thankfully received from those parties who are unable to attend, by the Treasurer, Richard Greene, Esq., Lichfield, or the Rev. James Downes, Stonnall.

The Church is situated close to the Downhills Station of the South Staffordshire Railway, to which Station Trains will run, (calling at the intermediate places) from Birmingham and Dudley at 9.45; Walnut 10.16; Lichfield 9.5 a.m., and return from Downhills for Birmingham and Walsall at 3.25 & 5.57 p.m., for Lichfield 3.15 & 5.50 p.m.

Official notice of the consecration of St James

child being given a lithograph print of the church as an interesting memorial of its completion. One wonders where all those lithographs went to? I have not been able to trace one to date. The children were then addressed by Revd J. Downes after which they sang the National Anthem, gave three cheers for the Queen and then departed with joyous hearts, making their voices heard as they wended their way home.

On the first Sunday, 19th October 1851, the Church was open for Divine Service, when two admirable discourses were given one by Revd George Buckeridge, Rural Dean, and one by the Venerable Archdeacon of Stafford. The church was well filled especially in the afternoon, and a total sum of £16-5s-9d. was collected of which £1 was from the working classes.

A meeting of the committee was held on 22nd October and it was resolved that Mr. Middleton and Mr. Stubbs "be and hereby are appointed the first Churchwardens of St James and that Mr. Middleton be requested to appear before the Archdeacon on 24th October next to make the usual Declaration on behalf of himself and his fellow Warden." It was also resolved: that Mr. Joseph Aldridge be appointed Clerk and Sexton at such a salary as the Churchwardens may be enabled to give at the end of the year; that Ann Richardson be appointed cleaner of the church and Thomas Harrison be appointed bell ringer; and that Mr. Hardwicke procure a stove suitable for the church and have it placed in such a position as to be most beneficial for the whole building.

On 19th December 1851 Revd J. Downes performed the first recorded burial service at the Chapel of St. James. This brings to a close the eventful year of 1851 in which the church was consecrated in Ogle Hay and it gives some idea of the task the early committee had set themselves. The minute book shows very fully how businesslike they set about their work and it is a great credit to them, that within two years of the first meeting the church was built and consecrated.

OGLEY HAY 1852-1899

Queen Victoria was the reigning Monarch as St James started to become established at Ogle Hay. The Chapel of Ogle Hay (Extra Parochial) was attached to the Parish of Stonnall with Revd J. Downes as Officiating Minister. He was assisted by Curates Revd Edward Coupland, Revd Hugh Brookman & Revd George Newman.

At a meeting held on 9th February 1852 a balance sheet showing the state of the finances was laid before the Committee, by which it appeared that, with the amount of grant from the Diocese and the money in the Bank, there would be sufficient to meet the £1000 promised for investment in the Endowment Fund. It was reported that the Commissioners for the building of Churches had remitted a sum of £20-18s-3d. as the duty paid used in the Church. The Manchester Co-operative Society had kindly made a grant of £15 towards the Endowment Fund. It was therefore resolved that the Chairman be requested to communicate with the Treasurer on the subject of the Endowment Fund and make arrangements with him for the immediate investment of £1000 with the Governors of the Bounty of Queen Anne.

On the 14th April 1852 Mr. Stubbs reported to the meeting that Mr. Pavier had generously given an iron chest for the safe keeping of Registers, copies of Consecration and Endowment Deed, and other papers belonging to the Church. It was resolved that the sincere thanks of the Committee be given to Mr. Pavier for the chest and also to John Mott Esq. for the sending of the copy Consecration Deed, free of all expenses. It was also resolved that best thanks of the Committee be sent to Messrs. G. & J. Brawn for their liberal gift of trees that were planted around the Churchyard under the supervision of Mr. J. Mellor of Little Aston. At a meeting held on 26th April 1852 a letter was read by the Chairman from the Secretary of the Incorporated Society, London, kindly permitting the appropriation of 50 sittings to be let for the benefit of the Officiating Minister. It was resolved that the grateful acknowledgements of the Committee for the considerate permission be conveyed to the Secretary so that it could be laid before the board. Mr Robinson, Architect, spoke to the Committee on various matters concerning the Church and Gate Piers, and promised to consult with builders Messrs Hardwicke about some discrepancies that appeared in the accounts and report back at the next meeting.

On 8th November 1852 Mr. Hanbury was asked to provide an opinion as to the present circumstances of the Committee because it was desirous that the builders and architect be paid their demands and that the Chairman should write to the Treasurer to ascertain whether he would only advance the required amount when additional grants or subscriptions were received to cover the amount owed.

The following meeting was held in the Vestry and the balance of the Builders account and the Architects charges were placed before the Committee where it was resolved that the outstanding amounts might be borrowed from the Trustees of the Burntwood Club on the joint security of the Committee for the erection of Ogle Hay Church and that the Architect and Builder be summoned to attend the Committee's next meeting.

At the 23rd December 1852 meeting Mr. Elias Ashnall attended on behalf of the Trustees of Burntwood Club. It was decided to borrow the sum of £215 upon the joint security of Messrs. Middleton, Brawn, Hanbury and Stubbs at a £4 per cent per annum interest rate. The Trustees agreed to receive payments to cover the loan at such times as the Committee received adequate subscriptions.

The sum borrowed was £215 which in addition to £15 in the hands of the Chairman allowed the builder to be paid £180 and the Architect £50. It is perhaps of interest to note here that right from these early years financial difficulties were encountered in making ends meet. It was thanks to the generous few that the Ogle Hay Church remained solvent.

In 1853, the 9th May meeting did not transact any business owing to the absence of Messrs Stubbs and Middleton the latter suffering from melancholy bereavement. At the next meeting held on 13th June the boundaries of the Ecclesiastical District were discussed, with agreement that a defined boundary be laid before the Commissioners, with a request that they would sanction it.

The London Gazette of 9th May 1854 records the new boundaries of the Parish of Ogle Hay which were approved by Her Majesty the Queen at the Court held at Windsor on 15th April. This now made Ogle Hay an Ecclesiastical Parish in its own right separated from Stonnall although still managed by Revd J. Downes and his various Curates.

The first ever Marriage at the Chapel of St. James in the district of Ogle Hay was solemnised by Revd George Newman (Curate) on 16th June 1854.

Page 1

BURIALS in the Parish of <i>Ogle Hay</i> in the County of <i>Stafford</i> in the Year 1852-3.				
Name.	Abode.	When buried.	Age.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
<i>Richard Johnson</i>	<i>Ogle Hay</i>	<i>Dec. 17 1851</i>	<i>3 Weeks</i>	<i>Rev. Downes</i>
No. 1				<i>Minister</i>
<i>John Gater</i>	<i>Wolverhampton</i>	<i>June 26 1852</i>	<i>4 years</i>	<i>Rev. Downes</i>
No. 2				<i>Minister</i>
<i>William Butler</i>	<i>Wolverhampton</i>	<i>July 24 1852</i>	<i>27 years</i>	<i>Rev. Downes</i>
No. 3				<i>Minister</i>
<i>William Gater</i>	<i>Wolverhampton</i>	<i>Jan 14 1853</i>	<i>3 years</i>	<i>Rev. Downes</i>
No. 4				<i>Minister</i>

Copy of first page in
burial register

The population is recorded as 650 in Ogle Hay: 445 in the Brownhills part of Norton: 50 in Hammerwich: 70 in the Walsall Foreign: and 35 in the Catshill part of Shenstone. Total 1250.

On 3rd July 1854 a vestry meeting was held of Landed Proprietors and others interested in the erection of a Parsonage House at Ogle Hay. Those present were Revd J. Downes, Messrs. W. Middleton, W. Stubbs, J. Brawn and W. Hanbury. It was stated by the Chairman that the site given by J. Nicholson, Esq., of Liverpool, for the erection of a Parsonage was now legally conveyed to the Church Building Commissioners and the Conveyance Deed deposited with the Registrar of the Diocese. He also reported that the plans that had been drawn up by Mr. G. T. Robinson, Architect, had been approved by the Lichfield Diocesan Association for the building of the Parsonage at an estimated cost of £860.

The Chairman reported that Mr. Nicholson had generously paid the legal Expenses of Conveyance of the site. The Architect had liberally offered to give the Plan Drawings and superintend the erection on payment of his expenses from Leamington which would make it possible to forego the usual Fee of 5% upon the outlay.

A meeting of the Subscribers was held at the Parsonage site on 3rd March 1856, when Mr G.T. Robinson (Architect) and Mr J. Hardwick (Builder) staked out the ground for intended erection. The builder was asked to commence work on the new Parsonage as soon as permission was given by the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty.

In May 1856 the Foundation Stone was laid for the parsonage by Master James Charles Downes (Revd J. Downes's son) and a silver trowel was presented to him to commemorate the event. Grateful thanks were expressed to the young Gentleman's Father for his indefatigable perseverance, energy and money that he raised for the erection of the Church and Parsonage amounting to £3671. The appeal of the Committee having been highly satisfactory, the Revd J. Downes published his Final Address and Balance Sheet to the generous subscribers who gave for the erection of the Church of St. James, Ogle Hay in the County of Stafford, the Endowment Fund thereof and the Parsonage House.

Revd J. Downes's Final Address

"My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen. In bringing to a happy termination the most interesting task I imposed upon myself eight years ago, that of creating Funds for the erection of a Church, partially endowing it and planting a Clergy man in his own House, upon a hitherto barren spot, I cannot refrain from offering my grateful acknowledgements for the liberal and cheerful aid, which under Divine Providence, has been accorded me in a work of no slight difficulty and anxiety, to the Church Building Societies of Lichfield and London, great thanks are due for their most valuable and large assistance.

During the remainder of my days I shall look back with pleasing recollections to that period, when, with God's Blessing, I was permitted to be so usefully employed in the extension of our Holy Religion and the advancement of our beloved National Church. I beg to subscribe myself My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen. Yours most Gratefully, James Downes, B.A. Incumbent of Stonnall".

The Revd J. Downes continued until 1857 as Officiating Minister in the area that he had so conscientiously provided a new and beautiful church. Regular worship of our Lord and Saviour still continues, week by week, 150 years later.

It was not until six years after the Church Consecration that The Revd Thomas Jackson, in 1857, became the First Vicar of Ogle Hay. Up and until this time the parish had been Extra Parochial to Stonnall. During his incumbency the first Constables, the first Overseers of the poor, the first Rate collectors and the first Surveyor of Highways were elected to serve the township of Ogle Hay. (Sacramental wine cost 5 shillings per annum in 1863). Easter Vestry Meeting minutes of 28th March 1864 show the accounts as having an excess income of 10 shillings on a turnover of £14-12s-7d, and the Revd Jackson appointing Mr. Joseph Thomas Bailey as Parish Warden and Mr. Frank Barnett as Ministers Warden. In 1866 Two Guineas had to be spent on the church roof as a result of a strike by an electric lightning storm and in the same year St James's school was erected.

The population had now grown to 1,357 as a result of the many mining activities and increasing travel opportunities. It is recorded in railway statistics that 10 trains a day were going through Brownhills.

By 1868 Architect plans were submitted to the Vestry meeting on 12th March where they discussed the extension of the coal fired heating pipes into the chancel (coal was costing 10 shillings p/a) The Revd Thomas Jackson died on 29th November 1869. Details of his death or burial place although researched just do not seem to be available.

He was followed by the Revd John Singleton B.A. of Pembroke College, Cambridge, previously eight years Curate at Chesterfield, he was instituted Vicar of Ogle Hay on 11th January 1870. During his time as Vicar, the Parsonage was put into thorough repair, a wash-house and a pantry added and a boot-house built. Gas lighting replaced the oil lamps and candles in church when it became available from the Gas Works of whom Revd Singleton was the chairman and founder. Choir seating was added in the Chancel and an organ chamber screen erected behind the rear of the seating.

Revd Singleton saw the "Warreners Arms" built, a new (£80) classroom for girls at St. James school, and the election of Mr. T. Price as Inspector of Nuisances (salary £5 p/a). In 1872 church insurance was £1-4s-6d, and the church choir wore surplices for the first time at the Harvest Festival. A system of weekly offering was introduced to assist the church finances, there being a debt at £41-17s-0d. The Vestry meeting minutes of 14th April 1873 show that "Mrs. Deakin be paid £3 p/a for the washing of surplices, the whole to be washed and nicely got up at least four times a year".

During the Revd Singleton's time Ogle Hay had its first official Curate, the Revd John Woollaston, a student of Lichfield Theological College. He stayed until June 1873, when he accepted the curacy of Smethwick. On 1st October 1873 the Revd E. C. Drury (previously Curate at Dawley) became the next Curate at Ogle Hay. On 25th January 1874, the Revd J. Singleton vacated the living at Ogle Hay after being nominated by the Bishop to the Rectory of Birmingham.

Of both Revd Jackson and Revd Singleton it is recorded that they worked faithfully and diligently in this new parish for the spiritual welfare of their parishioners.



St James Parsonage as it was in the 1960s

IMPORTANT SALE OF
FREEHOLD
PROPERTIES
 AND
LAND,
NEAR THE CHURCH, BROWNHILLS.

To be SOLD BY AUCTION, by

Messrs. WATKINS, POWELL & WOOD

AT THE STATION HOTEL,
BROWNHILLS,

On TUESDAY, the 21st day of JULY, 1896

AT SIX O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING,

(Subject to the annexed Conditions) by order of the Executors of the Rev. THOMAS JACKSON, deceased:—

LOT 1.

TWO FREEHOLD DWELLING-HOUSES,

Situate at the junction of Chapel Street and Church Road, Brownhills, occupied by Messrs. Wm. Wood and George Jackson, at rentals producing £19 10s. per annum.

The land which is Freehold, contains an area of 1,573 square yards or thereabouts.

The Property has frontages of 47yds. 2ft. to Church Road, and 32yds. 2ft. to Chapel Street. The houses have each good gardens.

LOT 2.

TWO FREEHOLD COTTAGES,

adjoining Lot 1, in the occupation of Messrs. James Chilton and James Merrick, at rentals producing £16 18s. per annum.

The land contains an area of 842 square yards or thereabouts. Frontage, 17yds. 2ft.

LOT 3.

A PIECE OF FREEHOLD BUILDING LAND,

having frontages of 16yds. 2ft. 4in. to Brick-kiln Street, and 34yds. 2ft. to Church Road, Brownhills, and containing an area of 609 square yards or thereabouts.

LOT 4.

A PIECE OF FREEHOLD BUILDING LAND,

adjoining Lot 3, having a frontage of 16yds. 2ft. 4in. to Brick-kiln Street, a depth of 34yds. 1ft. 6in., and containing an area of 578 square yards or thereabouts.

LOT 5.

A SIMILAR PIECE OF BUILDING LAND,

adjoining Lot 3, having a frontage of 16yds. 2ft. 4in. to Brick-kiln Street, a depth of 34yds. 1ft. 3in., and containing an area of 563 square yards or thereabouts.

LOT 6.

A PIECE OF FREEHOLD BUILDING LAND,

having frontages of 20yds. to Church Hill, and 22yds. 1ft. to Brick-kiln Street, Brownhills, and containing an area of 512 square yards or thereabouts.

LOT 7.

A PIECE OF FREEHOLD BUILDING LAND,

adjoining Lot 6, having a frontage of 26 yards to Brick-kiln Street, and containing an area of 908 square yards or thereabouts.

Lots 6 and 7 are in the occupation of Mr. Wm. Wood as Garden Ground, at an annual rental of £1.

LOT 8.

A FREEHOLD DWELLING-HOUSE,

Situate in Church Road, Brownhills, occupied by Mr. Henry Jones, together with the adjoining Land, at an annual rental of £22 10s.

The House contains Dining and Breakfast Rooms, Kitchens, 4 Bedrooms, and Out-offices, with Carriage-House, and Stabling for 3 Horses, with Loft over, Cowshed, and Loose Box. There is a good Garden.

The Land has frontages of 50yds. 2ft. and 48yds. respectively to Chapel Street and Vicarage Road, and contains an area of 1,490 square yards or thereabouts.

The House is exceedingly well situate, is in good order, and forms a very desirable residence.

LOT 9.

A PIECE OF FREEHOLD BUILDING LAND,

having a frontage of 32yds. 2ft. 6in. to Vicarage Road, Brownhills, adjoining the Parsonage, and extending through to Great Hampton Street, to which it has a frontage of 43 yards, and containing a total area of 5,242 square yards or thereabouts.

The situation of the whole of the above Lots is the best in Brownhills. The Land is level, and very suitable and ripe for Building purposes.

The Mines and Minerals under each Lot are included in the Sale.

For further Particulars and Plans apply to the AUCTIONEERS, Bridge Street, Walsall; or to

Messrs. GEORGE MALLAM & SON,

SOLICITORS,

1 ST. ALDATE'S STREET, OXFORD.

Notice of Auction to dispose of houses and land in the area of the Church. Note the date

The Revd Joseph Jordan's Ministry (1874-1878) is remembered as the time when St. Thomas's Mission Church was built as an add-on addition to the old schoolroom which until the new church was built had been used dual purpose for both education and divine services. The Bishop of Lichfield, George August Selwyn, licensed and consecrated it as St Thomas's Mission church in 1875.

On a lighter note it is interesting to see that in the Vestry Meeting minutes on 23rd April 1878 great concern is expressed at the unsatisfactory state of the churchyard and graves which had been trampled on by children. Churchwardens were requested to confer with the Local Government Board with a view to protecting the Churchyard. It would seem that vandalism in our churchyards and burial grounds has been ongoing for over 120 years and what we experience today is not something new. William Dalrymple McLagan became our new Diocesan Bishop in 1878.

In 1879 the Revd C B. Walton arrived bringing with him a ministry that was greatly loved by the people. In 1881 a new pipe organ was installed by J. Banfield & Son of Birmingham in the empty organ chamber at St James requiring the task for an organ blower (costing 10 shillings p/a). It is not known what provided the musical accompaniment before this date. According to the National Census of 1881 the population had grown to 2,040.

On Christmas Day 1882 all seating in St. James was released from allocation and became free and unappropriated. In 1882 Council buildings were opened in the High Street, and the Midland Railway line from Aldridge to Watling Street, Brownhills opened for freight traffic. In 1884 passenger traffic commenced and the Infants school was built opposite the church. Revd Walton died in office in 1885 having served the parish for six years. He was so sorely missed that a new stone pulpit inscribed 'IHS' was given to St. James Church by his many friends to be an everlasting memory of him. It seems a shame it is not used these days for what it was intended. The original pulpit was resited in St. Thomas's Mission Church. The symbol IHS inscribed on the pulpit is from the first three letters of the Greek form of the name of Jesus (IHSOYS).

In 1885 the Revd A. Orlando Cherrington arrived to take up the living at Ogle Hay. He had been 12 years a curate at Tividale and came with the reputation of being a church builder. St. Michael's Church at Tividale (Tipton) had been built whilst he was there. He did much to beautify St. James, and immediately busied himself with the building of The Mission Church at Muckley Corner. He had the interior of St. James's decorated for the sum of £15-10s-0d and set in motion a subscription list for the purchase of land to enlarge the church yard. In 1889 the sum of £205 was sufficiently raised to purchase the land between Church Walk and the Parsonage as a churchyard extension. This area is still used to day as a cremated remains burial area.

The Rev Cherrington exchanged livings in 1889 with the Revd Henry, A. Nash of Birmingham whose interest in the parish became somewhat personal when one of his daughters married the son of the then proprietor of Ogle Hay Mill (*now self contained flats at the bottom of Mill Road*). The 1891 population census shows yet another increase to 2,500. Revd Nash remained as Vicar until 1893 when Ogle Hay experienced yet another "exchange of livings" when it welcomed the Revd Sidney F. Arrowsmith from Liverpool. Ogle Hay also welcomed Mr. H. J. Holland as the first permanent Organist. He was to stay for 40



The plaque on the floor of St Peter's Church Stonnall, commemorating Rev James Downes

years. In this same year the Chairman of the Building Committee for St. James, the Revd James Downes, Vicar of Stonnall, passed away aged 89 years. He is buried near to the west door of his beloved church of St. Peters, Stonnall which he had served for 52 years. In 1894 Brownhills U.D.C. was established with Mr. John Thomas Bailey as the First Chairman. This U.D.C. covered the areas of Ogley Hay, Shire Oak, Norton Canes and part of the Foreign of Walsall known as Walsall Wood.

With the Revd Sidney Feetham Arrowsmith began a long incumbency of 23 years, during which much good, faithful and lasting work was done. It is said that his preaching was brilliant, with many of his sermons being published both far and wide. Of all the previous Incumbents he showed great zeal for the missionary work of the church. With such a long stay in the parish he would have seen many changes. The Church roof had to be repaired and interior painting and redecoration carried out with the cost being met by grant from the Incorporated Building Society.

In 1896 Ogley Hay Parish was divided into two separate areas known as Ogley Hay and Ogley Hay Rural.

St Thomas's Mission church had a silver collection on the 10th December 1899 especially for the War in South Africa commonly known as the Boer War.

OGLEY HAY with BROWNHILLS 1900-1921.

Although Brownhills had been part of the parish since 1854, it was not until the turn of the century that the "Parish of Ogley Hay" was renamed the "Parish of Ogley Hay with Brownhills" The National Census of 1901 showed a the sudden jump in population to 6,125, now that it included the township of Brownhills. In the same year Church Accounts showed a surplus of 2/4d and a turnover of £102-7s-5d.



Revd S. F. Arrowsmith
Vicar 1893-1916

Queen Victoria died on 22nd January 1901, and was succeeded by Edward VII who was crowned King on 9th August 1902. To commemorate this Royal event the Anchor Bridge was rebuilt in its present form in 1903 in anticipation for the Chester Road widening. In the same year Mr. William H. Hill left a legacy of £300 to the Vicar and Churchwardens of St. James in trust for the Poor of the Parish. *[It remained active in the parish until 1995 when its use became limited, and it was closed down by the Parochial Church Council].*

Research generally does not reveal much during the early 1900s but the following events are noted to illustrate the changes and calamities that surely affected the lives of the people of the parish.

In 1906, 21 trains a day in each direction were going through Brownhills. 1910 saw the toll house at Anchor Bridge demolished as the Chester Road was widened. King Edward VII died of pneumonia on 6th May, and was succeeded by King George V.

The 1911 National Census Return shows slight population reduction to 5,745, and at the 30 strong Easter Monday Vestry meeting a letter from the Bishop of Lichfield (Augustus Legge) was read, clearly defining duties of Church Wardens and Sidesmen at St James.

The Titanic foundered with the loss of 1,500 lives after hitting an iceberg on 15th April 1912. The Brownhills Council House clock was erected and started at 2:45 pm on 21st November 1912 to commemorate the Coronation of King George V. It had cost £93. 1912 also saw the opening of the Palace picture house.

First buses are seen in Brownhills in 1913. The service ran between Hednesford and Brownhills and was operated by the London North Western Railway Company. John Augustine Kempthorne became Bishop of Lichfield.

August 4th, 1914 saw the start of the Great War with Germany. The day before the declaration, a Horticultural Show had been held at the Hussey Arms.

In 1915 St. Thomas's Church and Land was valued for Land Registry purposes at £850. The Passenger liner *Lusitania* was torpedoed by a German navy submarine with loss of 1,198 lives. These war years with all its terrible loss of life must surely have been why so little is recorded of events in Ogley Hay with Brownhills.

There were 58 baptisms at St. James's in 1916. The installation of a wonderful new Reredos in the Nave east end replaced the Dossal (the white linen hanging cloth) and was presented for the beautification of the church by Mrs J. Bagby of Lime Tree Villa, Brownhills. The Battle of the Somme in November brought 1916 to a close with just 10 miles of territory being gained from the Germans at the terrible loss of 420,000 soldiers lives.

Also in 1916 Revd Arrowsmith's ill health brought about his retirement. He was succeeded by Revd W. E. Wibby who was to become the longest serving incumbent of St. James church, staying as Vicar for 28 years to the beginning of the end of the Second World War in 1944.

The Revd Wibby's Ministry is well remembered still, by many alive today. They recall that he was a faithful and devoted Vicar. Church registers reveal that 71 Baptism entries were made during 1917 in his first full year at St. James's followed by 102 in 1918.

Also in 1918, two years after retiring, Revd Sidney Feetham Arrowsmith aged 70 years, died and was laid to rest on Palm Sunday in the cemetery behind the vicarage. His grave and memorial are visible to this present day.

The dreadful 1914-1918 World War finally ended with the signing of the Armistice on the 11th November 1918. King George announced that at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month there shall be Two Minutes Silence to remember all those who gave their lives for their country.

1919 brought a new beginning of peace and energy to Ogley Hay with Brownhills, allowing the installation of a false roof inside the church which took away the unsightly view of laths and tiles which had been visible ever since the church was built.

1920 saw the issue of the first ever monthly issue of an "Ogley Hay parish magazine", but sadly no copy has been located anywhere.



Brownhills Parish Church Choir in 1910.
In the centre is Hyla John Holland who
was organist for many years



The inside of St James Church about 1916

Fortunately, Walsall Local History Centre has issue 15, thus enabling the writer to calculate when the earliest issue first commenced. Church magazines have been a useful source of the church's previous life and history.

In the same year on the 30th March, the first regular Walsall Corporation buses started running between Heath Hayes and Brownhills.

On 29th January 1921 the Great War Cenotaph was dedicated by the Bishop of Lichfield (John A. Kempthorne). It was sited on the right of the west gated entrance to the Churchyard and Church where it could be clearly seen by all who approached the Church from Church Hill (now Church Road).

With Revd Wibby now having been at Ogle Hay with Brownhills for four years, it was decided that 1921 should celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Consecration of St. James Parish Church. In a written address he said "That before 15th October 1921, the Vicar and Churchwardens were anxious to restore the Church as far as they can, with the same sort of confidence that inspired the generosity of Staffordshire men of seventy years ago, he felt sure that the people of the Parish would help". His address continued as follows "The Church had

been built of a rather soft stone; it stands in a very exposed position, and unless the work which requires to be done, and which has been delayed through the Great War, is not taken in hand at once, we fear that it will in a few years be beyond repair. This is a purely mining parish, but unfortunately none of the colliery proprietors live in the vicinity and although those who are the officials at the collieries are always ready to help us, we are reminded that their profits are still limited due to Government controls, and that they are responsible to their shareholders and, if my information is correct, most of the collieries in the neighbourhood are currently being

worked at a loss. Besides this most of our men who are working at or in the pits, are not receiving such large wages as their fellow workers in South Wales, so that we are compelled to everyone who take an interest in strengthening the Christian Church to assist with our effort. We can assure you that we are doing our best to help ourselves. Since the War we have had put in new west and transept windows and had repaired all other windows which were in a dangerous condition. The old boiler, which was in holes, has been replaced by a new more efficient heating apparatus, which will save us much coal. Indeed the people of the congregation have given generously and worked hard to help this restoration fund. We do indeed assure you that your money will be well and wisely spent, as we do not intend to make any structural alterations, but only repair the roof and walls both outside and inside. We, the Vicar and Wardens, appeal to you to help the Parish, as did the men here who went bravely to our defence in the Great War. Although as miners, nearly all of them could have escaped military service, no less than 510 men went from this Parish to His Majesty's Forces of which 67 made the great sacrifice. We ask you therefore to help us with your donations, gifts of articles for sale and your patronage at our forthcoming Sale of Work which will be held in the Ogle Hay Schools on Thursday, Friday and Saturday of Easter Week".

**The Parish Church,
BROWNHILLS.**

GOOD FRIDAY, 1918.

8.0	ANTE COMMUNION
10.30	MORNING PRAYER AND SERMON.
12 to 3	THREE HOURS SERVICE.
ORDER OF SERVICE— Kindly enter or leave during the singing of a hymn.	
12.0	Hymn 114 followed by Litany.
12.20	Hymn 115, Address, Psalm 6
12.50	" 631, " " 32
1.10	" 107, " " 38
1.30	" 108, " " 51
1.50	" 332, " " 102
2.10	" 105, " " 130
2.30	" 109 " " 143
2.50	" 259, PRAYER & BLESSING
4.30	EVENING PRAYER.
7.0	LIMELIGHT LANTERN SERVICE FOR ADULTS.

EASTER DAY.

HOLY COMMUNION 7, 8, and 11.30.
MORNING SERVICE 10.30.

Order of Service for
Good Friday 1918

As this period in the life of the Church comes to a close, the writer has been able to find very little in church archives as to the result of the plea for financial help outlined in the appeal. In 1921 the beautiful stained glass east windows were installed. These fine east windows which look into the sanctuary and chancel depict the central figure of St. James, our patron Saint (not Jesus as many people think). On either side in stained glass are scenes from the Holy Bible showing Our Lord with the Disciples at various stages during his Ministry.

It is understood the exterior stonework was also renovated with the result that the building is still standing to this day and did not go 'beyond repair' as the Vicar and Churchwardens had feared.

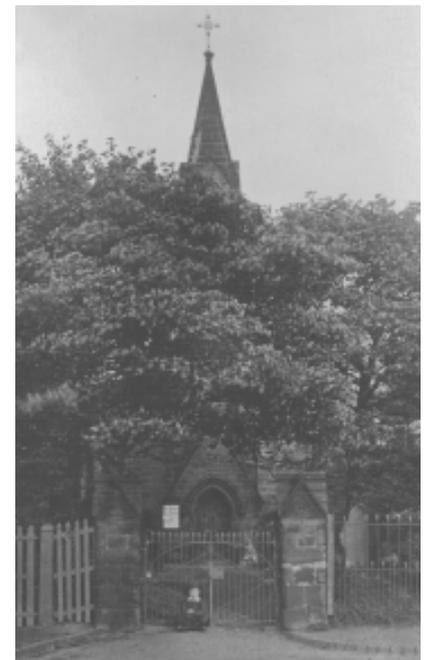
OGLEY HAY with BROWNHILLS 1922-1951

The early years of this next period have proved difficult to research owing to a scarcity of documented information. However church archives reveal a document stating that on the 21st February 1924 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England in exercising their power and authority along with Bishop of Lichfield, did issue a Table of Fees for the Parish of Ogle Hay and that the said Fees specified shall be paid to Ministers, Clerks, and Sextons for the several and various offices, matters and things, until further notice. This document suggests that for the first time a rationalisation of Fees was both ordered and implemented throughout the Land.

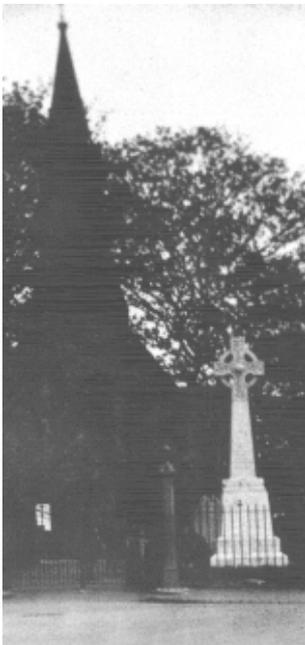
Records show that in 1924 the parish quota was £28-7s-7d, that the annual tradition of observing the Patronal Festival was held as usual on 25th July. The Parish Magazine distribution had now reached 600 copies, each copy costing 1d. In 1925 the Revd W. A. R. Hill (Vicar of Warslow, Leek, Staffordshire) preached at St. James's (exact date not known). The interesting thing about this is that he preached his first ever sermon at St. Thomas's Mission Church way back some 35 years before, when he was a Curate at St. James.

Walsall Corporation buses began a regular service between Walsall and Brownhills via Pelsall in 1926, just before the miners General Strike commenced on 1st May. During August riots broke out amongst the striking miners, and it was not until 5th October that most of the miners returned to work out of necessity. The Memorial Hall in Lichfield Road was opened in memory of those who lives were lost in the 1914-1918 Great War and a Parish Mission was held in the parish from 23rd October until 2nd November.

Electric lighting came to replace gas in the Church in 1927 (something we take for granted now). In the same year the Book of Common Prayer, which had been the acknowledged norm for public worship in the Church of England was revised and reprinted. There were many complaints about the cold when the church heating broke down, in that it was uncomfortable



Parish Church prior to 1921 when the Cenotaph was placed by the west entrance



Parish Church after the Cenotaph was placed by the west entrance

until a £71 repair had been completed. Sunday 26th February was a particularly exceptional day at St. James, when at morning service the Bishop of Lichfield preached and at the evening service the Bishop of Stafford Confirmed 24 Candidates. This is the only known time in the history of St. James to date, that two Bishops have each attended a Divine service on the same Sunday. On 19th June, an oak font cover (still in use) was presented as a lasting memory of Alfred Wilson who had died in the Great War. The first automatic traffic lights began working at the Prince Square crossroads in Wolverhampton. The year closed with the Bishop consecrating a further section of the Great Charles Cemetery on 20th November 1927.

The 'Regent' picture house in the High Street opened in 1928, as did the Church Tennis court on the 2nd June that year. The membership was restricted to over 14 year olds and communicants at a fee of three shillings per season. Issue 100 of the Parish Magazine was published with a special centenary cover.

1929 records show that there were over 200 communicants at Easter morning Service. How wonderful that must have been to find so many together in remembrance of OUR LORD'S precious death and mighty resurrection. At a Parochial Church Council meeting in the same year it was agreed that for the foreseeable future both the Church and Churchyard be closed and locked from dusk until dawn so as to prevent theft, damage and untidiness. Any persons found in the Churchyard during these times would be prosecuted for trespass.

1930 came with an appeal for an increase in church collections so that a deficit of £35 in the annual accounts could be overcome and 53 Candidates were confirmed by the Bishop of Lichfield at St. James. The Midland Railway line from Aldridge to Brownhills Watling Street which ran through Walsall Wood was closed to passenger traffic owing to lack of demand. 'Dennings' of Brownhills were advertising mens made to measure suits at 60 shillings each.

At 9:18 pm on 1st October 1930 a terrible explosion occurred in the Grove (Brownhills) Colliery beneath the "Fleur De Lys" public house. The funerals of the ten miners who lost their lives in the disaster took place at St. James Church on 7th October. A solemn procession starting from the Council House made its way along the High Street into Church Road, (lined both sides by the whole of the Ogle Hay and Brownhills

community), to the Church where Vicar W.E. Wibby held the funeral service. The miners were laid to rest in a mass grave divided into ten sections in Great Charles Street Graveyard with full military honours as six of the men had fought in the Great War.

A report in the *Walsall Observer* stated that the Revd Wibby performed a wedding service on Friday 3rd April 1931 (Good Friday). This was categorically denied in the May issue of the Parish Magazine. On 25th June, 400 children and parents went to Llandudno for the day by train from Brownhills with the Sunday school excursion costing the church £16-11s-9d. The National Census of 1931 shows a slight increase in population to 6,660.

In 1932, the water was cut off in the Churchyard until sufficient money became available to pay the bills. On 25th June the Lord Bishop of Lichfield, The Right Revd Kempthorne came to St James to Confirm another 50 candidates. Ogle Hay schools hosted a Whist Drive on 22nd September to help pay for the repairs to St. James Tennis Courts – 78 people attended. The December Parish Magazine was distributed to 725 recipients.



Revd W. E. Wibby with St Thomas Church Choir some time in the 1930s

On August Bank Holiday Monday 1933, the choir went on an excursion by train to Rhyl for an enjoyable days outing, just before Mr. H. J. Holland the Choirmaster and Organist retired, after 40 years of continuous and faithful service to St. James. The post was taken up by Mr. F. L. Smith.

When 15th October fell on a Sunday in 1933, the Bishop of Lichfield attended the special morning service to commemorate the 82nd Anniversary of the Church Consecration. As the winter approached it was noted in the minutes that coke had replaced coal satisfactorily as the fuel for the church heating.

1934 sees Mr. Cater open the first retail radio shop in Brownhills and on 1st September the very first United Brownhills Carnival. The procession route started at the Warreners Arms and embraced Ogle Hay, Shire Oak and parts of Walsall Wood.

King George V's Silver Jubilee on 6th May 1935 prompted a national demonstration of loyalty and patriotism. An open air United service was held in Holland Park in thankfulness for the 25 years of the Kings reign.

Less than a year later on 20th January 1936 King George V died, aged 70, at Sandringham. He was succeeded by his son as Edward VIII, who abdicated after a reign of 325 days. Edward was succeeded by his younger brother, the Duke of York who became George VI. St. James' celebrated 85 years since its consecration with an anniversary service at which Bishop Kempthorne of Lichfield preached. In this same year Crystal Palace of 1851 Great Exhibition fame was destroyed by fire.

When George VI was crowned King on 12th May 1937 local civic dignitaries processed from Brickiln Street to St. James Church for a service of dedication. Edward Sydney Woods became the new Bishop of Lichfield in 1937 and over 1,000 dwellings were now in existence in the Urban District. The BBC produced its first ever outside broadcast of the coronation but as TV had not yet reached Brownhills we had to be satisfied with radio and the pictures in newspapers.

Minutes of the Annual Church Meeting show great concern at the activities of Nazi Germany when Hitler denounced the Anglo-German Naval treaty and the Polish non-aggression Treaty in 1938.

1939 was a year of preparation for another war when all 20-21 year old men were being conscripted to the armed forces, followed later by military service becoming compulsory for all men between ages 18-41. It is with these affairs uppermost in peoples minds, that everything else became secondary, and probably explains why nothing is found in the church records for this year.

In 1940 National Days of Prayer were held at St James's as they were all over the country on Sunday the 26th May and 8th September.

Those of us who remember, can recall the full churches of the Nation praying for deliverance. St. James evensong services were brought forward to 3.30 pm during the winter months so as to avoid blacking-out the church windows. The Brownhills High Street "Palace" cinema held its last performance and closed.

Food became rationed on 3rd January 1941, and Winston Churchill made his famous "We shall fight them on the beaches" speech on 4th June in the House of Commons. Coventry Cathedral was destroyed by a massive Luftwaffe bomber night raid on the 14th November.

With Revd Wibby having now been Vicar for 23 years, and the Parish Magazine still being published monthly, despite war-time restrictions, it became necessary in 1941 to increase the price by ½d to 1½d. National Days of Prayer were held on Sunday 23rd March and 7th September. The War Budget raised income tax to a record 50% (10 shillings in the pound) because the war was costing £11 million per day.

1942 saw the closure of Ogle Hay mill. Vicar Wibby took the church to the people when he addressed audiences in the Working Mens Clubs and the Picture House. A National Day of Prayer was held on 3rd September with Holy Communion at 8 am, Mattins at 10.30 am and a special evening service at 6.30 pm without blacking out. Part of the spire (two large stones) fell down during the year. This needed urgent repair to be carried out as the spire was found to be in a very dangerous condition. Curate J. E. Evans came and went from St James preaching his last sermon at mattins on 1st October before leaving for St. Peters, Hednesford.

Palm Sunday 1943 was devoid of 'Palm Crosses' as they had become unobtainable due to the continuing World War conflict, and on Good Friday evening at 7 pm. Brownhills Choral Society rendered "The Crucifixion" by Stainer in the Parish church. The church bells rang out over the land by government concession for Easter morning service only, after being silent since the outbreak of war. The wartime ruling was that church bells were only to be rung if invasion occurred and the risk of this now happening was much reduced since the fortunes of war had improved for the Allies. Sadly the Parish Magazine ceased publication in December 1943 after 27 years owing to shortage of paper and lack of distributors. The year concluded with the German pocket battleship "Scharnhorst" being sunk just before Christmas on 22nd December.

On 15th March 1944, the ancient monastery at Monte Cassino in Italy was totally destroyed by the advancing Allies after a long and bloody battle. Vicar W. E. Wibby retired at the end of April. He was replaced after a short interregnum by Reverend John Hope Urwin who immediately set about publishing a new series of Parish Magazines in the October. Copies of his first and subsequent letters to the people of the parish can be seen in the Walsall Local History Centre. The magazines were priced 2d each.

It is interesting to note here that we found Reverend John living in retirement in the parish of Gnosall at the age of 90. This gave him the distinguished honour of being the only Vicar (other than the present incumbent) with whom conversation could be had about his particular time in Ogle Hay. He was born in May 1909 and upon leaving school served in the Merchant Navy for a few years before going to Theological College after which his ministry was in industrial parishes in the West Midlands and farming parishes in Staffordshire.

He was 35 years old when he and his wife came to St James in September 1944. Even though he had no curate to assist him, he started a youth club and his wife formed a girls net-ball team which actually won the County Trophy. The youth club was the fore-runner of the Youth Centre which was opened in Lichfield Road. Revd John had two brothers who were both prebendaries at Exeter cathedral. Whilst at Brownhills his son Mark was born, a brother for the two other children, Christopher and Allison.

After many months of preparation by the Armed Services, D-Day came on 6th June 1944, when the allied invasion fleet crossed the English Channel to invade Europe. Nazi Germany retaliated by bombing Britain with the first of many V1 "doodlebug" bombs followed in September by the V2 rocket bombs.

In this same year a new (red) Sanctuary light was hung to replace an earlier 1883 light. It was given by Mr Leslie Wall in memory of his wife Evelyn Ada who had died on 28th March 1944.

1945 was a year of some momentous events particularly for those who can still remember them. In February the RAF bombed Dresden in a most destructive and controversial raid of the war, killing around 100,000 civilians in the firestorms which engulfed the city. In March the last of over 1,000 of Hitler's V2 'Vengeance' rockets exploded in Kent. Holy Week and Easter services were held as usual in church as they have been since 1852 with services each day from Palm Sunday (25th March) through to Easter Day (1st April). April 15th saw the liberation of Belsen concentration camp by British troops. The 8th May was officially declared the end of the Second World War against Nazi Germany. On the 13th May (Civic Sunday) the newly elected Chairman of Brownhills Urban District Council (Councillor Sadler) was in Church to give thanks along with a full congregation for the end of hostilities with Germany.



Revd J. H. Urwin (Vicar 1944–1950) pictured at his home in Gnosall, August 1999, talking to the author. Sadly John Urwin passed away in January 2000

In the same month Mr R. O. Hammond retired as organist and was replaced by Mr C. Hall who was appointed as organist and choirmaster. In July Labour won the General Election with Clement Attlee as the new Prime Minister. August saw the atomic bomb used for the first time; four square miles of Hiroshima were laid to waste and over 50,000 civilians killed. A second atom bomb was dropped on Nagasaki before Japan surrendered to the Allies on the 14th August bringing to a final end the Second World War. Victory was officially celebrated in Britain on Sunday 2nd September. The "Autumn Fayre" this year was opened by Lady Lichfield and the Vicar and held as usual in the school room. A Christmas Tree was placed as decoration in St James for the first time during the Christmas celebrations of the birth of Our Lord.

1946 was an industrious year now that wartime restrictions were relaxed with the result that the church outside guttering was replaced, new interior lights were fitted, new altar frontals purchased, a new vestry clock added and the interior plaster walls repaired.

A faculty dated 9th September, authorised the provision of an oak block floor

OGLEY HAY WITH BROWNHILLS
PARISH CHURCH.

Holy Week and Easter, 1945.

PALM SUNDAY, March 25th.
Holy Communion 8-0.
Mattins and Sermon 11-0.
Children's Service 2-30.
Evensong and Sermon 6-30.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Saturday.
HOLY COMMUNION at 7-30 a.m.
EVENSONG at 6-0 with a short Meditation.
These Services will take no more than half-an-hour.

WEDNESDAY, in addition:—
Holy Communion 10-0.
Children's Service 4-15.
Lent Service 7-30, with Preparation for Easter Communion.

GOOD FRIDAY.
Ante-Communion 7-30.
Children's Service 9-30.
Litany and Short Meditation 12-0.
An Hour's Devotion, 2-0—3-0.
"Words from the Cross," 7-30—8-30.

EASTER DAY.
HOLY COMMUNION 7-0, 8-0, and at 11-0 with Hymns,
and at 9-15 at St. Thomas'.
Children's Service 2-30.
Evensong and Sermon 6-30.

*Services for Holy Week and
Easter 1945*

to be laid in the sanctuary, the erection of an oak tract case (now magazine rack) and the removal of the oak panelling roll of honour of the Great War so that the names of those who lost their lives in World War II could be added. The tract case was given by the husband of the late Elsie May Trusselle, who had been the head mistress at Ogle Hay junior school.

Any one who remembers Saddlers paint and wallpaper shop will know that the business was bought by Elkins and reopened as a hardware shop in the High Street in 1946. On Sunday 22nd September at 7.45 pm. the evening service was broadcast from St James on the BBC Home Service. That evening the Vicar, the Revd J. H. Urwin preached nationwide on Psalm 96 verse 9. As the year approached its end the news came to us that on 16th October the death sentences on Nazi criminals convicted at Nuremberg had been carried out. 200 communicants received Holy Communion on Christmas Day 1946.

1947 can be remembered by many as the most severe and coldest winter on record, which, combined with a coal shortage, threatened to seriously damage the economy. Many places including Brownhills and Ogle Hay were completely cut off by very deep snow the like of which has not been seen since. To add to the misery, the worst floods recorded followed the thaw drowning many livestock.

The services of the organ blower at the church were dispensed with as the organ became operated by an electric blower. The newly inscribed wall panelling commemorating the two world wars was erected in the baptistry area in the Northwest corner of the nave. Freewill offertory envelopes were introduced for the first time at Pentecost. As the year begins to close Prince Philip was made Duke of Edinburgh on 19th November before he was married on the 20th to Princess Elizabeth in Westminster Abbey.

On 29th February 1948, the church at St James was full as the BBC Overseas radio service broadcast to the World a service of worship and music with choir. In June the National Health Service was launched and became operative providing free diagnosis and treatment by both General Practitioners and Hospitals.

The oak panelling which had been erected last year in the Baptistry was inscribed with the names of the fallen in the two World Wars. Donations amounted to £105-16s-7d of which £40 was needed to pay for the actual inscribing. The Annual Parochial Meeting were concerned about the deficit in the 1947 church accounts of £31-12s-7d. Princess Elizabeth gave birth to a son on 14th November. As heir to the throne, he was named Prince Charles.

1949 started sadly with the passing of Mrs Callier who died on the 21st March. She was remembered not only as being very supportive to Isaiah her husband but also as an unstinting organiser and worker at St James. Isaiah was Verger and Sexton. Easter morning communicants numbered 247 the highest ever recorded to that date in the history of St James.

The Annual Church Meeting was informed of the continuing deficit situation in the financial accounts for 1948 which had risen to a worrying £43. To add to the financial problems the heating boiler failed during Easter-tide, requiring urgent repair work costing £90.

The only good news seemed to be for those considering marriage who were told that licences had been reduced in cost to £1-15s-0d. The free will offering scheme had now increased to 37 regular givers. The Church of England marked June 19th as the 400th anniversary date since the introduction of "The Book of Common Prayer" in 1549 which was being regularly used at St James. The Bishop of Stafford came to St James in November to dedicate the oak panelling to the War Dead of the two World Wars named thereon, at the North-west corner of the nave.

On September 18th the pound (£) was devalued by 30% and the milk ration was reduced to 2 pints a week per person.

In 1950 the Grove Pit closed. In church the east facing pews in the north and south transepts were turned to face north and south. The financial accounts of 1949 showed that the previous years deficit had been reduced to £19 with the Treasurer appealing to all to give more generously. Mr Isaiah Callier retired as Sexton and Clerk after 26 years of continuous service. He was replaced by Mr W. Cross.



Isaiah Callier, Verger, Sexton & Clerk for many years, pictured in Beacon Park, Lichfield, with his niece



*Revd M. Rees Davis, Vicar
1950-1961*

In September Revd J. H. Urwin moved to the parish of St Bartholomew at Hints after a sojourn of just six years of faithful ministry in the parish. He had served both God and the people of the parish during a period of great difficulty from just before the end of the Second World War, through the early post-war years. He moved to Hints and Weeford and then to Trysull where he was Vicar for 14 years.

After a short interregnum the Revd M. Rees Davies was inducted on 9th November 1950.

The year 1951 was a very special time in the life of the parish as it was 100 years in the October since the church had been consecrated. This centenary year coincided with the opening by George VI in May of the National "Festival of Britain" held at the South Bank Exhibition in London. It is quite probable that some parishioners will have attended either one or both of these celebratory occasions. A restricted bank account was opened on 14th October for the control of funds needed to finance the building of a church hall. This account was separately administered by Treasurer Mr. Leonard Sadler and known as the "Brownhills Church Centenary Hall Fund".

A sum of £347-11s-4d was the first deposit, it being the profit from the various centenary events held up to that date. The fund records were found in church archives and are documented in great detail up to and until the hall was finally paid for in 1961. As far as St James is concerned it was a time of great activity preparing for and organising a programme to mark the Centenary Festival Week starting on 14th October 1951.

Copies of the Parish Magazines for October and November along with the programme of the Centenary festivities for 1951 were found in church archives. National Census records show that the population for Brownhills had grown to 7,700.

OGLEY HAY with BROWNHILLS 1952-1995

How many can remember the passion play entitled "By the Cross & Passion" held in the Memorial Hall during Holy Week on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday in 1952. It was performed by the Vicar and members of the congregation of St James's to large audiences. This

was not long after the death of King George VI who had died of cancer at Sandringham, aged 56 on 6th February. Identity cards were abolished on the 21st February. The church accounts presented to the APCM showed a profit for the first time for some years of £309.

Severe storms at Lynton and Lynmouth on 16th August 1952 devastated Lynmouth killing 31 people. The new Barnett's Lane burial ground was purchased and laid out at about this same time. Although ready, it was not consecrated and could not be used until the new Bishop of Lichfield had arrived in the Diocese. With burial space at a premium some graves in the Great Charles Street Cemetery had to be dug in every available space in the already full graveyard. Visitors will notice that graves were placed wherever room could be found, many in pathways and some not facing in the traditional easterly direction. This situation was to last until July 1954.

The 1940 air raid shelters that had been erected where the Hall is now, were demolished during 1952 when the site was prepared for the building of a new Church Hall. *(To conclude 1952, with a snippet of useless information, the writer was called up to do National Service in the RAF Coastal Command due to the conflict in Korea. Fortunately it was spent at lovely spot called Mountbatten near Plymouth.)*

On 4th February 1953 sweet rationing finally ended and the 1953 APCM continued to show the 1952 finances in satisfactory order with a year end profit of £54. On June 2nd Princess Elizabeth was crowned Queen Elizabeth II whilst the author was taking part in an Armed Services Coronation parade on Plymouth Hoe. (It rained.)

With Arthur Stretton Reeve, a man of large stature, becoming the new Bishop of Lichfield on 23rd October 1953 it was hoped that he would very soon be able to come and consecrate Barnett's Lane cemetery. Meanwhile back at St James's Churchyard the trees were drastically lopped resulting in the whole town moaning and objecting.

1954 saw the building and opening of the library in Brickiln Street and the closure of the Ogley to Huddlesford canal. 180,000 people flocked to Wembley to hear Billy Graham on his evangelical tour.

At last and with great relief to the Parish, Barnett's Lane cemetery was consecrated for burials on the 1st July. On the day after, all food rationing came to an end. On St James Day (25th July) a fine processional brass cross was presented by Churchwarden Frank Arnold to the church in memory of his wife Caroline May Arnold. This cross although rarely used at present can be seen at the entrance to the South Transept. At a PCC meeting the members were disturbed to learn that the Barnett's Lane cemetery was being used by youngsters as a playground and that the stoke hole cover at the church had been stolen. 10 years after his retirement from St James the Reverend Wibby passed away at his home at Sandhills aged 81. He had been incumbent for 27 years and the longest serving Minister in the parish of Ogley Hay.

The Brownhills Parliamentary Constituency was transferred from Cannock to Walsall North in 1955. The Church of the Good Shepherd at Muckley Corner was welcomed back to the parish according to the March issue of the church magazine even though it officially lay outside the parish in Wall.

The Church Accounts for 1954 were presented to the annual meeting showing a deficit of £20. Vicar Rees Davies appealed for giving to be increased as the weekly giving had fallen to only £12.

An unusual sight appeared in the area surrounding the church during the months of July, August and September 1955 and actually made the *Walsall Observer* with an article and picture. It is suspected that not many remember the tethered goats munching away at the very overgrown grass in the churchyard which had been neglected and not cut by anyone for a considerable time. Nowadays we have the luxury of it being maintained by the Metropolitan Borough to whom we are extremely grateful.

It was in this same year that the old red altar frontal was replaced by a magnificent new one which had been made possible by a gift from Mrs C. Baker and the people of Vicarage Road by using monies no longer needed and left over from the "1953 Coronation Fund". A ten year repayment mortgage advance for £3,300 was arranged with The Ancient Order of Foresters to help pay for the building of the new church hall. This meant that the target date for total repayment would be 1965.

The Christmas Fayre on 8th December 1955 held in the Memorial Hall raised £660 towards the new hall.

At the 1956 Annual Parish Meeting the members present were pleased to note that 1955 finances were in slightly better shape with giving up very slightly to £14 per week, providing an excess income of £282. The 1956 Parish Share was just £133.

A new book case made by Mr Brian Tuckley was erected at the back of church near the old entrance door to accommodate 200 common prayer books in 1956, but became redundant and was removed in 1991 when book shelves were included in the new Fellowship Room. In March the Queen laid the foundation stone for the new Coventry Cathedral adjacent to the ruins of the old one destroyed by German bombers during World War II.

The Suez crisis which had been simmering since 1950 came to climax on November 7th as Prime Minister Eden was forced to back down when America failed to support him. A United Nations force took over the canal from British and French troops.

A momentous day for the parish was the official opening of the Church Hall on 6th October 1956 at 2.30 pm. A service in church addressed by Lord Bishop Arthur Stretton of Lichfield, was followed by a procession to the new hall for it to be dedicated and blessed. Invited guests and Parochial Church Council members were provided with tea and light refreshments.

The new hall was the venue for the first Christmas Fayre to be held in the building on 6th December raising £600 towards the mortgage repayment. To bring 1956 to a close, St James Players provided a "Grand Concert" in the hall on 13th December just a few days prior to the celebration of Our Lord's birth and the New Year.

1957 was a quieter year. The parish occupied itself with all sorts of fund raising events to keep up the mortgage instalments for the hall. Church members were told at the annual church meeting that weekly giving had dropped to £12 again, but that income had exceeded expenditure by £297.

Sir Anthony Eden resigned as Prime Minister as a result of pressure over his handling of the Suez affair and was succeeded by Harold Macmillan. The home of Dr. and Mrs. Forster at Shire Oak was where the Parish Garden Party was held on 6th July and was successful in raising £140. St. James



*Opening and dedication of St James Church Hall
Pictured from left to right: Frank Arnold, Churchwarden, Rev
M. Rees-Davis, Vicar, Very Revd Arthur Stretton Reeve,
Bishop of Lichfield, Rev J. H. Evans, Vicar of Walsall Wood
and Mr George Phillips, Churchwarden*

Players presented "Murder at the Vicarage" on the 28th & 29th October in the hall. Both evenings were well attended with profit after expenses being given towards the hall debt. The highest to date sum of £887 was raised at the December Christmas Fayre.

On 15th, 17th and 18th March 1958, The St James Players staged a comedy in the church hall entitled *One Wild Oat*. The proceeds went towards hall mortgage payments. Tickets were 2/6 for adults and 1/6 for children.

The PCC at their February meeting decided that after many years of faithful service by an ageing faithful few, that the task of keeping the church interior clean and tidy should be performed by an employed cleaner. The PCC also announced that it intended to take legal action against anyone who was caught abusing the privileges and dignity of the Great Charles Street cemetery.

The Mothers Union day-outing went to North Wales in June, and a Sunday School Festival was held at St Thomas's Mission church on 6th July 1958. The United Churches of Brownhills protested on a question of principle to the District Council when it granted permission for the Chasewater Fairground to be open on Sundays. On the 27th September 28 young people from St James joined with thousands of other young people on a Youth Pilgrimage to Lichfield Cathedral.

St James Players, now well established were producing two plays a year in order to help pay off the mortgage, and on 18th, 20th and 21st October their production was *An Inspector Calls* by J. B. Priestley. Each house was full and a total sell out. The year closed with a successful Christmas Fair which raised £697 towards church funds. The first section of the M6 motorway was opened by Harold Macmillan, with the completion of the Preston by-pass.



Members of the Mothers' Union in the 1970s

On January 2nd 1959 the Church Hall was filled to capacity by the faithful of St James at a Parish Party. It was a ticket only party (10/6d each) fully attended and enjoyed by all. Maundy Thursday was 26th March on which a Sacred Concert including Cantata was performed in Church with tickets at 2/6 each.

The year was one of renovation in the church itself in that a new font was given by Isaiah Callier in memory of his wife Lizzie. It was hand made of oak, contained a copper basin and constructed to match the lid which was retained from the old font. It is not known what became of the old font. Does anyone remember what it was like? In the same year the interior lighting was replaced by new fittings and rewired.

On St Matthias Day (24th February) Deaconess Chinchin officially retired as Deaconess to St James. She was 75 years old and was greatly missed by the Parish. This however was not the last we would see of her at Ogle Hay. In June the Bishop of Stafford joined the congregation at St James at a service of thanksgiving for the restoration work and dedicated two new memorial windows in the sanctuary.

In August, Mr Charles Hall, organist and choirmaster, gave of his talents by providing as a gift the oak panelling in the sanctuary. He also had the organ overhauled, repaired and restored to its former glory. He noticed that exterior church walls were beginning to crumble and had them refaced, which might have seemed to be a good way of stopping further deterioration, but some 30 years later was seen to be not only unsightly but also ineffective.

Miss Helen Barnett and Miss Fay Dennis (now Mrs Fay Owen) donated to the church a new Easter time white altar fall with burse veil, and a pulpit fall. The cost at the time was £85. It is still displayed each Easter and is probably the most beautiful of all the various altar falls the church has in its possession.

1960 continued to be a year of activity in that a Church of England "St James Mens Society" was formed at an inaugural meeting held on the 22nd February. The Annual General Meeting that year were informed with some relief, that the church hall debt was slowly coming down and was now just £700. A change of Warden was made as Mr Frank Arnold retired after 32 years service and Mr George Pountney took over. In July 1960 Mrs Maud Brown gifted the frontal and book locker in the south transept in memory of her husband Matthew. He had served for many years as a member of the choir which at that time led the congregation in worship and song.

MOT tests for motor vehicles were introduced on 12th September. It was noted in the August magazine that students of Lichfield Theological college would be available to take divine services at the mission churches as there was a shortage of men entering the ministry. Brownhills Station (Watling Street railway line) was closed. It had been used as a mineral line since the closure of passenger traffic in 1930. The track was removed from Chasewater to its junction with the Walsall to Sutton Coldfield line at Aldridge. The first episode of 'Coronation Street' hit our television screens on 9th December 1960.

The Annual Parochial Council Meeting of 1961 rejoiced that the Church Hall debt was now fully paid. At the Parochial Church Council meeting held in the month of June that year the meeting firmly pledged £200 towards Christian Stewardship in addition to fully paying the Parish Share to the diocese. The meeting was informed that Communicants were averaging 60 each week and that weekly giving envelopes had been introduced using the same method that is still used to this day. The amount given is recorded against a numbered envelope, making it impossible to know who had given and how much. Weekly giving income was currently running at an average of £35 each week.

Two beautiful tall floor standing oak candle sticks were donated in memory of Arthur and Harriet Johnstone who had both passed away in the previous year. Arthur was 94, and his wife was 80. They had been faithful worshippers for many years

In April, a successful Parish Dinner was held at the Town Hall Walsall. It must have been some dinner to fill the main hall if that was where it was held. Dr Michael Ramsey was enthroned as Archbishop of Canterbury on 27th June. A new Brownie Pack was formed using the church hall as base, under the leadership of Miss Luxton (Brown Owl).

Revd M. Rees Davies left Ogle Hay on 17th September for institution in the Shrewsbury parish of Holy Trinity. Many Brownhills people attended his institution service on 28th September following.

As Christmas approached, Revd Norman D. Humphries from the Royal Air Force came to Brownhills to take the living as Vicar after a short interregnum. He was instituted by the Right Reverend Arthur Stretton Reeve on the 12th December 1961. Revd Norman and his sister Flora resided at the Vicarage in Vicarage Road. The National Census for 1961 shows that the population for Brownhills was still growing and had reached 9,313.

A Parish Dinner was held on the evening of 1st March 1962. Many people attended as they also did on 7th April when in the church hall the St James Girl Guide group arranged a slide show. The title of the show was "Oberammergau 1960". In May the new Coventry Cathedral was consecrated, and in June nine adults from St James were confirmed by the Bishop of Stafford at Lichfield Cathedral as part of a Diocesan service.

Wednesday 25th July 1962 was the 19th Centenary of the martyrdom of our patron Saint. Holy Communion was held on that day at 7.15am. and at 10.15am. Evensong took place at 7.30pm. On the Sunday following a Patronal Festival Service was held with a combined Mattins and Holy Communion at 11.30am. Records show that there were 327 communicants during the month of August and that offerings for the same period were £111-4s-4d.

The Regent Cinema which had opened in Brownhills in 1928, was closed on 29th September 1962.

New hassocks appeared in the church pews in the September. They had been supplied by ladies of the church who met together each week to raise church funds. It is understood that they are the red ones that are still in use today.

On 20th-24th October St James Players presented the play entitled *Something to Hide*. Records reveal that 3,590 acts of communion were made in the parish during 1962 and that the now annual Christmas Fayre had raised the disappointing sum of only £370.

It had been the custom for some time to collect the monthly Parish Magazines for distribution from the shop of Leonard Sadler the Gentlemen's Outfitter and Tailor at 44 High Street, Brownhills. This arrangement changed in January 1963, when it was decided that they should in future be collected from the Vicarage.

At the 1963 Parochial Church Council meeting held after the Annual Parochial Church Council meeting Mr George Pountney resigned after 15 years service as PCC secretary. Miss Helen Barnett succeeded him. George continued to serve in the offices of Vicars warden and Treasurer.

It was not until the night of 5-6th March after a bitter cold spell, that the first frost free night was recorded since 22nd December. A flame gun was purchased in order to attack the long grass and weeds in the churchyards. One wonders if its use proved successful and what became of it?

On 8th August, the Great Train Robbery took place when armed thieves stopped and attacked a Glasgow to London express mail train near Leighton Buzzard stealing £2.5 million. In September the Brownhills skyline was changed by the demolition of the gas holder to make way for a new local authority housing development. A new skyline was to be created with the building of high rise flats and homes which would bring the number of council dwellings to some 3,000 in the parish.

In December new choir robes were introduced at the Christmas Services. Church records show that these were as follows:

Christmas Eve	Holy Communion	11.45pm.
Christmas Day	Holy Communion	7.00—8.00—9.15 & 10.15am
Christmas Day	Mattins	11.00am

January 1964 came with a new edition of the church magazine called 'CONTACT'. It contained a message from Bishop Reeve of Lichfield and was sold at 4d each copy. At the time the Parish had three organists as follows: St James: Mr C. Hall; St Thomas' Mission: Mr C. White; The Good Shepherd: Miss K. Beetlestone.

Sunday 24th February (Saint Matthias's day) was the 80th birthday of our much loved Deaconess Sushannah Chinchen. It was also the day that Bishop Stretton Reeve came to St James as celebrant and preacher for the 10.15am Holy communion service.

St James players under the direction of their Producer Carlton White, presented in the spring a murderous intrigue in the church hall entitled *Bonaventure*.

The PCC was informed by the Treasurer that the Parish Share was being increased to £350 p/a. On 25th May, Revd M. Rees Davies returned to Brownhills for the day from his parish in Shrewsbury to unveil a plaque in the church hall. It reads as follows: **THIS TABLET HAS BEEN PLACED HERE TO RECORD THE HIGH ESTEEM AND AFFECTION IN WHICH THE PARISHIONERS OF OGLEY HAY WITH BROWNHILLS HOLD THE REVEREND M. REES DAVIES VICAR OF THIS PARISH FROM 1950-1961. HIS INSPIRED AND INSPIRING LEADERSHIP MADE MANY THINGS POSSIBLE NOT LEAST THE BUILDING OF THIS HALL.** It was a happy event in that people not

Ogley Hay with Brownhills PARISH MAGAZINE.

Vicar: The Rev. M. REES DAVIES, Telephone: Brownhills 2187.

Lady Worker: Deaconess S. Chinchen.

Churchwardens: Messrs. F. Arnold and G. Phillips.

Hon. Secretary, P.C.C.: }
Hon. Treasurer, F.W.O.: } Mr. G. W. Pountney.

Magazine Secretary: Councillor L. Sadler.

Organist: Mr. C. Hall.

Verger and Sexton: Mr. W. Cross, 8, Albion Road.

Applications for Marriage Licences, Banns of Marriage, and Notices of Baptisms, should be brought to the Vicar.

THE PARISH CHURCH

Holy Communion: 5.0 every Sunday. Wednesdays, 10.15.
Sung Eucharist: 11.0 1st Sunday in Month and Festivals.
Morning Prayer: 11.0 except as above.
Sunday Schools: 2.30.
Evening Service: 6.30.

S. THOMAS' MISSION CHURCH

Holy Communion: 9.15 1st and 3rd Sunday in month and Festivals.
Sunday Schools: 2.30.
Evening Service: 6.30.
The Ladies' Guild meets every Tuesday at 6.30.



**This label in your
next Sult is your
guarantee of
SATISFACTION**

Front page of Parish Magazine for November 1951 showing advert for Leonard Sadler

only came together in fellowship that day, but were able to meet again Revd Rees Davies and personally thank him for his foresight, dedicated hard work and encouragement that he had provided in the planning and building of the hall which we now take so much for granted.

The Mens Society organised the Harvest Supper and Concert held on 28th September 1964. It was a ticket only evening costing 4/6d each. Sadly we do not hold such events now, but the author can well recall these were times when we managed to arrange many events of this sort, and have wonderful social times together with food, drink and entertainment. The year came to a close with the inspiring preaching of Martin Luther King on 6th December at St Pauls, London. A successful Christmas Fayre was held making £514 for church funds followed by the usual celebratory services over Christmas time in church.

Although 1965 will be remembered for many things it may probably be recalled by many as the year when the mini-skirt came into fashion with its revealing characteristics. Perhaps also in local memories will be the closing of the Brownhills High Street railway station on 18th January leaving the parish devoid of trains to and from Walsall and Lichfield. Although it had been under-used for some years, it was Dr Beeching who in his 'Beeching Report' decided to halve the British rail network, and in so doing isolated Brownhills.

In the same month St James ceased the 11.00am Mattins service on Sunday 15th in favour of a 10.00am Holy Communion Service. Winston Churchill was in his 92nd year when he died on 24th January.

A critical financial situation was revealed by Treasurer George Pountney at the 1965 annual meeting when he stated that the Parish Share could not be paid, because the income was insufficient to pay to the Diocese. It was agreed that each Contact Parish Magazine until further notice should record the dire situation and appeal continually for help.

In April, Mr Dodd, the Brownhills Postmaster, was elected to Chairman of the 'Brownhills Ratepayers Association'. The Association had been formed by local residents, who were so alarmed at the steep rise in Rate demands. Forthcoming local elections were fought and won, so that Brownhills Ratepayers voices could be heard in Local Government.

At a cost of £150 St James Players were allowed by the PCC to erect a new concrete garage at the rear of the church hall. The Players were at this time contributing a useful sum to a needy parish from their productions. In the town, Ravenscourt was being built, and Revd Norman Humphries was doing sterling work in persuading the Local Authority to update the churchyard around St James. A layout was approved incorporating the laying of access pathways, the removal of the War Memorial from the west gate entrance to its present central position in the grave yard on the south side of the church, and a dwarf wall to replace the old iron palings around the perimeter. Work progressed at a good pace due to the intervention of Mr Carlton White who, being both a Local Government Officer for Brownhills UDC as well as a PCC member was able to use his influence in the right areas. The work was to take many months before it was completed in early 1966. Originally the churchyard was very much unkept, untidy and overgrown and in no way pleasing to the passer-by. As the memories fade of what it used to be like, we see today the church in a delightful open plan setting with neat lawns surrounded by low walls which tempt youngsters of all ages to walk upon.

The Peoples Staff (that is the one with the crown at the top) was stolen from the church by person/s unknown and had to be replaced by a new one. Mr Ray Woollaston became the new church organist. The Christmas Fayre was this year opened by Mr and Mrs Harold Brookes from the Ladies and Gents Outfitters in the High Street. £550 was raised.

On 22nd December 1965 the 70mph speed limit was introduced on all roads and motorways not restricted to lower speeds.

Early in 1966 a new east window was installed at St Thomas's Mission Church on the Watling Street in memory of Alfred George & Annie Bowen who had been both highly respected and most worthy of remembrance as regular worshippers at St Thomas. They had died respectively on 24th December 1946 and 3rd December 1942.

March saw the completion of Ravenscourt Precinct with Boots the Chemist being the first shop to open. Many shops stayed empty until 1971. Dr Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury went to Rome on 23rd March to meet with Pope. This was an historic first meeting between the Church of England and the Catholic Faith since the Reformation in the 16th Century. Gas replaced coke, when a new boiler was installed in the cellar beneath the vestry. The need to shovel, feed, light and tend the old boiler to keep the church warm was thankfully no longer required, reducing some of the Verger's tasks and making his duties so much easier.

Because of continually rising production costs the Contact Magazine rose by 2d to 6d each.



Revd N. D. Humphries pictured with his sister, Flora

On April Fools Day Aldridge and Brownhills Councils amalgamated. It was a sad day in the hearts of Brownhills people.

The Home Words supplement in the May Parish Magazine advertised 'Five day pilgrimage holidays to the Holy Land Christian towns for a staggering low price of 50 guineas per person. It is not known whether anybody from St James made use of this offer. In the same month the Bishop of Stafford came to Barnetts Lane cemetery to consecrate a further part of the ground for burials. Brownhills Carnival was revived this year with a grand street procession of **47 floats** led by the Carnival Queen and ending at Holland Park. It was held on 25th June in aid of Brownhills Fellowship for the physically handicapped.

The critical financial situation continued at St James with the Parish Share being underpaid for the last two years. Expenditure was cut back and further pleas were made for sacrificial giving in order to meet the increasing debt.

On 8th September Revd Norman Humphries moved to a new living in the parishes of S. Mary Knockin & S. John Maesbrook in the Oswestry deanery of Salop. He had written 57 separate letters in the magazine to the Parish.

For the sum of £250 the land upon which St Thomas's stood was sold by the Diocesan Education Council to the Parish in order to regularise the position in respect of the tenure of the old school property land which had been used for the Mission Church since 1875. The parish



Revd Norman D. Humphries
Vicar 1961-1966

was able therefore to secure a clear title to the land by holding the freehold which is now vested in a Lichfield Diocesan Trust.

The disaster at Aberfan on 21st October 1966, occupied the minds of many, when an unstable slag heap slid down a hillside on to a junior school killing 116 children and 28 others. Over £400 was made at the Christmas Fayre in December.

In March 1967 the Annual Vestry Meeting in the Church Hall were told that the Parish Share would be £465. In April St James Old Tyme Dance Club (under the direction of Mr & Mrs A. Owen) continued to flourish each Thursday evening in the church hall. The tune which was most popular with the dancers when dancing the 'Sunshine Stroll' at this time was 'Morning Town Ride' by the Seekers. During the same month the old Vicarage was being altered to bring it up to 1970s standard. The outhouse and cloakroom were demolished, windows repaired or replaced as necessary, electrically rewired, central heating changed from coal to oil, new gates at front, plumbing alterations, redecorated inside and out and generally modernised at a cost of £1288 repayable by the parish at £128 per annum @ 5% interest.

On 27th April Rev Rees Davies died suddenly at his home in Shrewsbury. His passing greatly shocked St James church. He had been a popular Vicar when at Brownhills some six years previously and was very well known and liked by parishioners, many of whom went to his funeral in Shrewsbury.



*Revd W.R.H.Hesketh with his wife, Ivy,
Vicar 1967-1971*

Eight months of interregnum came to an end when Rev W. R. H. Hesketh was installed as Vicar of the parish at an induction service conducted by the Bishop of Lichfield on 2nd May 1967. He had been ordained at Peterborough Cathedral and spent his early years as a curate in Northampton after which he had served in Western Scotland and London. He was the Area Organising Secretary for the Church Missionary Society whilst living at Shrewsbury for 11 years before going in 1962 to Shelton in Oxfordshire as Vicar. He and his wife Ivy had two married sons.

The Vicar outlined in his first letter in the June Parish Magazine, his intentions to introduce a stabilised list of church services and times, and to investigate the possibility of having a Curate. It was about this time that Mrs Gwen Poxon retired as Superintendent of the Kindergarten. Gwen is still an active member of the church as this history is being written. On 21st June 1967, aged 53, Dr Donald Makepeace Forster died at his home 'Ramorny' Chester Road. He had in 1916 joined the practice of the late Dr T. S. Patterson and was most well known in the district. I bring this into my writings because he regularly held summer garden parties at his house on Shire Oak to which I and my family had used to go. They were as I recall good times with side shows, games, gift, and cake stalls. But now, for some more useless information. It was at one of these garden parties in the late fifties that Dr Forster in his capacity as a qualified person held a 'Baby Show' in his garden summer house, at which my eldest son was the winner. If you find this hard to believe, I have the rose bowl to prove it.

In July Mr Bernard Taylor succeeded Mr Ray Woollaston as organist and choirmaster at St James. The Revd Derek Ormston joined the Ogle Hay parish as Deacon in the September. He came from St Davids Theological College Lampeter, Cardiganshire. He was the first curate in the parish for 24 years. In the October church magazine,

Vicar Hesketh appealed for increased giving, because the weekly income of £16 was insufficient to keep the church clean, lit, and warm.

The church interior was redecorated in the November by Manders of Wolverhampton. New carpet cushions were bought at a cost of £5 per pew in order to reduce the hardness of the seating. They have been sat upon for 33 years as they are still in use as this is being written. Prior to Christmas, the Sunday School on the 17th December held a Carol Gift service at 3pm at which the children brought gifts for the Hammerwich Children's Home.

1968 opened with the formation of an AYPAs (Anglican Young Peoples Association) on 21st January. It was a nationally recognised organisation which met each Sunday after evening service at 8pm. On 20th February approximately 180 square yards of land on the north side of St Thomas's church adjacent to the Watling (A5) Street was sold to the Ministry of Transport for £200 so that the street could be widened to a dual carriageway. The money was invested in the Diocesan Investment Trust.

The first decimal coins in Britain were issued on 23rd April 1968. I would think just about everybody of that day remembers the confusion when 6d became 2½ new pence and 1shilling became 5 new pence.

On 16th June the Parish Church held programmes of services for the Children's Festival. Both morning and afternoon services were fully attended by the children, their parents and the choir. Jane Smith and Joy Oakes read the lessons from the Lectern Bible. About this time Dennis Powell (current churchwarden) received the West Midlands Press Apprentice of the year award.

29th September was a special day for Revd Derek Ormston when at Lichfield he was ordained Priest. The records show that pew to pew collections were suspended on 21st October. Records do not reveal why this came about or what if anything took its place. What is recorded is that 12 months later the were reintroduced. Does anyone remember why this was so? In November 1968 Series II order of service was introduced but not very well received with most of the congregation preferring the Lords Supper or Holy Communion in the Book of Common Prayer. Parish records show that for the month of December, communicants totalled 601 and collections were £178-6s-6d. The year ended without any payment being made to the Diocese for the parish share of £600.

1969 started with a New Years Day Party in the Church Hall. Tickets were 1/6d which entitled all comers to a drink, a mince pie and a disco from 8-11pm. It was to be the last function in the hall for a week or two whilst the AYPAs decorated the interior.

On 20th January a Christian Unity service was held at St James. This was probably the first service of its kind in the parish with the Vicar and Curate along with Methodist Minister, Rev W. J. Hill, Rev John Druce vicar



*Members of the Young Wives enjoying a trip out in the
early to mid 1950s*

of St Johns Walsall Wood and Father McGovern from St Bernadettes taking part in an effort to bring the different church congregations together in the district.

On Sunday 9th February the evening service at St James had a visiting preacher from the Diocese of Kobe in Japan. He was Dr Canon G. H. Gibson, Professor of Practical Theology at Shoin University lecturing in England at the time.

Parish Registers reveal that from 1851 to 1969 there had been 12,000 baptisms (averaging 100 each year). The CEMS (Church of England Mens Society) continued to grow and was now affiliated to the Walsall area Federation under the guidance of Branch Chairman Rev J A Turner (Vicar of Chasetown). The group met each 4th Monday of the month at 8pm in the church hall. Mr Eric Price was elected Chairman and Mr Martin Smith Secretary.

On 31st March 1969 (Monday in Holy Week) the Mothers Union met in church for a special service of Compline led by Rev Derek Ormston. For those of you who may not know of this service it is the last service of the day, and a beautiful time of quiet worship, reflection on the past day with prayers to God for protection during the coming hours of sleep and darkness. The Mothers' Union had long been the backbone of our church, being called upon to organise and cater for the many social events that were put on in the Church Hall. They also offered spiritual support to the ladies of the parish.

The price of a brand new three piece suite at this time was advertised as being just £149-10s-0d. They were the good old days! We could buy five at that price today. British made Concorde made its maiden flight from Bristol to Fairford on 9th April.

The Vicar was assured by the Chairman of the Urban District Council of Brownhills in April that the pathways in Church Walk and on the North Side of the church would be re-paved, the lamps repaired to working order and barriers erected at ends to impede cyclists, all at no cost to the church.

The Annual Meeting of the council was held in the Hall. 32 members were present. Messrs George Pountney and Ron Bevan were elected by the Vicar as his Warden and Deputy Warden. Mr Eric Price was elected Pro Warden for St Thomas's replacing Mr A Dorsett, who had served for many years. Messrs George Phillips and A Owen were elected by the meeting as Peoples Warden and Deputy respectively. The Electoral Roll showed that the membership of the Church of England at St James's was 364.

The treasurer informed the meeting that it was unlikely that the Diocesan Commitment (Parish Share) would be paid again this year as there were insufficient funds and much debt. Furthermore, the portion of the Curates stipend for which the church was responsible was in doubt and could well lead to the loss of the Curate. The following persons were elected to serve on the PCC for the coming twelve months:

Messrs G. Pountney, G. Phillips, A. Owen, A. Dorsett, M. Harvey, E. Price, W. Cooper, D. Powell, R. Bevan, G. Marklew, M. Taylor, J. Law, R. Bevan, Mrs E. Marklew, Mrs F. Owen, Mrs J. Devey, Mrs M. Cooper, Mrs Bull and Miss H. Barnett. Vicar Revd Hesketh, Curate Revd Ormston, and Deaconess Chinchin.

Prince Charles was invested as Prince of Wales at Caernarfon on July 1st.

The July edition of Contact Parish Magazine contained a disturbing feature in that documentation pertaining to the early history of St Thomas's Mission church appeared to be non-existent. The writer of the magazine feature appealed for help and information concerning the matter. Strange this, because I have had the same difficulty. Nobody seems to know of any records, which suggests that there were none made, or they had been destroyed at some time or other. In the same Magazine the AYPAs were reported as having been very active with outings and meetings etc. including a memorable visit to the All Britain Conference at Winchester Cathedral. At a recent meeting they elected to their local committee, a Chairman (Dennis Powell), a Secretary (Joy Devey) and a Treasurer (Martin Smith). On 7th July, Sunday evensong was presented by Junior and Senior AYPAs together with the Rev David McInnes (Precentor of Birmingham Cathedral) as preacher.

It seems that 1969 was a good time for young and older peoples activity groups within the church, all of which are well documented in regular articles in old church magazines under the general heading "Mainly for Youth". There was an abundance of regular information concerning social gatherings like BBQs, discos, whist and beetle drives etc. Cub Scouts, Mothers Union, CEMS, Brownies, AYPAs meetings and a Sunday school were also doing well.

Contrary to all this, wanton deliberate damage was rife in the vicinity with the old Police Station in Church Street being ransacked and burgled by thieves and vandals.

As for the church building itself the following work was carried out during the months of September through to December: Miss Edith Turner of 50 Lichfield Road, provided finance for the replacement of wire window guards on north side at a cost of £81. A new clergy vestry was erected in the north transept costing £180. The finial and cross were removed from the spire for safety reasons. The tiled floors throughout the interior were covered with blue carpeting and an amplification system installed with microphones at the high altar, pulpit and lectern. All this with finance at a premium??

The October edition of the parish magazine showed an analysis of the reasons for the serious financial situation at St James. It showed that a ¼ of the congregation gave an average of 4/- per week with the remainder giving an average of 10d per week. This situation was so unsatisfactory that the church was now unable to keep solvent and was not paying for gas heating, electric lighting or parish share. The financial situation was extremely serious.

On 6th December the Christmas Fayre was opened by Councillor Jonah Deakin OBE. Research has not revealed how much was made towards the critical financial situation. The following day (Sunday 7th December), at 6.30pm Evensong service, the Bishop of Lichfield Rt Revd Arthur Stretton Reeve and the Archdeacon of Stafford were both at St James to speak on a matter of importance concerning the financial situation at the church. The whole congregation, the PCC, as well as St Thomas's church committee had been urged to be there. What was actually said, what questions were asked, was not recorded, but it would seem the message was clear, because the House of God is thankfully still managing to do His work at St James here in Brownhills.

The year ended with the death penalty being formally abolished on the 18th December.

The new year of 1970 started without parish magazines for the next few months. It is not known why. If they were published no copies have been found in archives. In line with the recent



The old tower after removal of the cross and finial, in a bad state

amalgamation of the Brownhills and Aldridge Councils, the Aldridge/Brownhills Parliamentary Constituency was established.

The annual Vestry meeting this year on the 1st April was informed of the resignation of Mr G Pountney as Vicars Warden. Mr Ron Bevan was asked by the Vicar to take over with Mr Malcolm Harvey as deputy. The meeting were told that the parish share for 1971 would be £725, but thankfully a discount had been allowed by the diocese of 15% reducing it to £616. It was agreed by the meeting that in order to pay some of what St James's owed to the Diocese that a Gift Day be held on Saturday 3rd October at which the Vicar would be in church all day to receive gifts of money. This was not a great success however as the gifts amounted to only £30. The author of this history, was elected to the PCC at this same meeting wondering what he had let himself in for. So far he has stayed the course. The electoral roll at that time recorded the membership as being 370.

A million copies of the New English Bible were sold when it was issued on its first day (16th March 1970).

The magazine after a lapse of four months was available again with the May issue in which it was learned that The Good Shepherd at Muckley Corner had been sold for £450 to the Staffordshire County Council so that road could be widened. The money was placed in Trust at the Diocese. Dennis Powell married Joy Devey at St James on 26th September 1970.

In August, the AYPAs and the CEMS (the young people and men's groups) went for a specially arranged interior and exterior tour of roofs and spires of Lichfield Cathedral. We were very privileged to be allowed to see parts of the Cathedral not normally allowed to visitors. Those who went found it most instructive and interesting.

Mr John Dorsett deputised as organist during Mr Bernard Taylor's time of illness. The United service was hosted by St Johns Walsall Wood this year on 12th October. Very few St James people went. At a cost of £75 for materials a group of men from church replaced the rotted wooden fascia on the front of the hall with new plastic cladding under the direction of the Vicars deputy warden. The December issue of the parish magazine was the last of the 'Contact' series.

In 1971 Ravenscourt precinct became more alive when Tesco opened a store in the March but was closed in 1985 when Hillards built and opened a brand new Superstore on the site of the old Brownhills Open Market.



*Brownhills High Street,
looking towards Boots and
Ravenscourt Precinct on the
left*

Miss Margaret Hampton became the new organist at St James and the PCC agreed that The Good Shepherd Mission Church at Muckley Corner be demolished to allow for the A461 road to be made into the dual carriageway.

The 15th February 1971 was Decimal Day when the decimal system came into operation and replaced the old Pound, shillings and pence. It caused much confusion amongst many who were convinced that it just increased prices of everything.

Revd W. H. R. Hesketh left St James for St Bartholomew's at Hints in March leaving the parish with an interregnum. On 26th June Miss Helen Barnett resigned after many years service as Sunday School Superintendent.

As a result of a Police recommendation, the church doors were in future to be locked at all times when the church was not being used. Unattended children had been found using it as a play area. Sadly the church is still locked to this day.

After eight months of interregnum Revd Harold Thornley became the new Vicar of Ogle Hay with Brownhills at an Induction service held on 28th October 1971. He moved into the Vicarage in Vicarage

Road along with his wife Freda and three children, Nicholas, Jane and Ann.

The 1971 National Census Records shows the population for the parish as 11,860.

In order for them to be preserved and kept safe in a controlled environment, Vicar Thornley immediately set about sorting out the parish registers which were kept in the church safe. Early Baptism, Marriage Banns, Services, Weddings and Burials are now all stored in the Staffordshire County Records Office where they can be made available for viewing by the public.

1972 started with the better news that St James had paid the 1971 parish share (£616) in full *for the first time since the inception of the scheme in 1968.*

Britain joined the EEC on 22nd January.

On Saturday 27th May, at 2pm. A Parish Conference was opened by The Lord Bishop of Lichfield, Arthur Stretton Reeve to discuss the various current difficult situation in the parish, and to make recommendations so that a future policy might be agreed as to a way forward. The clergy team that led the various sessions were :

- The Revd. D. Tustin, Vicar of Tettenhall Regis.
- The Revd. H. D. G. Jenkyns, Vicar of St Paul's Wood Green, Wednesbury.
- The Revd. S. J. Cooke, Rector of Haughton, Stafford.
- The Revd. H. Thornley, Vicar of Ogle Hay with Brownhills

A full report of the proceedings is on file in church archives.

Following a recommendation of the Parish Conference, the Sunday School, from September onwards, started at 10am. in the Church Hall, joining the congregation at 10.40am. in church for the latter part of the Sunday Family Communion service. This was a major change allowing children to receive instruction applicable to their age and also attend church. Ancient and Modern (revised edition) hymn books came into regular use on 3rd September. Donations towards the cost of 30p per copy were gratefully received by the Treasurer.

Miss Edith Turner passed away on 12th December. She had been very generous to the parish for many years. The Christmas Fayre raised £433 towards church upkeep.

On 12th March 1973 the Parish Annual General Meeting met in the hall and were told that the Diocesan Synod had approved a budget of £201,500 for the next twelve months and that the Parish Share to the Diocese would increase by 10%. The Synod was pleased to report a slight increase in the Diocese Covenant Scheme giving which had realised £54,700 for the Parishes from the Inland Revenue. The number of covenantors were then 4,700 from 223 parishes. Mr Abraham (Don) Myatt was elected Treasurer and we give thanks to him for his loyal service to St James in all matters of finance. At the time of writing, Don was our longest serving Treasurer having completed 27 years continuous service.

Valued Added Tax (VAT) was introduced to Britain on 1st April 1973.

The Vicar's letter in the June magazine, speaks of an air of enthusiasm in the parish, which wants to work together and do something to help in its growth. A Sunday School and Church outing went in two coaches to Alton Towers on 23rd June at the very modest cost of 62½p for children and 75p for adults. Seven days later at the Vicarage the now annual Garden Party was held with the proceeds going to the Church of England Children's Society. At the same garden party a presentation was made to Mr George Phillips. He had been Peoples Warden for 37 years, serving the parish since 1936. According to church archives he was and still is currently the longest serving warden at St. James's.

On 19th July 1973, Architects Wood, Goldstraw & Yorath of Hanley, Stoke on Trent reported on the fabric of St James's church at the Quinquennial Inspection. The news was not good. The parish church roofs, timbers, spire and external walls were all in a poor condition and in need of urgent attention.

Our spirits were lifted when Miss Joan Winterbottom was licensed as a full time Parish Worker by the Bishop of Lichfield at St James's on 21st October 1973. This was the very first time that a parish worker had been licensed in a parish. Traditionally it had always been done at the Cathedral. The Bishop was the celebrant and Head Deaconess Beryl Morgan the preacher at a service of Holy Communion that day. Joan took up residence at 10, Wessex Close, High Street, Brownhills just as Deaconess Chinchin (although officially retired) was finally giving up her parish work at the age of 89 years.

The Architects also found that St Thomas's was also in a poor state with excessive dry rot and wood decay in the floor and wall panelling.



Detailed investigation revealed that the wood rot was well advanced making it necessary to close the building on 24th November 1974. Estimates were obtained but were prohibitive in terms of the £15,000/£20,000 needed for repair. So that St Thomas's regular worshippers were catered for, a coach was provided each Sunday morning to transport people to/from Brownhills West and the parish church for the Holy Communion service at 10.00am. Meanwhile the pipe organ was sold and the east window removed for safe keeping.

The Fayre at Christmas was held on 1st December at 3pm. in the hall. Its goal was to raise much needed finance for the restoration work of the church exterior.

The year closed with an interesting snippet from a newspaper that the Bible was still the best selling book, now being published in 1457 different languages. I was not fully aware that so many different tongues existed. Did you?

1974 started quietly but was stirred to a General Election on 28th February, the result of which was a narrow Labour victory. Prime Minister Edward Heath resigned after failing to form a Conservative-Liberal coalition allowing Harold Wilson to form a minor-

ity Labour Government.

The year of 1974 will always be remembered as the time when Brownhills lost its Staffordshire identity and became absorbed into the Walsall Metropolitan Borough as part of the West Midlands. Most Brownhills people did not relish the idea of being in the West Midlands and the Walsall Metropolitan Council.

When St Thomas's was demolished in March 1974, Mr Carlton White had already become the full time organist at St James. It was a sad time for all the parish, particularly for those of Brownhills West as they saw their mission church razed to the ground leaving only the remains of a boundary wall and fence. The site can still be seen at the junction of the Parade and the A5, but is now an overgrown land site owned by the Diocese.

In considering the church life of St James, the PCC agreed at a meeting held on 15th May that the PCC be divided into a committee system of government. Three sub-committees were formed :

Finance & Fabric led by Mr Carlton White.
Worship & Mission led by Mr Dennis Powell.
Socials led by Mr Michael Powis.

The Finance/Fabric committee met immediately to set about the task of church restoration. The vicarage central heating was updated and changed from oil to gas about this time. The church spire and tower were inspected by Rafferty Bros. of Tunstall, Stoke on Trent, for the making safe of the churches spire, tower, roof, nave, chancel, and north transept gables. The cost of inspection was £108 + Vat. confirming clearly that those parts inspected were unsafe and needed to be dismantled and rebuilt.

The Annual Garden Party at the vicarage was held on 6th June with a large number of side shows, games, competitions, and refreshments. Miss St James 1974 (age limited to under 11yrs) was chosen by those who were there. £166.38 was donated that day to the Church of England Children's Society.

Men of St James will remember a particular cricket match at Brownhills Holland Park when BCC (Brownhills Cricket Club) met BPC (Brownhills Parish Church) on a day in August 1974. BPC lost of course, scoring 90 for 8 wickets whereas BCC scored 127 for 5 wickets. We did our best!!

1st October saw the first McDonalds open in Britain in south London. There is even one in Brownhills now.

On 15th November, Donald Coggan succeeded Michael Ramsey as Archbishop of Canterbury, followed shortly afterwards by the death of our beloved Deaconess Chinchin on the 18th aged 90 years.

21 people lost their lives and 120 were injured in the Birmingham pub bombing on 21st November 1974.

Many people of St James will still most surely remember 1975 as the year when 'Mission & Stewardship' overshadowed other events at St James's. It was a most momentous time of preparation, planning and feverish activity in the parish of Ogle Hay with Brownhills. It all started with a "Parish Mission" on 21st February, when three Brothers and one Sister arrived as helpers in the running and organisation of a 7 day programme of events. See 'Mission Programme' in Interest Facts at back.

After all this, other parish events in 1975 paled into insignificance and were not so well recorded, however research discloses that on Sunday 13th October, Series III Parish communion started and on 31st October 1975 Joan Winterbottom, our Parish Worker left St James for Crawley New Town, Sussex.

The St. Thomas stained glass window was dedicated in St James on 2nd November. It was framed and fixed to the west facing wall of the nave. You will recall it was removed from the Mission church prior to it being demolished. The Christmas Fayre made £554.27p in December and church registers reveal that there were 8226 communicants in 1975.

After all the excitement and activity of previous year, 1976 was more subdued, routine and tranquil. It did however have its highlights. Records reveal that Kenneth John Fraser Skelton came to the Diocese as the new Bishop of Lichfield and that Vicar Harold Thornley started to write some rather exceptional letters in the Parish Magazine. As I read them whilst doing my research, I am both impressed and inspired at these excellent writings, and his gifts of eloquence and passionate love of Our Lord. I recommend that the people of today should read them, as they speak plainly of Christian Life. (Copies can be seen upon application at Walsall Local History Centre in Essex Street.)

James Callaghan succeeded Harold Wilson as Prime Minister on 5th April 1976.

On 15th May a Lichfield Diocese Family Day Out was enjoyed by many parishioners who travelled by coach and car to the Stafford showground. It was a day of 'Celebration', a day of good weather, displays, workshops, fellowship, and Communion together with Christians from all over the Diocese.

230,000 people left Britain in 1976 to live abroad and exceeded the number of new settlers in the country by 41,800. The worst drought in Britain for 500 years was declared along with the hottest summer since 1727.

10am Holy Communion service on Sunday 8th August was special in that new Bishop Kenneth of Lichfield came to St James's to preach.

On 25th September Parishioners attended a Christian Rally in the Central Hall Birmingham entitled 'Come Alive'.

'Spiritual Renewal' came to St James when Revd Harold Thornley returned from his family summer holiday. This particular time was an important turning point in the lives of those who came to know and love more deeply Our Saviour. Those who were involved will always remember the time so very well, when they were challenged by and responded to The Holy Spirit.

Not much was found when researching 1977, there is a noticeable absence of archive material. All that I discovered was that the Parish Magazine price rose to 4p each, the first known Church Hall Rules (1st October 1977) were PCC agreed, issued and displayed, and the 40th Walsall (St James') Scout Group closed at the end of the year. It is also worthy of note that Vicar Harold continued throughout 1977 to write some wonderful and most inspiring letters in the Parish Magazine.

It was also of course the Queen's Silver Jubilee on June 7th at which she lit a bonfire in Windsor Great Park.

Even less was found in 1978 when researching. It seemed to be a year of little notable activity again. It was recorded in PCC minutes that the recently closed Scout Group had amalgamated with the 2nd Brownhills Group and were continuing their scouting at Barnetts Lane. May 1st was the first May Day bank holiday to be celebrated in Britain.

Sunday evensong services changed from the Book of Common Prayer to a new Series III form of worship, and the PCC voted that a gift be given of £1000 to Nottingham Theological College for the training of future church leaders.

The PCC agreed that £900 be spent on the purchase of 100 stacking type chairs in the Church Hall to replace the canvas seat type most of which were not repairable.

In the winter snow of January and February 1979 the Great Charles Street Cemetery was mapped by Wardens and Officers of St James so that accurate grave positions could be located prior to the renovation and landscaping of the entire area. The writer was a member of this working party and can recall scraping away the cold snow in order to reveal names on graves and marry them with entries in the parish Burial Register. The map that was made is still in use today and is invaluable when there is a need to accurately locate individual graves.

The parish share continued to rise and is recorded as being £2646 in 1979.

In April, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II approved the creation of the new Suffragan See of Wolverhampton within the Diocese. The first holder of this appointment was the Revd Barry Rogerson, who was consecrated Bishop in St Pauls Cathedral on Wednesday, 25th April. A special service was held at St Peters Church, Wolverhampton on Friday 15th June at 7.45pm to mark the inauguration of the new See and to welcome the new Bishop. The parish of Ogle Hay with Brownhills was represented by the Vicar (Harold Thornley) and 10 laity.

In May the price of the Parish Magazine rose in price to 5p each to meet ever increasing costs and for the first time weekly Notice Sheets were introduced at services which could be taken away as a reminder of service times and forthcoming events.

June saw the publication of a 'Brownhills Parish Church Financial Forecast for the Future' entitled "If we carry on as we are". It was a six page discussion booklet appraising the current situation, a budget for the next three years and possible courses of action. The PCC discussed at length the financial future of the church as on its shoulders lay the responsibility of steering a course which would lead to permanent stability in times of increasing inflation.

Mr and Mrs Peter Howard of Chasetown opened 'The Highway Christian Bookshop' at 17, High Street in Brownhills during the month of July 1979. Much interest was shown for some years, but it sadly closed eventually when the interest waned. There were six teams of church cleaners at this time comprising seven persons to each team. We struggle with four teams these days.

On 5th September a state funeral was held for Lord Mountbatten who was assassinated by the IRA at Mullaghmore when his boat Shadow V exploded, killing him, his boatman and his grandson Nicholas.

Inflation according to the PCC minute book was responsible for a £3 increase to £8 per session for the hire of the Church Hall starting 1st January 1978.

On the same date Miss Elsie Turner of 50 Lichfield Road passed away at the Chase Hospital Cannock. Under the terms of her will she expressed the desire that the Lichfield Diocesan Trust should have the freehold of her home at 50 Lichfield Road for the use of assistant Curates of St James Church Ogle Hay with Brownhills. The



St Thomas East window installed in St James



View of church from Great Charles Street direction shortly after completion

Parochial Church Council took advantage of this generous arrangement and set in motion the immediate modernisation of the property at a cost of £3,500. (A sum which was a lot more than the cost of the dwelling when it was erected in 1901).

In the same month on the 19th Mr Carlton White also died after a long illness. He was missed very much for his involvement as Vice Chairman of the PCC and his musical skills on the organ. Mr Frank Harvey took his place as organist.

On March 25th Robert Runcie was enthroned as Archbishop of Canterbury. The men of the church started work on the restoration of the Church roof. The years work was being planned to include the choir vestry roof, the organ chamber roof, followed by the North Transept roof and South Transept roof. The PCC had taken out insurance cover for each of the men and for public liability for a period of six months to the end of September. *See extract from Insurance Records in 'Facts from the Archives'.*



*Looking along the length of completed roof
1980*

With the Archdeacon's Certificate received, work began in April with the encouragement and blessing of the Diocesan Advisory Board for Church Buildings. An estimate from the Architect for the roof restoration to be done by outside contractors was in excess of £25,000 an amount St James could not afford. It was estimated that by doing it ourselves it would cost in the region of £3,000 to £4,000.

Rev Peter Richmond came to St James after his ordination as Deacon at Lichfield Cathedral on 29th June 1980 from St Johns Theological College at Nottingham. He moved into 297 High Street Brownhills whilst 50 Lichfield Road was being modernised. A light hearted snippet appeared in the August Parish Magazine concerning 'collective terms'. If many fish together is a shoal, and many worshippers are a congregation then, would you describe a gathering of clergy as surplice goods?

In the September magazine a progress report was found entitled the 'Church Roof.' It was written by Vicar Thornley in which he said that the work was progressing well and that with the vestry, organ and north transept complete, work had started on the south transept. As the work proceeded it was discovered that existing laths

and some main beams were riddled with wood worm and rotten throughout. One might expect that these depressing findings would make the working party despondent and feel inadequate for the task in hand. Not a bit of it, the rotten wood was replaced with new timber covered with new felt and laths after carefully scrutinising other wood for signs of rot. None were been found at this stage, thank the Lord. The work on the roof finished for the winter months at the end of September.

Harvest was held on Sunday 5th October 1980 and broke with the usual tradition of taking gifts of produce to the needy of the parish. The produce was auctioned at the Harvest Supper on the following Monday evening in aid of 'Tear Fund'.

On 27th January 1981 Bishop Stretton Reeve of Lichfield died and in February on the 24th Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer announced their engagement. Mr Frank Harvey the organist left St James for Bridgnorth and a quote in the February Magazine talks about the changing size of the £1 note. 'It is curious how the £1 note can look so small in a supermarket yet so large in church!'

The PCC were informed in March that the Parish Share was £5,600 for 1981, an increase of nearly £3,000 since 1979. Work resumed again on the church roof on 5th April and continued through the summer until the end of September.

The work of clearing and tidying Great Charles Street Cemetery commenced in May and continued through the year to completion. During this time the workers had the use of the church hall for breaks and toilets with the result that they redecorated the hall interior in appreciation of its use particularly when the weather was inclement.

Peter James Richmond was the first curate to move into 50 Lichfield Road after the modernisation programme in May. He was ordained Priest at Lichfield on 28th June 1981.

Nicholas Thornley, the Vicar's son was ordained Deacon by the Bishop of Grimsby in the Diocese of Lincoln, to work in the parish of St Lawrence, Scunthorpe during June. On 29th July, Prince Charles married Lady Diana Spencer.

The Alternative Service Book (ASB 1980) was introduced on the first Sunday in August to all services except for the 8.00am Holy Communion which retained the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. Also in August a Children's Holiday Club was held in the old Vicarage garden. Who remembers the 'Don Summers Crusade' at Burntwood Baths? It was held from 15th-30th August in a huge marquee. Many people went to hear and join in the worship and prayer services. There were also talks, films and demonstrations as well as opportunities to go forward to commit themselves to Jesus. I have particular reason to recall this crusade, but you should ask the writer personally if you want to know why.

Work ceased at the end of September on the church roof restoration. It was a good time to stop as Vicar Harold Thornley, Churchwarden Walter Baggott and their wives were going to the Holy Land. They visited most of the Holy sites and could not stop talking about it for months after they had returned. The roof work had continued at a satisfactory pace and on schedule. The large south nave roof having been stripped, felt and new laths fitted and retiled. A good job done without accident leaving just the north side to be completed in 1982. The light at the end of the tunnel was becoming brighter. Praise the Lord.

The January 1982 Parish Magazine included the first ever issue of LINK a monthly publication by the Diocesan Communications Committee of the Diocese of Lichfield. On 16th January at 7.00pm a Parish Party was held in the church hall.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting on Monday 22nd February 1982 was informed that the parish share had risen by £620 to £6,220.

On 2nd April 1982, the Falklands War began as Argentine forces invaded and captured the Falkland Islands a British Sovereignty since 1833 in the South Atlantic. The Argentine Forces formally surrendered to the British task force at Port Stanley on 4th June and a cease-fire agreed as fighting ends in the Falklands

When the men started to work again on the last phase of the church roof on 8th May 1982 a humorous snippet appeared in the July Link which said "The restoration fund for the church roof has finally reached its target, thanks to £10,000 realised from the sale of rare foreign coins donated anonymously at last week's offertory". This of course was not true but it would have been a real blessing if it had been.

On 24th July 1982, 14 people of all ages from the church congregation took a parish holiday which had been organised by Rev Peter Richmond to Kimmel Hall near Abergele in North Wales. They joined with folk from Haddenham and Cuddington churches near Aylesbury in a week of teaching and fellowship together at a lovely old hall in its own splendid gardens away from worldly distractions. There were daily morning and afternoon teaching sessions, evening worship and praise services. There were baby sitters for those with

young families and times of relaxation together in the warm weather. This holiday away together was to be the first of many that followed in later years. Many came to Christ during that week, as we grew together successfully as a Christian family.

The first of many successful children's Holiday Clubs was held on 23rd-26th August in the church hall from 10.00-12.30pm each day. Approximately 40/50 children attended each session.

The Diocesan Architect came on 24th September to Quinquennially inspect St James Church and the completed church roof work. He was relieved to find that the problem of water penetration through the roof had at last been solved. Also in September the Diocesan Office at St Mary's House Lichfield became computerised. Some of us were not ready for this in the parishes and wondered what this might do to parish administration.

On Sunday 12th December 1982 during the Christmas Gift Service, the Junior Sunday school, under the leadership of Joy Powell performed a musical nativity play to the delight of the congregation. At the December meeting of the Parochial Church Council the Architect's Quinquennial report revealed that the tower and spire were dangerous and must be taken down for reasons of safety. In response to this, the meeting decided to apply for a Faculty not only for its demolition, but as an act of faith, to rebuild it the following year. The Architect had obtained estimates showing that the rebuilding costs would be in the region of £10,000. This may have been the reason why the Christmas Fayre brought in a record £902 that year.

On 15th January 1983 Curate Peter Richmond married Victoria Savage at Amersham Parish Church in Buckinghamshire. Shortly afterwards they left Brownhills for the parish of Trentham on 26th February. At this time the £1 coin started in circulation.

In March, Wednesday evening church meetings were replaced by House Groups. Meetings were set up at



Scaffolding clads the tower as work begins in earnest

Walter and Dori Baggott's home at 45, Watling street,
John and Joan Mainwaring's home at 9, St John's Road,
Dennis and Joy Powell's home at 16, St John's Road,
Les and Janet Poynton's home at 18, New Road and,
Graham and Jill Morgan's home at 11, Anglesey Crescent.

The aim of each group was to learn to grow together, pray together, to trust one another, to build each other up in the faith and learn to love one another. Thirty-seven people joined House groups at this time.

The PCC were informed that the Parish Share would rise yet again, this time by £707 to a new annual payment of £6,927. Has the parish share ever not risen each year? The PCC also spent much time discussing the church tower and spire. Their deliberations finalised on the demolition of the unsafe spire and tower followed by the rebuilding of a tile clad replacement costing around £4,000-5,000 including the scaffolding if the work was done by the men of the church during the summer months. An appeal for funds was already under way and was expected to reach the cost by the end of August. It should be recorded here that the organisational skills of the Rev. Harold Thornley and the enthusiasm of the men was outstanding. Much prayer was offered and answered at this crucial time in the history of the St James.

The regular Sunday bus to and from Brownhills West ceased in May and was replaced by people with their own cars who formed a taxi rota to take the place of the expensive bus which now was not paying for itself. On 14th May parishioners enjoyed a day out together as they went to 'MAYFIRE'

at Stafford show ground. A thousand plus sat down to a picnic lunch after which a Eucharist service was led by the Bishops of the diocese in the large indoor arena. St James became twinned with S. Mary & S. Luke at Shreshill after the service when banners were exchanged.

In June, scaffolding went up around the tower and the old spire and tower were demolished stone by stone. Work progressed throughout the following weeks in order to complete the rebuild before the autumn/winter weather arrived.

The Conservatives won a landslide majority General Election with Margaret Thatcher remaining as Prime Minister on 9th June. On July 3rd Geoffrey Stuart was ordained by Bishop Kenneth to serve as assistant Curate to St James. He moved into 50, Lichfield Road with his wife Jenny and their two children David and Paul.

August 1983 heralded the issue of a new A4 sized church magazine replacing the previous 10" by 8" format. The cover picture of the church interior in a different colour each month was changed to a colourful artwork picture.

Work carried on apace as the new church tower and spire began to take on its shape. It is interesting to note here that the spire frame was actually built on its side in the old vicarage back garden. All pieces were numbered carefully so that when disassembled they could be moved to their site on top of the prepared tower and reassembled quickly and efficiently. The tiling was added, new lead flashing applied, new stainless steel cross set on the top and interior illumination added that shone out during the hours of darkness from each of the four faces through the cross windows. All this hard work meant that the church again had a secure safe tower and spire with cross to identify God's house and place of worship in the town. The vicar and men were indeed proud of what they had achieved with the help of the Almighty during 1983.

After the constructional activity of the previous year, 1984 came with the good news that the tower and spire appeal fund closed after reaching a satisfactory total of £5,013.

The miners led by Arthur Scargill began their strike on 12th March against the proposed pit closures resulting in many violent confrontations between pickets and police in the mining districts.

The Parochial Church Council on 2nd May 1984 found themselves unanimously agreeing to petition the Chancellor of the Diocese for a faculty to re-order the church interior. The faculty was granted allowing plans to be prepared so that an intense work schedule during October and November of the following year would not inconvenience church use too much.



'Workers' gather at top of spire – Harold Thornley (vicar), Dennis Powell, Sam Poxon and Eric Price



The new cross stands proud against the skyline

Outstanding evenings on 4th and 6th July were spent at Villa Park when coaches took two separate parties to hear Billy Graham and Cliff Richard at the "Mission England" crusade. 260,000 met altogether during that week from all parts of the Midlands to listen, sing and worship together. It was an evangelistic time of deep Christian experience during which 25,000 went forward to commit their lives to Christ.

In the Spring, Pathfinders was begun for 10-14 year olds, with a good number attending. Noreen Meek became church organist.

The Grand Hotel bombing killed four and injured many when an IRA bomb exploded at the hotel in Brighton during the Conservative Party Conference on 12th October.

On 30th April Britain's first black bishop, the Venerable Wilfred Wood is appointed.

The Parish Magazine front cover was changed when the August edition depicted for the first time a full colour picture which was to be different for each future month.

The General Synod approved the ordination of women on 2nd July 1985, as deacons only, although many of the members of the Church of England, strongly opposed it.

From Sunday 6th October the church was closed as work started on the reordering. Choir stalls were removed from the chancel and resited in the north and south transepts. Four rows removed from the front of the nave so when the chancel screen was removed it would allow the floor to be raised forming a dais projecting into the nave from the chancel. The church hall became the place of worship whilst the church was being reordered. During the alterations in the church the north transept clergy vestry was removed. All this work was again done by church men who worked on a full time basis for the whole two months until completion.

Funerals took place in the Methodist church during that time. Sunday was a day of rest and worship as were other times when church activities such as house groups etc. took precedence over the manual work. The new carpeting and interior redecoration were done by contractors. A new Lectern and Lord's Table were hand made by the Rev. Harold Thornley and serve as a lasting reminder to this man's inspiration and leadership with this whole project which cost £7,192. It was a great improvement by bringing congregation and clergy closer together during the worship and allowed space when necessary, for the presentation of drama and dance etc. At the beginning of December the reordered and redecorated church was at last ready for the celebration of Our Lords Birthday and the coming New Year.

1986 started with St James aware that Rev. Harold Thornley would be leaving the parish to take up a new living at Holy Trinity, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury on Saturday 1st February. He was thanked for his work by the Lichfield Deanery Synod when he attended his last meeting as a representative of St James Ogle Hay on 28th January. On Monday 17th February at 7.30pm many of St James's congregation were at his Institution by the Bishop of Shrewsbury (The Right Reverend L. Lloyd Rees.)

It was at this time that the author was Lay Chairman to the Parochial Church Council. This duty was not normally needed whilst an incumbent was in the parish but now that St James had entered a time of interregnum the Lay Chairman together with the PCC and the Wardens set about managing the affairs of the parish.

The Annual Parish Church Meeting minutes showed a deficit in the 1985 church accounts of £1875. This was due mainly to the recent church re-ordering costs.

Easter Sunday on 30th March 1986 was led by Curate Rev. Geoffrey Suart who was caring for the parish until his departure on the 1st May to Christchurch, Cressage, as team Vicar in the Shropshire Team Ministry parish of Much Wenlock.

On the 26th April the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in the USSR exploded causing high levels of radiation to affect Britain as well as the whole of north-west Europe. The movement of sheep in England was banned due to the danger and the build-up of radiation levels.

In June, No. 37, New Road was purchased by the Diocese as a more modern Vicarage for the parish. It was not until after the work was completed on 1st September, that the Rev. Colin Thomas, his wife Joyce, and their two daughters Anna and Sara took up residence in their new home. Sixteen days later Colin broke his leg whilst moving a billiard table and became incapacitated causing the planned induction service on the 18th September to be cancelled until 31st October. The Institution was conducted by the Bishop of Wolverhampton (The Right Reverend Christopher J. Mayfield). Reverend Colin was still on crutches at the Parochial Church Council meeting held on Saturday 27th September at the new vicarage. The meeting formally welcomed the Vicar and his family to St James and set about dealing with business matters concerning aspects of church life including, services, fabric, evangelism, teaching, music, missionary support, children, young people, policy, bookstall, church leadership, ecumenical activities and a possible parish holiday. It was encouraging to see the church waking up again after six months of interregnum.

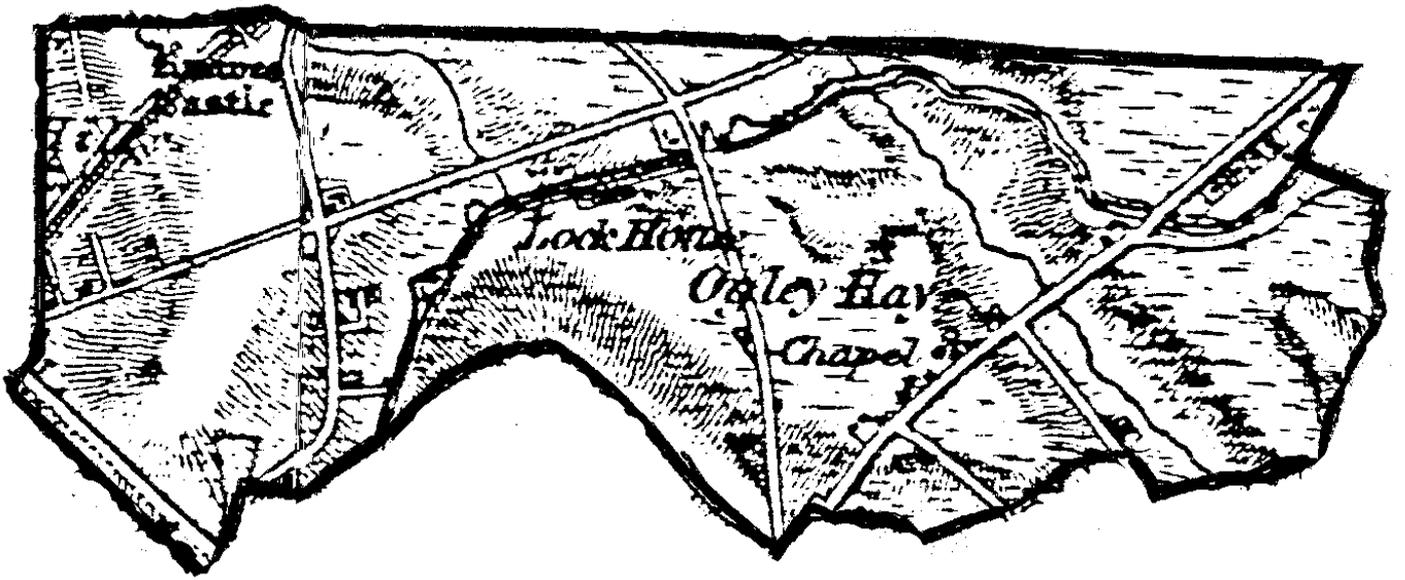


View of the new nave altar after refurbishing and reordering

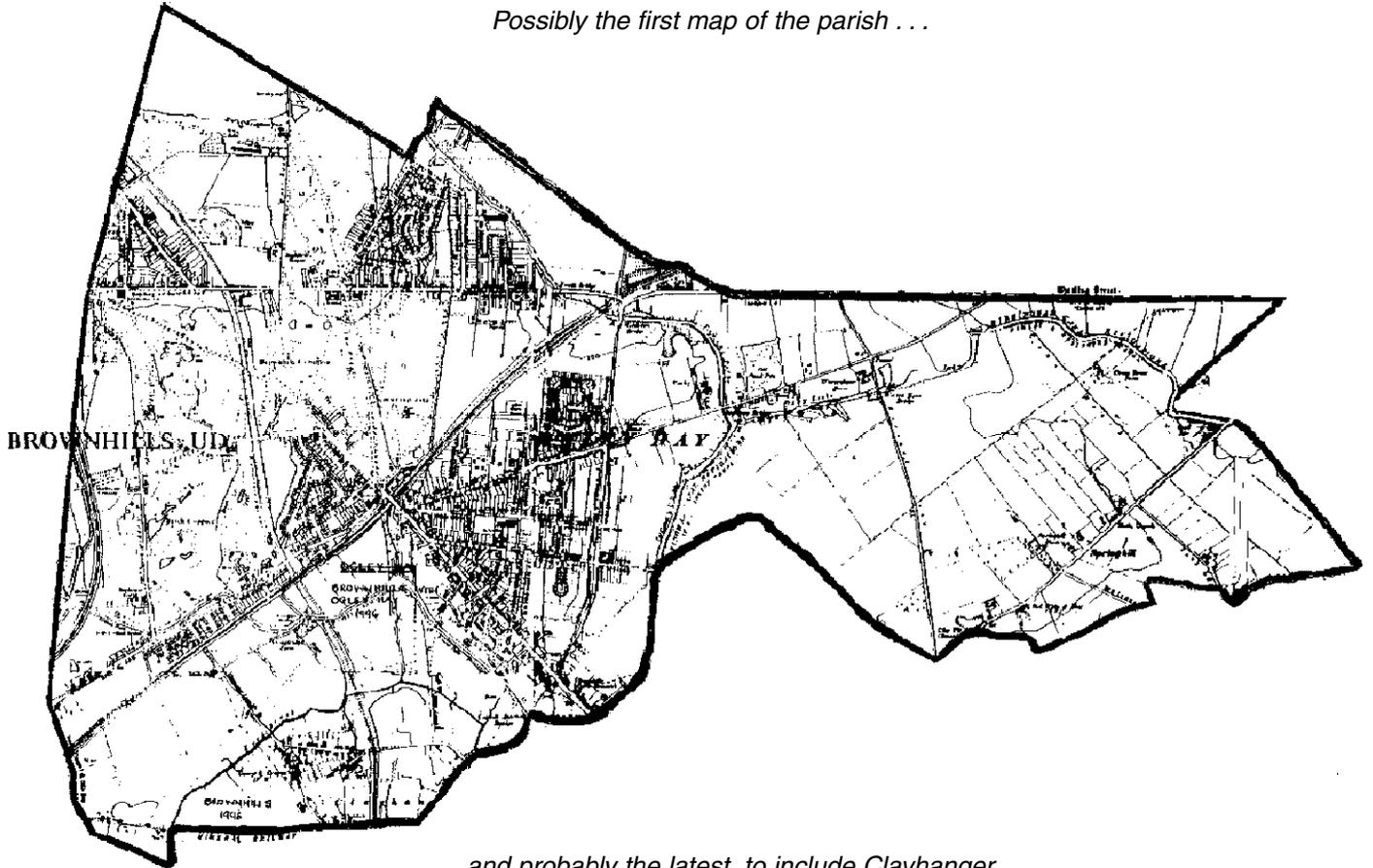
Now that the new Vicar was holding the reins changes became evident with the advent of an annual Christingle and Gift Service, a new afternoon fellowship group, new baptism and re-marriage of divorcees policies, revision of fees etc. Christmas carols were sung in aid of the Children's Society on the Hussey Estate, Hillards Supermarket and on Christmas Eve in Central Brownhills. This year full of upsets and changes ended as is the custom with celebrations of the Lord's Birthday.

As I come to 1987, I find the task of searching for information is easier in one sense, yet in another increasingly more difficult. This is mainly due to the fact that both the author and many readers will have vivid memories of the years now leading up to the end of the millennium. So as I come to these following years, would you try not to be over critical if some events that you may particularly remember have been omitted.

1987 started with the news that Terry Waite, the Archbishop of Canterbury's special envoy had been abducted in Beirut on 20th January whilst trying to negotiate the release of hostages and became himself a hostage. In the February Reverend Colin Thomas went to



Possibly the first map of the parish . . .



. . . and probably the latest, to include Clayhanger



Brownhills, looking from Shire Oak towards Chasewater



Aerial view of St James Church, 1975



Looking up Church Road towards St James, date unsure.



Happy group of workers pose in the Church Hall
 l to r rear: Malcolm Harvey, George Pountney, Ian Pountney,
 Betty Burton, Rose Millerchip, Sam Poxon. Front: Helen
 Barnett, Fay Dennis, Connie Ball, Violet Cliff, Maude
 Pountney, Eileen Hunt, Gwen Poxon, Frank Burton.



Thriving Youth Club, pictured in Church Hall

SALE OF WORK, Ogley Hay Schools,

March 31st, to April 2nd, 1921.

Thursday, March 31st.—Sale will be opened at 3-0

by

THE HON. MRS. J. H. H. V. LANE,

King's Bromley Manor.

Friday, April 1st.—Sale will be opened by

MISS SOPWITH,

Chasetown.

Saturday, April 2nd.—Sale will be opened by

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN, at 3-30.

STALLS AND STALLHOLDERS.

Working Party Stalls.—Mesdames Callier, Price,
 Trusselle, Wilby, Willner, Misses Barnett, Morris
 and Turner.

Toy and Fancy Goods Stall.—MRS. BAGBY. *Helpers*—
 Misses Arnold, L. Arnold, Bagby, J. Bagby,
 Beaseley, and L. Cresswell.

China Stall.—MRS. J. R. LANE. *Helpers*—Mesdames
 Arnott, Holmes, Shepherd, and Miss Shepherd.

Sweet Stall.—MISS ARROWSMITH and MISS LANE.
Helpers—Mesdames Arrowsmith, Cullen, J. B.
 Lane, and Miss Brewz.

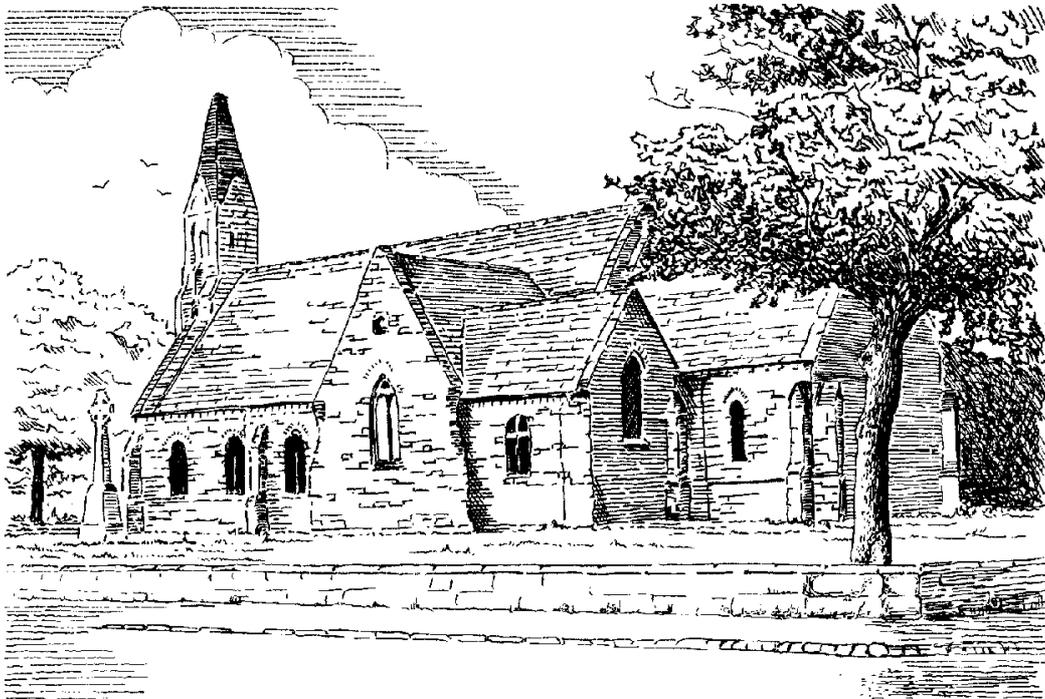
Refreshment Stall and Room.—MRS. A. WILSON and
 MRS. J. WILSON. *Helpers*—Mesdames Cadman,
 Clayton, Pountney, and Members of G.F.S.

Concerts in Girls' School.—Under the direction of
 Messts. C. Trusselle and J. Latham.

Advertising hand-out for a Sale of Work, 1921

Part of the cover of Parish
 Magazine in the 60s





St. James Church, Brownhills.

Line Drawing of St James as it looked in 1975



For **BEST VALUE** in **FOOTWEAR** you cannot beat
the **Old Established Boot People**

GREGORY'S

(ESTABLISHED 35 YEARS)

AGENT FOR

Moccasin, Cathedral, Genson, Portland & other Leading Brands
PIT BOOTS and FARMERS BOOTS made on our own Premises
Modern High-Class REPAIRING with
BEST QUALITY ENGLISH LEATHER



9 High Street, BROWNHILLS
(Opposite Market Place)

For **CONFECTIONERY** at its Best, Try—

D. M. COOPER



**Pork Pies. Bride and
- Birthday Cakes -**



CREAM FANCIES A SPECIALITY

Your Orders will receive our personal attention

93 HIGH STREET, BROWNHILLS

36 HIGH STREET

PHONE 77

The Regent Coat and Gown Shop

For the Newest Styles and Cloths in Ladies'
COATS AND DRESSES at very
Moderate Prices



H. R. Dening & Son

23

HIGH STREET

For Men's and Boys' Wear

Men's Suits to measure 45/-, 50/- & 65/- upwards

25 HIGH STREET

For Fancy and Household Drapery

Stockists of such well known brands as BALLITO HOSIERY,
WOLSEY HOSIERY, VEDONIS UNDERWEAR, Etc., Etc.

Adverts from early Parish Magazines – note the telephone numbers

<i>Receipts, Balance</i> 7.7	<i>Expenditure</i>
1882 17 th Feb. Sub 2.10.0	<i>Pradley Act</i> 3.0
<i>Collier Spring</i> 2.12.0	<i>North</i> 5.3
<i>to Mon</i> 2.4.11	<i>Spilsbury</i> 3.3
<i>Mp. Ladder Sub.</i> 1.0.0	<i>Garnon</i> 8.5
<i>W. Harrison Esq</i> 2.0.0	<i>Woolworth</i> 10.6
<i>M. Mackhase</i> 10.0	<i>Visitation Fees</i> 15.0
<i>Ev. J. New</i> 10.0	<i>to Expense</i> 6.0
<i>M. J. Newley</i> 5.0	<i>Santa John</i> 3.0.0
<i>Donkies Fee</i> 2.6	<i>Supper Washing</i> 1.0.0
<i>M. Roberts</i> 3.0	<i>Channing Church</i> 17.6
	<i>St. Martin</i> 1.0.0
	<i>New ropes of Mat. of</i> 11.0
	<i>Painting Gate, Palace</i> 1.0.0
	<i>Smith St, Mat. of Gate</i> 8.4
	<i>Expenses to Show</i> 9. 5.0
	<i>Insurance of Min. of, Alms. 4</i> 11.0
	<u>12.4.3</u>
<u>12.5.0</u>	
<i>Admiral's Fund Commt</i>	
<i>Thomas Jackson.</i>	

*St James' Church, Colley Heath
Inventory of Church Goods*

1. Communion Plate and silver chalice.
2. Silver chalice (two)
3. Silver chalice.
4. Pulpit
5. Organ
6. Four altar candles.
7. Brass altar cross
8. Two altar candlesticks.
9. One Priest's altar desk
10. Two Communion office books.
11. Two Communion chairs.
12. One linen Communion cloth.
13. Needlework Communion cushion
14. Two Prayer desk kneelers, worked.
15. Two prayer books for Priests desks.
16. Tertiary office book.
17. Three altar frontals.
18. Chancel screen
19. Two Pulpit Standards Lights.
20. One pulpit desk
21. Lectern and Bible.
22. Linceo bedcase cloth and chalice veil.
23. Oak Chancel Stalls and kneelers.
24. Three Bells.
25. Stone font.
26. One vessel and two altar curtains.
27. Vestry table and cupboard.
28. Choir Sulpice cupboard.
29. Iron safe (vestry)

C.B. Walton 1881

Inventory signed by Revd C.B. Walton, 1881

Accounts, signed by Revd Thomas Jackson the first vicar of St James, from some time between 1857 and 1869

Statement of Churchwardens' Accounts to Easter Monday, 1883.

RECEIPTS.			PAYMENTS.		
£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
By Offerories ...	33	4	Balance due to Bank ...	29	11
By Christmas Tree ...	7	6	Bank Charges ...	1	12
By House Rent ...	10	0	Two Bank Cheque Books ...	0	4
By Sale of Old Matting ...	0	7	Visitation Fees ...	0	10
By Dividend on Repair Fund ...	4	2	Insurance ...	1	10
By Pew Rents ...	3	0	Organist ...	15	0
Balance due to Bank ...	19	0	Music for Choir ...	1	5
			Gas ...	9	17
			Coal and Haulage ...	1	10
			S. Barnett ...	12	0
			Tuning Organ ...	1	1
			Rates and Taxes ...	1	3
			New Vestry Mat ...	0	7
			Messrs. S. and H. Carlin ...	0	6
			Labour in Churchyard ...	1	1
<u>£77</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>£77</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>

Statement of Offerories Collected in St. James' Church, between Easter 1882, and Easter 1883.

	£	s.	d.
Church Expenses ...	33	4	8
Hammerwich Cottage Hospital ...	2	19	7
Sunday Schools ...	4	10	0
Organ Fund ...	5	9	6
Choir Treat ...	1	3	6
Curate's Fund ...	7	1	4
Society for Propagation of the Gospel ...	1	5	0
Diocesan Sunday ...	2	1	4
	<u>£57</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>11</u>

Income and Expenditure in 1883



Front entrance, just prior to Fellowship Room building work starting



Redecoration for the Millennium





Revd Colin Thomas gets to know parishioners despite the use of crutches when he first arrived

hospital to have a bone graft to his leg which he had so seriously broken five months before. Good News Bibles were introduced into the pews for the use of worshippers. The Treasurer announced at the PCC in March that the parish share in 1987 was to be £8731 and that the various different church bank accounts were to be amalgamated into one account known as "Brownhills Parish Church". On 11th April a weekend of Prayer and Gifts commenced at which people were invited to support the church with prayer, regular giving and monetary gifts. It realised £1,178 for church funds. At Lichfield Cathedral on 24th May the first Ordination of 24 women as deacons took place. They would be allowed to perform marriages but not to officiate at Holy Communion.

At a meeting held on 23rd May the PCC agreed to the introduction of new hymn books entitled HYMNS OLD & NEW (Anglican edition).

The General Election on 11th June 1987 returned the Conservatives to power with a majority of 101 led by Margaret Thatcher as prime Minister for her third consecutive term. On 15th June Revd David Gardener along with his wife Karen and their son Ben arrived at 50, Lichfield Road. During August Tesco took over Hillard's as the towns supermarket in Brownhills. Also in August many went together on a church holiday to the Torbay Christian

Centre at Paignton. Ask Janet Poynton about this holiday for she must certainly remember going for a solitary after dinner walk, getting lost, and not being able to find her way back to the Christian centre. As and from the first Sunday in July church pew to pew collections were stopped in favour of free will offerings which were made using the offertory plates at the back of church. A faculty was granted on 11th September for the removal of the font from near to the west door to the front of the church and the installation of a motorised overhead screen behind the chancel arch.

In October *The Church of England Newspaper* (CEN) was made available in church for those who had placed a regular order. The Vicar's car was stolen and destroyed by fire on 4th November. There was widespread condemnation of the Remembrance Day bombing at Enniskillen on 8th November at which 11 innocent persons were indiscriminately killed. The first Frugal Lunch at St James was held in the church hall on 14th December in aid of Tear Fund just prior to the Christmas celebrations.

1988 began with the knowledge that the population of Brownhills was now approaching 10,600 and that Margaret Thatcher had become the longest serving twentieth century Prime Minister. The National Westminster Bank in the High Street was raided and robbed. The Station Hotel a landmark for many years in the High Street was demolished. The very first cremated remains burial was made during February in a newly designated area in the old graveyard by permission of the Diocese. A faculty for further burials of this type had been applied for.

On 6th April a further faculty was granted authorising the provision of a children's corner in the North Transept. Lord Ramsey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury passed away on 23rd April. On the evening of Monday 11th July the PCC met to consider various possibilities for an extension to the church since outline planning permission had been received. How many readers can remember that Saturday afternoon on 13th July when 9, St Johns Road hosted 'cream teas'. A large tent (borrowed from Mr Dennis Powell) was erected, tables and chairs laid out on the back garden lawn just as the skies blackened and a thunder storm provided a heavy downpour of very wet rain. The organisers dashed to the tent for cover, looked at each other, then offered prayers for better weather. We later gave thanks for the sunny afternoon that followed and the £110 raised towards church funds that day. The parish holiday in 1988 was at Paignton. The weather was fine, the fellowship wonderful, the Glencoe Hotel on the sea front excellent, and the Devon scenery marvellous. A good time of enjoyment and happiness was enjoyed by all those who went. St James Sunday School was chosen to lead the Diocesan Children's Festival procession to the Cathedral.



Dressed to kill – "waiters" at the Cream Tea

On Thursday 1st September a meeting was held to discuss with Daniel Cozens and Peter Adams the possibilities of laying the foundations for ecumenical evangelistic meetings in two years time. On Saturday 10th July a Children's Family Centre was opened by Bishop Christopher of Wolverhampton with St James taking a prominent part in the Dedication service. At St James on Sunday 18th September Bishop Keith of Lichfield led a service of Confirmation along with the laying on of hands on each candidate. The Parish minute book records that Mr Hewitt rewired the church hall at a cost of £2,530. The Harvest Festival was held on 2nd October and a Family Barn Dance with epilogue was arranged for 8th October in the church hall. The end of year accounts showed an excess of income of £6961 and a satisfactory Gift day income of £2327. The parish share of £9,015 in 1988 was the largest item of expenditure. The PCC met on 12th December to discuss the Parish Review which was introduced by two PCC members from other churches in the Deanery. Anita Cox from Shenstone and Sheila Simkins from Stonnall. It proved to be a helpful exercise in view of the plans being made for our forthcoming 1990 Mission. Just before Christmas on 21st December a Pan Am jumbo jet exploded in the air over southern Scotland as a result of a terrorist bomb in the luggage and crashed killing all 270 people on board and 11 residents of Lockerbie.

And so to 1989 the year when the Community Charge (poll tax) was introduced in Scotland as a substitute for rates causing wide spread protest, signalling the forthcoming problems that were to occur when the charge was imposed in England. Parochial Fees were revised on 1st January showing that Baptisms were £2.50, Banns were £5.00, Marriages were £39.00, and a Funeral service in church with burial immediately after was £46.00. The Walsall Symphony Orchestra gave a Musical Concert in church on 30th January. An amusing article appeared in the February Parish Magazine which is worth mentioning. It went like this:- *Have you heard about the humorist who was heard to say that he did not intend to attend church ever again. He had been twice - the first time to have cold water poured over him and the second time to be joined for life to a nagging wife*". "Watch out" the Vicar was heard to say, "next time you come dirt may well be thrown in your face.

At the PCC on 13th February, Nick Elliott (organist's husband) offered St James Church a six foot Grand Piano (Cellard and Cellard about 1930) for £1,750.00 although it would fetch £2,500.00 on the open market. The PCC agreed to purchase the piano for £1,750.00. It is still in regular use.

The Annual Parochial Council Meeting on 13th March was told of the slow progress that was being made with both the church extension and the sale of land at Barnetts Lane.

On 5th May 1989 the Archdeacon's Visitation was held at All Saints Alrewas when Dennis Powell and Graham Mason became Churchwardens at St James for the year. From 26th June to 1st July Billy Graham returned again to England. He came this time to lead Mission '89 and meetings were beamed across the United Kingdom by satellite. St James's people had the choice of Walsall or Aldridge to hear his message. The Pathfinder Choir visited the Resources Exhibition at the NEC in Birmingham, attended by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. They were asked to sing at his side as he signed autographs. He thanked them personally at the end of the day for their wonderful singing.

A Garden Party was held on 8th July in aid of the Children's Society. There was a Great Cake Bake and flag selling in Tesco's a week later. £613.50 was raised from these events which along with the annual box donations resulted in £1291.00 going to the Children's Society that year from St James.

When Marilyn Baker came to give a concert in church she used the new grand piano to entertain the congregation on 9th September. An outstanding performance and testament from a gifted person without sight. Sunday 17th September was Battle of Britain Day with 10am Holy Communion service attended by 1444 Squadron Air Cadets on parade. Curate David Gardener who was in the Birmingham Marathon on 24th September, completed the run in 3 hours forty-one minutes and raised £100 for Christian Aid. The Youth Leaders took 30 young people to Dovedale House for a weekend away – hard work but enjoyable!

A faculty was granted on 6th October with-out a Consistory Court, allowing for the plans to be completed and tenders invited for the extension to the west end of the church. In preparation for the New Life Together Mission in 1990 a training weekend was held with Daniel Cozens and Peter Adams on 28th/29th & 30th October in the hall. At Lichfield Cathedral on Saturday 18th November 1989 the author sponsored Mr Graham Mason when he was licensed as a reader by Bishop Keith of Lichfield. It was a privilege to be able to present Graham to the Bishop on this day and to be part of the proceedings and joy of that very special moment in his ministry.

The December 1989 magazine listed the many church services which were held at Christmas to celebrate the birth of Our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Christingle service at 10am on 3rd.

Carols by candlelight at 6.30pm on 9th.

Carols sung in Tesco's during the evenings of the 19th, 20th, and 22nd.

United open air carols in Ravenscourt 9am-12noon on 23rd.

First Communion of Christmas at 11pm on Christmas Eve.

Christmas Day Holy Communion at 8am and 10am.

Holy Communion at 8am and 10am with 6.30pm healing service on the last day of the year.

With the end of year accounts showing a deficit of some £1,232, the year finished with some anxiety as to where the money would come from to pay for the church extension.

And so 1990 came bringing with it resolutions concerning the Mission, the Church extension and the reordering of Barnetts Lane cemetery. It was a time when we needed not only to trust in the Lord, but to also have renewed faith in both God and ourselves as we came to grips with our financial difficulties and the various projects and events that we had planned for the year. It was one of those times when we needed again to step out in faith.

Education Sunday, held on 11th February, brought St James and local schools together for a service of divine worship at which school teachers and pupils took part. This seems to be a first in that records do not show this happening quite like this before. The February magazine reminded readers that "Seven days without prayer makes one weak".

The APCM and PCC meetings were held on Monday 19th March 1990 in the church hall at 8.00pm. The following persons were elected: Churchwardens: Messrs Dennis Powell and John Mainwaring; Lay Chairman: Mr Adrian Pye; Secretary: Mrs Pauline Mason; Treasurer: Mr Don Myatt; Deanery Synod Representatives: Messrs Graham Mason and Vince Llewellyn.

The meeting was informed that the Parish Share for 1990 was a staggering £11,193. Where was all this money to come from? The busy time of the Mission was suddenly upon us. Its full programme started on 31st March and continued through till 8th April. There were evangelistic meetings most evenings in the Brownhills Comprehensive School lecture theatre. A men's meeting was held on Friday evening 6th April at the "Sportsman" in Lichfield Road now demolished and replaced by "Smithy's Forge". During the Mission many were greatly blessed with 122 responses or rededications.

On Saturday 21st April the Day of Prayer Gifts realised gifts of £1,750. Although this was not as high as in previous years it was a reassuring answer to the prayers of the people of St James. A thanksgiving Holy Communion was said at 6.00pm that evening in church. Commencing 14th May, Christian Aid Week raised a combined total of £375 from the Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic churches in Brownhills. Our notice sheets each week appealed to us, to continue in prayer for Terry Waite's release as he began his 4th year of captivity. Bishop Keith of Lichfield gave a clear message in June on BBC Radio that terrorism was not the answer to the problems in Northern Ireland and that the IRA men responsible for the death of the soldier and wounding of two others on Lichfield City railway station should renounce all forms of violence. This incident brought close to home the hate and cruelty that was still continually occurring in Northern Ireland.

The north transept floor in church was repaired due to the discovery of serious wood rot and decay probably caused by lack of under floor ventilation. The cost of replacement floor and professional preservation came to £1,394.



"Yellow Peril" takes to the road for a church holiday

"Slavanka" was a place where twenty-three of us from St James set out for on 11th August 1990. No, it was not in East Prussia as you might think, but at Southbourne (near Bournemouth). We, along with others from Stoke on Trent, were on our annual church holiday. Those of us who went and can remember it will recall the wonderful time we had in the hot and sunny weather. The Christian fellowship together was exhilarating. We attended Family worship on the Sunday morning at St John's parish church Boscombe. The theme of the service was "Faith to Obey" (Genesis 12 v. 1-9). Some of you may recall the plans we made for the 'great escape' on the last day.

The nights began to draw in and as Autumn approached, we learned of the death on 13th September of Rev. Harold Thornley. He had been Vicar at St James for 15 years and was still well remembered by the parish. September was busy at St. James starting with a Garden Party in the Vicarage garden on Saturday 1st, followed on Sunday by Family Service with Baptism at 10am. On 6th a BBQ provided by the men was enjoyed

at 145 Great Charles Street. On 8th an all day Bring & Buy Sale was held at 42 Great Charles street in aid of the Children's Society. Usual Sunday services were on 9th along with the monthly afternoon service at St James Home. A PCC meeting took place on 10th, and a Ladies meeting in the hall on flower arranging was given by Margaret Powell on 12th. A guest speaker spoke about "Christians in Sport" on the 18th at the evening service. The following Saturday a concert of popular music was given in the church hall by our own young people, in aid of "The Royal Marsden Hospital", followed on the 28th by a weekend visit of 23 young people and nine leaders to Quinta Hall at Oswestry. This gives some idea of how much was going on at St James at this time. Surely this suggested that the church was not as dead as some thought. There even seemed to be signs of growth now that eight house-groups were meeting weekly each with an average membership of eight people. There was an Extraordinary PCC meeting on Wednesday 3rd October, to make decisions on Youth Work and the Church Extension.



Youngsters and leaders gather for a group photograph at Quinta Hall

On 13th October, a Flea market was opened by the Mayor of Walsall at St James Hall. It raised £1,000 for charity (it is not known which one). The year came to a close with the usual services of Christmas celebration tinged with excitement for the future, but with slight foreboding and uncertainty in the finance department.

The January 1991 magazine (15p) appeared with a new style front cover showing an artists impression of how the church might look when the new extension (not yet started) was completed. The contract to commence was signed by the builders (K. Hanks) on 7th January 1991. On 16th January the United Nations forces launched ferocious air attacks on the Iraqi forces in Kuwait as the Gulf War began with 'Operation Desert Storm'. The conflict was intense and lasted until the cease fire on 28th February was declared after the liberation of Kuwait.

To financially support the church extension, CYFA held a sponsored sleep out during the nights of 9th and 10th March in the church yard. St James supported them with food and warm clothing. On the following evening in the church hall the Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting learnt that the Parish Share was to increase by a staggering 19%. Archbishop of Canterbury (Robert Runcie), retired on 31st January, and was succeeded by Dr George Carey on 19th April when he was enthroned as Archbishop.

The church extension continued to grow with the roof being tiled and the window and door frames fitted. On Saturday 11th May a good number went by coach to 'SEEDTIME' at Stafford show ground from St James. We were joined by churches from all over the Diocese in a combined act of worship which was led by Pam Rhodes the presenter of *Songs of Praise*. It was recorded by the BBC and was transmitted a few weeks later. The whole event was a celebration of what God had done, and was still doing. God the Sower of seeds of faith. God who in Jesus makes them grow into the variety of Christian lives the world over. Yours and mine among them.

The Parish were sad to see Rev. Dave Gardner, and his family leave St James on 29th May 1991 for a new living in Mildenhall, Suffolk. David went to be licensed as Team Vicar on 17th June 1991. A farewell evening party was held for Dave, Karen and the boys in the church hall on Saturday 26th May. In the same month new *Let's Praise* hymn books were purchased at £1.25 each to go along side the *Mission Praise* books already in regular use. Early June saw restoration work being carried out on the East and West stained glass windows so as to bring them back to their former beauty. A ramp was constructed at the Chancel end of the Nave aisle so that easy access was now available for the disabled. 'Good News down your street' was started in June with four teams going out to take the 'word' (Christian teaching) to homes in the town.

The June issue of the Parish Magazine carried an interesting article entitled "Lament" reproduced here especially for the mature reader.

They are bringing You up to date Lord, here at St James Brownhills,
 They have removed the choir stalls and are now praising with guitars.
 It has been done for the young ones to try to draw them in,
 But I do so wish they would worship without making such a din.
 For I am going a little deaf Lord and when there is all that noise,
 It gets so very hard for me to hear your loving voice.
 There are now new hymns Lord with tunes I do not know,
 So, I hardly ever sing now though I did love singing so.
 They are very go ahead Lord they now use the ASB,
 But, the words are not so beautiful as the older ones used to be.
 The bible has been modernised also the Lords Prayer and Creed,
 Why, I ask when all the old ones were so perfect and filled my every need.
 It seems to me Lord I have outstayed my time,
 I don't take so easily to change like I did in my youthful prime.
 But Lord it will not be long before I am called above,
 I trust I will find you Lord and glory in your love.
 Till then, I will stick it out here, though its not the same for me,
 Whilst others call you "YOU" please don't mind if I call you "THEE".

On June 30th Rev Stephen Girling (Curate), Diane and family joined St James when they took up residence at 50 Lichfield Road. Through out the year the church extension had slowly taken shape. Services continued in church during the construction with access being through the new building until in the July it was finally completed. A most useful addition complete with toilets and refreshment bar. The parish holiday that year was at Barmouth in the Aaron Christian Hotel on the sea front. Who remembers the day we went in search of a waterfall in the mountains in the rain? We all got soaked to the skin, managed to keep laughing and have such great fun. At a meeting of the Finance Committee on Friday 6th September the details of the Diocesan loan of £64,783 for the new extension were discussed. It was expected that with twice yearly payments of decreasing amounts it could be repaid by the end of 2001. Bishop Christopher Mayfield of Wolverhampton dedicated this most worth while addition to the church of St James as the "Fellowship Room" on Sunday morning 8th September 1991. How did we cope before without it?

In November from 2nd to the 6th there was held at Shire Oak school a "Bible comes to life" exhibition run by the Church Mission to the

Jews. St James church was the principal organiser and participant of this local ecumenical event which proved to be a great blessing and time of learning for many. How many remember this week of interesting book stalls and side shows which gave insight to the times and stories of the new and old testaments. Each evening an enactment of a story from the bible was skilfully portrayed in period costume.

A new sound system was installed in church in the November. It consisted of microphones on the altar, pulpit and lectern, speakers and a mixer desk (added during 1992) in the north-west corner of the nave. This allowed every one particularly those at the rear to clearly hear what was being said, a most useful addition which we now take for granted. After much prayer Terry Waite was at last released thankfully on 18th November from captivity. He had for most of the 1,736 days been in solitary confinement. The nation rejoiced at his homecoming. The 1991 National Census showed that the Brownhills population was now 10,009.



Almost finished . . .

And so the season of Christmas 1991 began. When does Christmas actually begin? (This was the question asked in the December issue of the Parish magazine) Does it start, when the shops begin to play carols and put up the decorations? Or, is it at the beginning of Advent which starts four weeks before 25th December which is the special time in which to get ready for the birth of Jesus? Let's start with the word 'Advent'. What does it mean? It means 'coming'. The season of Advent before Christmas, like Lent before Easter is a time to prepare. Not just by writing cards and wrapping presents, but by inviting the living Lord Jesus into our hearts. So, the question isn't 'when does Christmas start?' but 'when does it finish?'

So to 1992 a leap year. Readers will now be thinking 'Oh yes we can easily remember eight years ago' But, do you remember Les & Mary Noakes's Silver Wedding on 26th January and the Saturday evening Concert in church on 14th March given by Brownhills Choral Society in aid of funds for the new Fellowship Room, or that the annual parish share had risen yet again to a new high of £15,773. Well whether you do, or do not remember, read on, because on Sunday 15th at a Confirmation service there were 24 candidates, 12 from St James and 12 from other churches in Walsall and Shelfield. At the 1992 Annual Meeting, the Treasurer reported a satisfactory financial state of affairs, there being only a small overspend of £114. The Electoral Roll Secretary presented an amended Roll of 161 members. New chairs were purchased in April for Chancel and Fellowship Room use. Most were paid for by members of the church and dedicated to the memory of loved ones. The May magazine in its Fact File gave the following statistics under the heading of "Until death do us part".

In 1938 there were 7,621 divorces in England, by 1958 there were 23,456, by 1968 there were 47,959 and by 1978 there were 151,533. Since that time divorces have hovered around 150,000 each year.

On Sunday 28th June, Rev. Stephen Girling was ordained Priest at Lichfield Cathedral. In July, Noreen Elliott (organist) left St James to live in Norway. Mr Peter Biggs took over full-time – he had been helping out by covering some evening services before this.



Another view

Pilgrim Hall, Christian Hotel & Conference Centre, Easons Green, Uckfield, East Sussex was the church holiday destination from 2nd -7th August in 1992. As usual these church holidays are a great happy and joyous time. Many of us who had not been to this part of England before enjoyed the daily Christian worship and fellowship together as well as the trips out to the Bluebell Railway, the Red Devils, Eastbourne, Beachy Head lighthouse and lying in a hole together on the Downs looking up at the sky on a windy day.

Also, in August the world came under the threat of Colonel Dogbreath and his men the Nasty-means. They flooded the market stalls around the world with their T-shirts which looked harmless enough but people who wore them seemed to turn nasty and mean. The world was being destroyed by violence and hatred. Fortunately the THUNDERBIRDS came to the rescue from a small but insignificant place on the planet – St James church hall Brownhills. On 24th-28th August the children's holiday club (aged 7-11) flew a week long mission to save the world. It was a dangerous mission, but 60 troopers crewed the ship to bring the world from the edge of destruction by following Admiral God in Thunderbird 3. A great week in which the Christian message was enacted out during a very breathtaking and exhilarating mission. Those who were part of this exciting week will most certainly remember it. Those who could not be there, missed a wonderful experience.

September followed with the Harvest Festival on Sunday 13th at which each House group made it their task to individually decorate a church window. It is thought that this was the first known time House groups had done this. On the last Saturday in October at 10pm, members of the church youth held (in aid of World famine) a twelve hour prayer vigil and sleep-out (under canvas) in the church yard. Rather than me, methinks. By the end of October a working party had completed the repair of the church hall windows. Most of the windows had been the deliberate target of mindless youngsters. The broken glass was replaced, the window frames repainted and each whole window wire guarded. Did readers know that most of those who plan to become Christians at the eleventh hour, die at 10.30 (extracted from October Magazine).

31 members of St James attended a special Saturday morning Conference on 21st November 1992. Its purpose was to see where the local church was and the way forward in terms of Outreach, Worship, Youth Work, Rites of Passage, Mid-week Meetings, Finance, Buildings, Cemeteries, etc. This took the form of small groups sharing initially as to where the needs of St James were, followed by the whole conference coming together to decide on the most important areas of concern. The general census was that Worship and Out-reach were discussed in depth and detail so that recommendations could be put to the next meeting of the PCC. The conference was encouraged by the work they had undertaken, and finished in prayer led by Rev. Colin Thomas. Three rows of pews were added at the rear of the south side of the nave. The space they occupied had been largely unused except as a book stall which had been relocated in the fellowship room. November concluded with the Rural Dean (Revd M. Wooderson) and Lay Chair (Mrs A. Cox)



Another holiday . . . another park . . . another walk

coming to St James to carry out a Parish Visitation and Review as required by ecclesiastical Canon Law (C.22) covering church fabric, contents, insurance, church yard, finance, pastoral care of incumbent, worship, lay training, ministry, mission, and other particular matters. The Christmas Fayre which raised £878 was held in the hall on Saturday 5th December 1992. Mr. Jack Williams (Joan's husband) generously donated at the end of the year a handmade desk to house the mixing desk at the rear of the north side nave.

On 1st January 1993 revised Parochial Fees, prepared by the Church Commissioners had been authorised by the Parochial Fees Order of 1992. The fees became as follows:

Baptism with certificate £5.00.

Marriage Service £72.00.

Funeral Service in church, crematorium or cemetery with burial in churchyard £82.00.

During February light refreshments were introduced in the Fellowship Room following services. This allowed the congregation to mingle and chat over a cup of tea or coffee before leaving. In March the 'ARISE SHINE' banner was hung under the west window. It had been made by Karen Gardener when David Gardener was curate at St James. On Saturday 3rd April 1993, £2,165 was raised for the church at the Day of Prayer and Gifts. In this same month Bishop Christopher of Wolverhampton said farewell to the Lichfield Diocese at St Matthews church Walsall. This year Good Friday fell on 9th April and a 'singing along the way Procession of Witness' took place. It started at St James, proceeded to St Bernadettes RC church, then on to Brownhills Methodist Church and finally to Ravenscourt shopping centre. At each stopping place the passion story was told with payer and song.

Phase I of the church south side exterior stonework restoration costing £20,000 was completed by the end of April after seven months of specialist work by professional stone masons. It was a great improvement but at such cost considering the whole building was originally built for just £3,670. As this is being written, it is thought unlikely, owing to financial constraints that Phases II or III will be started for some considerable time. It is however interesting that the Parochial Church Council (PCC) minute book shows that not since 1987 had there been much progress on the sale of part of the land at Barnetts Lane Cemetery. It now seemed after six years, that even though it was not sold as yet, expense was being incurred on the payment of Solicitors Fees. These expenses were for establishing who legally owned the land and investigating the various possibilities of selling it to a developer. Progress was slow but hopefully would lead to an eventual sale.

The Sunday evening Pentecost Praise service at St James on 30th May was led by the Men of St James with Mr Bill Procter from Shenstone preaching. On July 2nd Brownhills St James Brownies and Guides were re-launched with Miss Joanne Bromwich as the Brownie Leader and Mrs Brenda Dyoss as Guide Leader.

£467,000 towards the target of £550,000 had to date been paid to the Church Urban Fund by the Diocese of Lichfield. August came and went in its usual quiet way with many going away to their annual holidays, except perhaps for the five day highlight of 'The Jungle Club'. It was generally thought that the previous year 'Thunderbirds' was good but, 'Jungle Club' seemed to be even better. Everything went like clockwork and 56 children from the immediate area enjoyed it. Christian truths were communicated, whilst the children enjoyed themselves. The event proved that Christians can have lots of fun when they are enjoying themselves.

In September ten people from the church attended an eight-week Healing course. Following on from the course it was decided to explore the possibility of starting a prayer and healing ministry during or after services. It was agreed by PCC that couples under the guidance of Rev. Stephen Girling should be available on a trial basis during/after morning at two communion services each month.

Harvest was on 3rd October 1993 and was special in that Revd David Gardner, Karen and the boys visited us at St James. David and his family had left Brownhills in 1991 for a new living in Mildenhall, and it was a joy to see them at the 10.00am Family Communion service. How the boys had grown in the two and a half years since we had last seen them. David recalled the happy time he had spent at Brownhills as he preached at the harvest thanksgiving service.

Sixteen of us left Brownhills on the morning of 25th October for a ten day holiday in the Holy Land. We stayed at Mount Scopus hotel in Jerusalem whilst visiting the holy places in and around Jerusalem moving on to the Ron Beach hotel at Tiberias for the Galilee experience. Many of the places we read about in the Holy Bible were visited, making it possible to see and understand the history as well as to walk in the footsteps of Our Saviour Jesus and the Prophets of the old Testament. The pilgrimage was a never to be forgotten spiritual experience which was truly the journey of a lifetime.

The 'Keep Sunday Special' campaign which worked hard to prevent all shops opening on Sundays for many months was defeated when in November Parliament changed existing laws to allow shops to open for business on Sundays. During November Bishop Michael officially took over as Bishop of Wolverhampton from Bishop Christopher who had left in April 1993.

In the quieter, less eventful year of 1994, a United Service was held on Sunday 23rd January at St Bernadettes R.C. church in Brownhills. It was held during the Week of Christian Unity when the different denominational churches came together for worship. Further services took place that year on 29th May at Brownhills Methodist and 9th October at St James. The January Parish Magazine (20p) appeared with new colourful style covers. It contained an interesting comparison fact, that in 1935 the circulation was over 800 per month compared with the current 250. There must have been an army of delivery persons on the streets in those days. On 28th January the church itself was broken into by person/s unknown. Materials were stolen or damaged to the estimated value of £700. No one could recall this ever having happened before.

In February over the weekend of 18th, 19th & 20th a Parish Break was held at Elim Bible College, Nantwich in Cheshire. Although cold and wintry the venue was warm and comfortable. The time that was spent together was entitled "Fan the Flame" and included times of worship, quietness and reflection with forward looking discussion in relaxed comfortable surroundings. The main speaker was Michael Sheard. In the cathedral on 23rd/24th April two historic ordination services were held. 51 women were ordained priests which after many years of waiting and argument seemed to be the most natural thing in the world. The parish share had risen to an all time high of £19,619 per annum requiring extra income of £40 per week. At the same meeting the Ministry and Mission committee submitted a prepared "Mission Statement" focusing on Teaching & Nurture, Worship & Prayer, Care & Service and Evangelism & Outreach. It was approved for printing and distribution. The contentious issue of the Ordination of women priests was discussed at length. It was agreed



Parishioners with the Golden Dome in Jerusalem behind them



Chancel and Sanctuary which remained basically unchanged after re-ordering

that the whole church congregation should be involved and that opinions should be sorted by means of a questionnaire to all members. The results revealed that the majority were of the opinion that women priests would be welcomed, and that the Bishop would be informed of the thoughts of our church members.

Brownhills CYFA on 25th June went marching for Jesus in London. A stone taken from Brownhills was symbolically prayed over for our town and its people. It was placed with others from all over the country in Hyde Park. A great time was enjoyed by all those who went. The five yearly inspection of the church by the Architect on 27th June 1994 resulted in a 27 page report on the state of the church fabric. The most important nine items requiring attention included such things as electrical safety and certification and work on roof and ridge tiles. In July the PCC were informed that Brownhills had been designated as an "Urban Priority Area".

On 12th September the PCC were told that the Archdeacon (The Venerable Richard Ninnis) had received a letter suggesting that the parish boundaries between Walsall Wood and Brownhills might be changed so that Clayhanger could be brought into Brownhills. The PCC were of the opinion that before agreeing to the Archdeacon's suggestion further detail should be sought. At the same meeting the Deanery Synod reported on the suggestion, that the Parish of Brownhills should be in the Walsall Deanery. This was rejected by the PCC, who affirmed positively that the parish should remain in the Deanery of Lichfield where it had always been. Finally, after months of uncertainty it was learned that church land at Barnetts Lane had been put on the market for sale. It was understood that many developers were showing interest. Hopefully it might be sold after all.

Covers to the Parish Magazines changed again at the beginning of 1995. This time each month had a different front cover drawn by different members of the congregation. It seemed there were hidden skills that challenged readers to search the magazine each month for the name of the local talented artist.

Owing to an act of forced entry and theft from the church building during 1994 the PCC agreed to the installation of a security alarm system on 23rd January. The system successfully alerts nearby residents if illegal entry is made. On 25th February many of us went to see and hear the Canon and Ball Gospel Show at Chase Leisure Centre. These two comedians had completely changed their act since turning to the Lord and were touring the country with the good news. On Monday evening 27th March an Extraordinary PCC meeting was held to discuss an unpaid bill to a lightning protection firm who had failed after working on the installation, to meet the required standard needed for public buildings. As a result of advice obtained from the Archdeacon the PCC agreed by recorded vote to reverse its previous decision and pay a sum of £669 as final settlement for the work done. Prince Charles came to Lichfield Cathedral in March to launch the cathedral's 800 year birthday celebrations.

On Saturday 20th May in the church hall a farewell party was held for Revd Steven Girling (Curate) and his family as they left Brownhills for the Team Ministry of South Molton in North Devon in the Diocese of Exeter. Stephen was to be responsible for churches at Chittlehampton, Filleigh and Umberleigh.

During the following month of May whilst 50 Lichfield Road was empty the 94 year old property which did not have a damp course was provided with damp proofing protection at a cost of £1000. This treatment whilst being expensive was essential if the property was to be maintained in good order. The maintenance of the property is the responsibility of the parish, although legally owned by the Lichfield Diocesan Trust.

The church holiday this year was at Keswick. 24 from St James went and spent a glorious week in the Lake District. The party was split into four separate guest houses in the town, coming together at leisure times and at meetings. We joined with thousands of others in the Convention Centre to take part in the uplifting worship and teaching. An excellent holiday long to be remembered.

In June on Sunday 2nd Mike Branscombe was ordained Deacon at the cathedral prior to moving into 50, Lichfield Road. For four days from 10th-13th August, 20 young people enjoyed time together in the activity of "Football Pursuits". This was enjoyed by both participants and instructors who taught football based skills linked to Christian teaching and sport. Most of the young people attended church in their football clothes on the following Sunday. The Archbishop of Canterbury (George Carey) visited St Matthews Walsall on Saturday 21st October. He was the key speaker at a day conference entitled "Lets Share the Good News". Many from St James went and joined the conference in the very full church. As the year closed it was agreed by the PCC at their December 1995 meeting that the offer of £570,000 be accepted for the portion of land up for sale at Barnetts Lane Cemetery. This was a welcome milestone in the long and drawn out negotiations.

The Parochial Church Council of the parish of St. James within the area of the benefice of Ogle Hay with Brownhills in pursuance of a resolution passed at PCC meeting held on the 4th day of December 1995 consented in accordance with section 14 of the Pastoral measure 1983 to the change of parish boundary so as to include the Clayhanger part of the Walsall Wood parish. This would allow Brownhills and Clayhanger to come together when the Order was approved by the Bishop of Lichfield.

End of year finances showed an underspend of £2,254 and outstanding loan repayments of £45,197 for the Fellowship Room. Diocese of Lichfield church goers proved the moaning pundits to be wrong when at the end of the year 97.2% of the 1995 Parish Share amounting to over £5,800,000 had already been received by the Diocese.

A Parish Weekend was held at the Elim Bible College near to Nantwich on 29th-31st March 1996. As on a previous occasion, a time of quiet reflection, good food, good accommodation and excellent fellowship was enjoyed.

On the afternoon of Wednesday 24th April 1996 the inaugural meeting of an elderly group started to hold weekly meetings in the Fellowship Room. It was and still is a contact group for people inside and outside the church mainly from the Brownhills area. The afternoons consist of various speakers, demonstrations, worship songs, prayer times, refreshments, occasional outings and is known as "THE CARE-IN". The PCC were informed on the 13th May that insurers had surveyed the church building and valued it at £1,455,000. This made the insurance premium £1,104 per annum. They were also informed that Walsall Metropolitan Council had placed a 'preservation order' on the chestnut tree in the old Vicarage front garden. It is thought that this will in no way deter children from annually throwing at the tree during the 'conker' season.

30th June was a big day for our curate Rev Michael Branscombe, for it was the Sunday on which he became a priest at Lichfield Cathedral. Many of us went to the cathedral that day to enjoy the service. It reminds the writer of how fortunate we are at St James in having Deacons and Priests come and go, for it gives us the opportunity of being present in the cathedral on these great occasions.

Thursday 25th July 1996, (St James Day) was the day on which Rev Peter Harris was licensed as Non-Stipendiary Minister (NSM) to St James by Bishop Michael Bourke. Peter's wife Julie and children Christina and Wesley were pleased to be part of the fellowship at St James. Peter is a full-time worker for the Staffordshire Ambulance Service and the shift patterns allowed him to be a useful asset to St James by fitting in with the worship and pastoral visiting in the parish. In the September Parish Magazine, Rev. Peter Harris wrote about his title as NSM, his work, his ministry for the Lord and how he managed to balance his busy life.

On 8th September Bishop Keith of Lichfield approved an Order for the transfer of that part of Clayhanger in the parish of Walsall Wood to the parish of Ogle Hay with Brownhills. On 23rd September Brownhills was welcomed to the 'The Anglesey Circle of Parishes'. The principle of the group encouraged by Archdeacon Ninnis, was for the parishes of Brownhills, Burntwood, Chasetown, Chase Terrace, Farewell, Gentleshaw and Hammerwich to work together on those things which were appropriate to be done corporately, whilst allowing each parish to remain separate and autonomous in those things which were best done on that basis. In October on the 20th the Ministry and Mission Committee met to discuss whether the parish was able to meet the criteria for establishing the Diocesan Scheme for a Local Ministry of collaborative leadership. The meeting was helped in its deliberations by consultants, Hazel Whitehouse from Burntwood and Rev Eileen Turner from Hammerwich.

The vicar led a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land from 3rd to 14th November 1996 when a party of 16 left Heathrow and flew to Tel Aviv, Israel. They went to Bethlehem, Mount of Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, Mount Zion, Via Dolorosa, and through the old city of Jerusalem to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. They also spent time by the side of Lake Galilee for four nights during which they found time to visit Mount Carmel, Mount Tabor, Caesarea, the Mount of Beatitudes, Tagbha (site of the loaves and fishes miracle), Nazareth, Golan Heights, Cana, Masada, Jericho, Qumran, and floated in the Dead Sea. The author calls to mind all these places only because he is now able to truthfully say "Been there" when they are mentioned or read about in the Good Book. The author recommends the Pilgrimage to all who may want to go.

On 29th November a Pastoral Order under Section 14 of the Pastoral Measure (1983) was made by Bishop Keith of Lichfield to the effect that the name of the benefice and parish of Ogle Hay be altered to "THE PARISH OF BROWNHILLS WITH OGLEY HAY" as and from 1st December 1996.

As and from 1st January 1997 the Church of England was required to follow the law for charities as laid down in the Charities Act of 1983 and the church accounting regulations of 1997. The Church Treasurer, a PCC member and the Auditor attended regular seminars given by the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance (LDBF) to learn how to deal with church finances, the new methods of book-keeping and how to prepare the accounts for 1997 and future years.

On the evening of 3rd February, St James hosted the Anglesey Circle of Parishes as they met to discuss the differences between the parishes with a view to seeking a co-operative way forward together.

During the same month Father Brendan Donlon of St Bernadette's RC church in Brownhills retired. On 17th March the APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting) met to elect the Church Officers and the PCC. Easter Day 1997 was extra special in that Holy Trinity at Clayhanger held its re-opening service in the school room. This was followed by Sunday services once a month whilst the new school/church/community building was under construction.

An Alpha Course at St James was started on 3rd April. It was held on one evening each week for ten weeks. It comprised a time of fellowship together whilst eating an early supper, then watching Christian teaching videos presented by Nicky Gumbel of Holy Trinity, Brompton, London, with time after to reflect on what had been learnt before finishing at 10pm. The PCC standing committee agreed to the provision of new white (PCVU) windows and doors at 50 Lichfield Road. This work was needed for the curatage building if it was to be maintained in a responsible manner by the PCC. The Core Ministry Team (CMT) was officially mandated by Bishop Michael of Wolverhampton on 6th May. Brownhills church became authorised that day to be a Local Ministry Team of collaborative leadership. At the General Election "New Labour" was elected with a largest ever majority with Mr Tony Blair as Prime Minister. After many years of Conservatism most thought it was about time for a change.

June was a busy month in the Parish when a Christian group from Sabah in Malaysia came to stay for a 15 day visit. They brought their culture, their distinctive dress, their fellowship, their Christian Love and were a great blessing to us. They joined in with us at our house groups, took part in our worship at St James, provided us with a show of their particular style of dance and movement, and told us of their quickly growing church of thousands in Sabah. They went with us to the Staffordshire Showground to 'The Feast' along with many others from all parts of the Diocese. It turned out to be very wet all day, causing many of the outside events to be cancelled. The coach got stuck for a time in the wet and muddy parking field. Not to be put off some most interesting stalls and demonstrations were seen under canvas in the many tents at the ground. The once every ten year Diocesan Family Communion Service was led by the Bishops and held in the covered arena. On Sunday 22nd June a farewell service was held at St James to exchange thanks with our Sabah visitors from that far away part of the world. They presented our church with an inscribed plate and photograph as a gift which has been framed and displayed on a wall of the Fellowship Room.

The following Monday the Core Ministry Team spent an away day at Badger House in the tiny village of Badger situated between Wolverhampton and Bridgenorth to discuss a large agenda. The time of worship, song and prayer was led by Rev. Michael Branscombe. During the months of July and August a working party of churchmen tackled the job of repairing the many exterior broken windows and doors in the church hall after a spate of vandalism. Each of the sixteen completed windows were repaired, stripped, repainted and wire guarded. Each door was clad with a sheet metal skin and repainted to secure the building.

In August, land at Barnetts Lane was finally sold at a net sale value of £533,000. The developers (Wilcon Homes), started work almost immediately. For those wondering who was to benefit from the sale it should be clearly understood that the land was held in a Trust by the Diocese. It did not belong to St James Church (as many seemed to think). The parish church will ultimately receive the earned interest only, from the capital invested in various ethical investments by the Diocese. On the last day of August, Princess Diana tragically died as the result of a car accident in Paris. The whole Nation mourned the loss of a much loved Princess whose warmth and



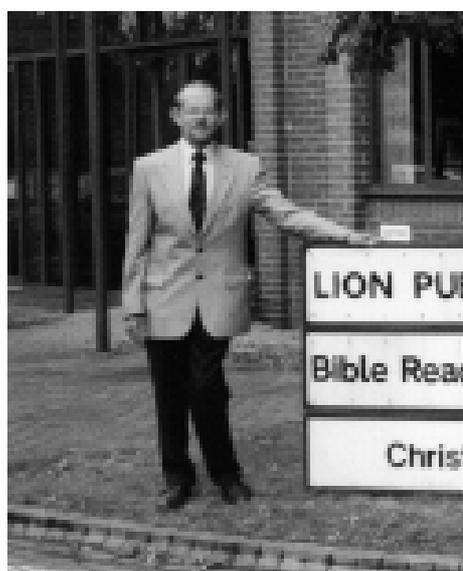
*Gathered around the Cenotaph for
Remembrance Sunday, 1999*

sincerity touched the World. On Saturday 6th September the funeral took place at Westminster Abbey.

The PCC on Monday 15th September decided to proceed with the suggestion that quotes be sort for the re-fencing of Great Charles Street Cemetery. Over the years the place had become both a playground and a short-cut between Vicarage Road and Great Charles Street resulting in the desecration of many headstones and graves etc. The intention of the PCC was to explore what it would cost to surround it with security fence with one access entrance. On 17th September Alpha II started. It followed the new up-dated format supplied by Holy Trinity Brompton. In October the first Harvest service was held at Clayhanger since its reopening. It attracted a congregation of 40 this being the largest yet to date. Advent Sunday, 30th October 1997, saw the introduction of the new 3 year Lectionary starting with Year 'C'. It replaced the Alternative Service Book (ASB) at all services at St James, except for the 10.15am midweek Holy Communion where it would be retained until 2000. The ASB which had been used continuously since 1980 was introduced as an interim supplement to the Book of Common Prayer which remarkably had for 300 years been the acknowledged norm for Public Worship in the Church of England. The regular Sunday 8.00am service of Holy Communion at St James is now the only service since St James was consecrated in 1851, still to use The Book of Common Prayer from preference.

On Saturday 24th January 1998 Robert Edwards was licensed as Lay Reader at Lichfield Cathedral. Those who have been able to attend a licensing service at the cathedral will know what a thrill it is to witness such an occasion and see a local man who has successfully undergone extensive training become a Reader of the Church of England. Robert is now able to preach and assist at services.

At the PCC on 22nd February the council approved the revised (Issue 3) church hall user rules which had been updated so as to conform to the Licensing Authorities requirements. The PCC also agreed to a 5% increase in all Fees with the exception of Cremated Remains fees which remained unchanged. A Good Friday United Service was held in Ravenscourt town Precinct on 10th April at which THE CROSS was carried in procession from St James to the service and back again. Tea and hot-cross buns were served in the Fellowship Room afterwards.



Revd Colin Thomas
Vicar 1986–2007

A Special PCC was convened on 27th April to discuss the important matter of 'The Admission of Children to Holy Communion before Confirmation'. Bishop Keith of Lichfield had asked every PCC to discuss this subject and advise him as to whether the current policy of not allowing children to participate in the Holy Communion should be changed or not. The members discussed the matter in depth before concluding that all baptised children regardless of age should be allowed to participate in the Eucharist, subject to there being clear guidelines concerning the implications and the administration of the proposed admission. The General Synod of the C of E held on 17th October affirmed in principal that children should be able to receive the sacraments before conformation. Bishop Keith however decided not to proceed yet, as more time was needed for reflection on the subject so as to iron out the many implications. The subject is to be reviewed again in 2001.

The Core Ministry Team, which comprised at that time Reverend Colin Thomas, Reverend Michael Branscombe, Reverend Peter Harris, Mr. Graham Mason, Mr. Robert Edwards, Mr Dennis Powell, Mr John Mainwaring and Mrs Joyce Thomas reviewed themselves as individuals to determine where their strengths and weaknesses lay and how they might be addressed. This was done at a meeting held in the Fellowship Room on Tuesday 5th May 1998 known as the Myers-Briggs day.

Many from church went on a day out to Birmingham on 18th May to join 70,000 others make a human chain around the G8 Summit meeting place of world leaders. This was the first big demonstration in support of the Jubilee 2000 campaign to cancel the debts of the poorest countries. At the time of writing the campaign continues.

The PCC meeting on 1st June were informed by the Treasurer, Mr A Myatt, that the sum still outstanding on the Fellowship Room now stood at £24,948 and that payments were on course to be completed during the year 2001. The PCC Standing Committee met briefly after Family Communion service on Sunday Morning 9th August to approve the opening of a new bank account solely for the administration of finance associated with the cemetery at Barnetts Lane. This new account to be known as 'The Barnetts Lane Fund'. It was recorded that a maximum of £5,000 p/a could be expended on the cemeteries and that any other parish expenditure would need to be brought to the Administrative Trustees for consideration.

On 7th September a new committee was convened to consider arrangements for the coming 150th Anniversary of the consecration of St James. Although two years were yet to elapse before the actual date (15th October 2001) it was felt prudent to start and plan the various activities that could celebrate the Anniversary. When the PCC met again on 14th September the meeting discussed the new fence that had been erected around Great Charles Street Cemetery. This now gives Mr Steven Burton the grave digger, an opportunity to maintain tidiness, now that the cemetery was secure and no longer a thoroughfare. By the end of September, 250 new *The Source Song*/Hymn books had replaced the much worn *Let's Praise & Mission Praise* books. Each book had cost £3.50 to buy but many were donated by the congregation.

The Core Ministry Team underwent its annual review on 5th October with Rev John Allan (Diocesan Officer for Local Ministry) in attendance. Team members were pleased with how well they had bonded as a whole, and their effectiveness in their ministry. In October, The Venerable Richard Ninnis retired leaving the post of Archdeacon of Lichfield vacant.

"The Warreners Arms" closed in November after 126 years. It was refurbished and reopened in December as a McDonald's restaurant. It was also during November that Rod and Jill Bevan and family were invited to come to St James as the next Curate in June 1999.

The Chairman of the Board of Ministry announced on 1st January 1999 the appointment of Reverend Michael Branscombe as half-time Minister to the Benefice of Holy Trinity at Clayhanger and half-time post of Diocesan Vocations Officer when his authority was Licensed and Contracted. On February 16th the *Brownhills Advertiser* showed on its front page an article and picture of Rev. Mike as the new Minister for Clayhanger in the parish of Brownhills with Ogle Hay on the occasion of his licensing by Bishop Michael of Wolverhampton at the George and Dragon pub in Church Street. An historic moment because Clayhanger had never before had its own Minister.

A meeting on 18th February at The Refectory, The Close, Lichfield, was attended by Bishop Michael, the new Archdeacon, George Frost and members of The Anglesey Circle of Parishes to discuss the future of the Circle. It was at this meeting that the parish of Brownhills

with Ogle Hay decided to opt out from the Anglesey Circle due to geographical considerations.

Revd Colin Thomas was appointed Rural Dean of Lichfield on 1st March. He was commissioned on 15th May along with Revd David Weaver (Vicar of Christ Church, Burntwood) as his assistant. The budget forecasted an income of £52,000 and an expenditure £54,000 showing that there would be a need to borrow £2,000 from reserves during the year.

Sunday 27th March was the 12th annual day of Prayer and Gifts. On that day in a letter to the members the Electoral Roll from the Vicar, the Wardens and the PCC were reminded that we should give thanks to God for all his Blessings and continue to bring our petitions to Him. It was with thanks to God that over the years He had provided for all the needs of the church at St James. The Vicar, Churchwardens and PCC appealed for a 10% increase in weekly giving to ensure that church expenses could continue to be adequately covered.

The March/April 1999 edition of *Spotlight* on the Diocese of Lichfield carried a large column and picture of Holy Orders being taken instead of 'last orders' at a local pub in Clayhanger as Rev. Mike Branscombe was made Minister of the new church of Holy Trinity. The picture showed Mike outside the pub with his motor bike.

At Shallowford House, near Norton Bridge on Monday 24th May 1999, the Core Ministry Team met together for a time of quiet reflection, prayer and Bible reading. The new Baptism Service was debated in the light of the culture of current Baptism Policy at St James and how it might be changed in the future.

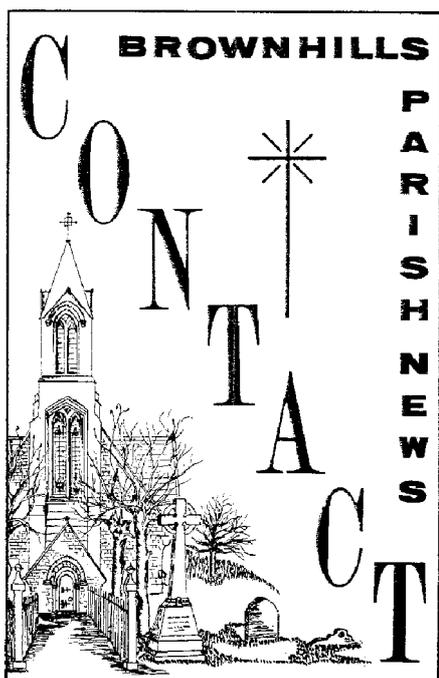


Bishop Mike, with vicar and wardens, consecrating additional land in Barnetts Lane Cemetery

For many weeks Rod and Jill Bevan (along with Rachel and David) refurbished the interior of the curatage prior to moving in after his ordination as Deacon on Sunday July 4th. He was welcomed to the parish at evening service that same day. At the evening service on 3rd October (Lay reader) Robert Edwards preached his farewell sermon at St James. The people of St James presented him and his family with gifts and said their good-byes as they prepared to leave on 8th October for St Marks, Bexhill on Sea to start a new job as Lay Assistant. The PCC were told at a meeting held on 13th September that work had commenced on the building of the new community church at Clayhanger and it was thought that regular Sunday services in the new church might commence in January 2000. The PCC awaited with some trepidation the Quinquennial report of the Architect's findings after his Inspection of the church on 9th October.

On 17th October the Right Reverend Michael Burke, Area Bishop of Wolverhampton under the authority of the Right Reverend Father in God Keith Norman, by Divine Permission, Bishop of Lichfield did Consecrate an additional area of ground at Barnetts Lane detached churchyard for the burial of the dead including that of the burial of cremated remains.

A special Parochial Church Council met on Monday 15th November to discuss the new Common Worship Baptism Policy. Before this main item of business the PCC briefly discussed the arrangements for the interior redecoration of the church. This was to start on 10th January 2000 and would be completed in three working weeks with out any interruption to Sundays services. Donations towards its cost were asked for in the parish magazine. The main item of business then followed concerning the existing Baptism policy and the difficulties and uneasiness within the current arrangements. It was agreed that nominated sponsors should be involved at both Baptism preparation and follow-up and that the new Common Worship for baptism services be adapted for use at St James. As the month of December came the PCC held its last meeting in the 20th century on Monday 6th in the Fellowship Room and made plans with prayer and resolution for the new Millennium.



DECEMBER 1965

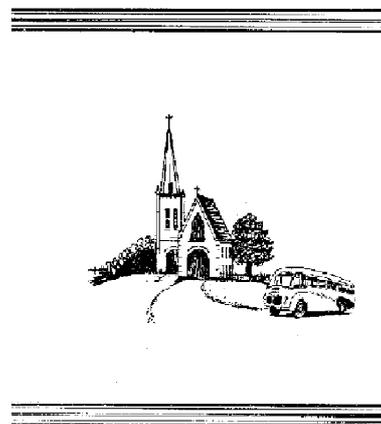
PRICE 4d.

DECEMBER 1991



ST JAMES, BROWNHILLS PARISH MAGAZINE 15p

Brownhills Parish Church



Various Parish Magazine covers from down the years.

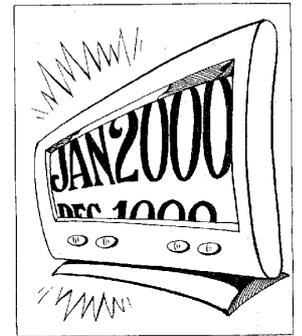
A PRAYER for the new MILLENNIUM.

God who gave us life, and in whose arms we die,
you know us as we are, understand what we have been,
and can see what we shall become.
We give you back our lives, that you may make them new;
generous, committed to hope, and fearless to do your will;
that your whole creation may live to praise your name
now and forever. Amen.

A RESOLUTION for the MILLENNIUM.

Let there be
respect for the earth
love in our lives
delight in the good
forgiveness for the past wrongs
and from now on A New Start.

JANUARY 2000



Brownhills Parish Magazine 20p
(St. James, Brownhills with Holy Trinity, Clayhanger)

At this point, the writer concludes the history of St James at Brownhills as the year 2000 arrives and the 150th Anniversary draws near. Our church may never have been the focus of world attention, never played a major role in the history of our country but nevertheless it has continued to be a source of encouragement and inspiration. A place to meet and worship the Living God, to receive His forgiveness and peace. A place of prayer and comfort to thousands of local people over these past 150 years. May it continue to be so for a very long time to come.

FUTURE PLANS

Saturday, January 1st 2000—A special new years day morning service in church with bell ringing (along with others Nation-wide) to celebrate the coming of the New Millennium.

Saturday, 30th January 2000—Licensing of Robert Edwards at St Marks, Bexhill on Sea by Bishop Wilcox (retired).

Monday 7th February 2000—Brownhills St James –Parish Visitation by Assistant Rural Dean and Lay Chair.

Saturday, February 25th 2000—A viewing of ‘Old Brownhills’ slides in the church hall as a monetary contribution towards funds for the 150th Anniversary celebrations.

Donations from those who regularly attend 8am Sunday Holy Communion to be used to purchase 20 new Common Prayer books.

New hand and lapel radio microphones to be obtained for use at Family services.

Sunday, April 23rd. (Easter Day) 2000—Holy Trinity church Clayhanger to hold its first service in the new building.

New carpet planned for the Vestry

Wednesday, 26th April 2000—Bishop Michael of Wolverhampton to dedicate Holy Trinity Clayhanger.

Thursday, 20th June 2000— Church Party to go by air from Stansted to Austria for a holiday combined with a one day and night stay in Oberammagau Bavaria to see a performance of ‘The Passion Play’.

Minister Mike Branscombe and his wife Margaret of Clayhanger to exchange churches with Rev. Dexter Kestler from Florida USA in July 2000.

Friday, 29th September 2000—Rev Peter Harris will leave St James to be licensed to the parish of St Michael the Archangel and Christ the King at Rushall Walsall.

EPILOGUE

Yesterday is history
Tomorrow is a mystery
But today is a gift
Which is why it is called ‘ the present ’

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
Send the Holy Spirit upon your church
to renew us in faith and obedience.
Help us to share your Good News
in both word and deed so that all may draw to your Love,
and follow the ways of your Son Jesus,
for His names sake. Amen.

POSTSCRIPT

The writer wishes to thank those who have purchased this book, and would like readers to know that proceeds from the sale will be given to the Parochial Church Council Treasurer as gifts towards the upkeep and maintenance of St James at Brownhills with Ogle Hay.

Facts from the Archives

INCOME and EXPENDITURE at the LAYING of the FIRST STONE CEREMONY 22nd August 1850

Income		Expenditure	
Collected on the ground	24 7 0	Admission/Prayer cards	2 0 0
Donations:-		Tent hire	1 5 0
Viscount Lewisham	10 0 0	41 bottles of Wine	5 2 6
Peter Shaw	5 0 0	Lunch for labourers	2 8 0
Charles Forster	2 0 0	100 small Loaves	4 2
William Stiles, Esq.	2 0 0	Carriage, Postage etc	15 0
Earl of Dartmouth	10 0 0	Hire of table, spoons, glasses, etc	2 5 0
Sale of prints of new church	2 1 6	Presentation Trowel	1 0 0
Richard Green Esq.	1 0 0	Bread, butter, tea, sugar (2nd day)	1 4 0
		Ale for workman	4 0
		EXCESS to Building Fund	40 0 10
	£56 8 6		£56 8 6

CONSECRATION DAY COLLECTION at the CHURCH 15th October 1851

The Marquis of Anglesey (cheque)	25	0	0
Peter Shaw Esq. (cheque)	5	0	0
J.S.Manley Esq. (cheque)	4	0	0
Lord Hatherton (cheque)	5	0	0
The Hon. E.R. Littleton (cheque)	5	0	0
Five Pounds	20	0	0
P.O. Orders	1	10	0
One Guinea	1	1	0
Sovereigns	32	0	0
Half Sovereigns	13	10	0
Crowns	1	0	0
Half Crowns	7	10	0
Shillings	4	16	0
Sixpences	1	13	6
Fourpences		2	8
Copper		7	5
	127	10	7
Plus Bishops Fees returned	9	16	4
	£137	6	11

BALANCE SHEET – 17th NOVEMBER 1851

Subscriptions		Liabilities	
Collections/Subscriptions	1406 7 8	Builders Contract	1151 0 0
Society Grants	550 0 0	Endowment Fund	1000 0 0
Mr R. Brawn (lime)	10 0 0	Architects %	60 0 0
Mr G. Strongitharm (lime)	5 0 0	Advertisements	2 0 0
Haulage	32 7 8	Repair Fund	60 0 0
Returned Timber Duty	10 0 0	Consecration Fees	10 15 6
		Consecration Day Expenses	13 0 0
	£2013 15 4	Expenses for the year	13 0 0
		Extra Fittings	16 0 0
		Printing Costs	12 2 3
		Box of Velvets	1 0 0
		Builders extras	41 3 6
		Stove and pipe	5 0 0
Shortage/Deficiency	410 1 11	Sundries and 3rd bell	30 0 0
	£2423 17 3		£2423 17 3

This rather wordy lengthy legal document in church archives is reproduced here for those who may find it interesting. The original papers are hand written without punctuation so that they could not be changed or misunderstood. Legal documents still follow this practice even today.

**OGLEY HAY—ST JAMES—CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD
SENTENCE—OF—CONSECRATION
FIFTEENTH—DAY—OF—OCTOBER—1851**

*In the name of God Amen Whereas it hath been represented unto US The Right Reverend Father in God John Lonsdale by Divine Permission Lord Bishop of Lichfield by and on the part and behalf of the Reverend James Downes Clerk Bachelor of Arts Incumbent of the Chapel and District of Stonnall in the County of Stafford and within our Diocese of Lichfield and the Inhabitants of Ogle Hay aforesaid and others that the place of Ogle Hay aforesaid is Extra Parochial and adjoins the Parishes of Shenstone Walsall Norton Canes and the Chapelry of Hammerwich all in the said County of Stafford and within our Diocese and comprises One Thousand Acres or thereabouts and contains a population of Five Thousand persons and upwards and that for the purposes of promoting the Interests of Religion and aid for the spiritual wants of the Inhabitants of Ogle Hay aforesaid a Church has been erected there on part of a Piece or Parcel of Land or ground hereinafter mentioned capable of accommodating Three Hundred and Eighty persons the expenses of erecting and fitting up the same being about One Thousand and fifty Pounds which have been defrayed by contributions from pious and well disposed persons amounting to about Six Hundred pounds and by Grants of Three hundred and fifty pounds from the Lichfield Diocesan Church Extension Society and Five Hundred Pounds from the Incorporated Society and that under and by virtue of a certain Deed of Conveyance bearing date the twelfth day of July last past Mary Green of Liverpool in the County of Lancaster Widow and John Nicholson of Liverpool aforesaid Merchant under the Authority and for the purposes of certain Acts of Parliament passed in the building and promoting the building of additional Churches in populous Parishes Did freely and voluntarily and without any valuable consideration give grant convey and release to Her Majesty's Commissioners for building new Churches All that piece or parcel of Land or Ground situate at Ogle Hay in the County of Stafford aforesaid then staked and marked out and bounded on the South and part of the East and part of the West by an intended Road from the Station of the South Staffordshire Railway at Brown Hills to Ogle Hay aforesaid and on the North side by land of the said Mary Green and John Nicholson and the remaining part of the East and West sides thereof by other Lands belonging to the said Mary Green and John Nicholson containing on the North and South sides thereof respectively Two hundred and thirty eight feet And on the East and West sides respectively Two hundred and eighteen feet and on the whole Five thousand seven hundred and sixty four yards and eight square feet or thereabouts together with the use of the roads to and from the said Church on the East and West sides thereof and of a footway or path of six feet wide on the North side thereof and which said piece or parcel of land and the said Roads and footway or path the use whereof to and from the said Church is by the said deed granted are more particularly delineated and described in the plan as drawn And all and every right title and Interest of them the said Mary Green and John Nicholson to and in the said piece of land intended by the said Deed to be conveyed To hold to Her Majesty's Commissioners for building new Churches and their Successors for the purposes of the said several Acts and to be devoted when consecrated to Ecclesiastical purposes for ever by virtue and according to the true intent and meaning of the said Acts whereas it hath been further represented unto Us that the aforesaid Church contains within the walls thereof in length One hundred feet And in width Thirty feet And that the same hath been furnished with a Communion Table and Rails and the necessary Plate for the Communion of the Holy Sacrament a Pulpit and reading desks Benches containing sittings for Three Hundred Adults and eighty for Children a font for Baptizing Children three Bells and all things necessary for a Church And the same is ready for Consecration And that the Land so as aforesaid conveyed hath been enclosed by a Quick set Fence in order to be used as a Church Yard or Burial Ground to the said newly erected Church and which is also ready for Consecration And further it is intended to invest a sum of money equal to Five pounds per cent in the Outlay of the erecting and fitting up the said Church in the purchase of Stock as a fund for the repairs of the said Church And also that it is intended to invest the sum of One thousand pounds with the Governors of the Bounty of Queen Anne as an Endowment towards the maintenance of the Minister of the said Church And whereas the parties aforesaid Have duly petitioned Us to dedicate and consecrate the said newly erected Church by the name of Saint James for the public Worship of Almighty God therein And to declare that the same may be severed and so indeed to sever it from all common profane and secular uses and by the word of God and prayers and other spiritual benedictions and religious duties to dedicate and consecrate the same And all thereunto belonging to the sacred and blessed name of God and to his service and Worship and to be used as a Church for the performance of Divine Service and Offices therein according to the rites and ceremonies of the United Church of England and Ireland And also to consecrate the aforesaid Land or Ground so aforesaid Conveyed and enclosed as and for a church yard or Burial Ground thereto And to decree the same to be severed from all common profane and secular uses and to be consecrated Ground accordingly Therefore We John Lonsdale by Divine permission Lord Bishop of Lichfield by virtue of Our Episcopal authority proceeding to the separation dedication and consecration of the said newly erected Church at Ogle Hay and wherein we now are do set apart and separate the same from all common profane and secular uses whatsoever And do consecrate and dedicate by the name of Saint James to the glory and for the worship of Almighty God and the celebration of Divine Service and Offices therein according to the rights and ceremonies of the United Church of England and Ireland as by Law established and for preaching and expounding the word of God therein for ever hereafter And we do pronounce decree and declare by these presents that the same has been and is so Consecrated by Us to remain And We do also consecrate the said Land so as aforesaid Conveyed and enclosed with the said newly erected Church as and for a Church Yard or Burial Ground thereto and to be and remain as and for a Church Yard or Burial Ground for ever hereafter Lastly WE reserve to the Archbishop of Canterbury and his successors to Us and our successors Bishop of Lichfield Our Chancellor and Official And to the Archdeacon of Stafford successors the right and Jurisdiction in and over the premises and a power of visiting the said Church and Church Yard in the same manner and with like authority as Churches and Church Yards within Our Diocese are usually visited All and singular which premises as far as in Us lie We decree conform and establish by these presents In Testimony whereof We have caused Our Episcopal Seal to be hereunto affixed and have subscribed our name hereto this **Fifteenth day of October in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and fifty one and in the Eighth year of our Consecration Signed Sealed** and delivered by the within named John Lonsdale (Lord Bishop of Lichfield) **in the presence of Edward Coupland** (Curate of Ogle Hay signature) **James Downes** (Minister of Stonnall signature) **David Moore** (Curate of Kings Bromley) and **John Mott** (Registrars signature)*

This 1852 document in church archives shows the Governors of the Bounty of Queen Anne's acceptance of the £1000. Like official documents of this time it was hand written without punctuation and is reproduced here for the reader's interest.

*The Governors of the Bounty of Queen Anne for the augmentation of the maintenance of the Poor Clergy Do by this writing under our common seal signify our consent to accept the sum of One Thousand Pounds Sterling Upon Trust to lay out and invest the same in the public Funds of Great Britain and to pay the dividend and produce of such investment as and when the same shall become due and received to the Minister or Incumbent for the time being of the Church or Chapel of Saint James at Ogle Hay in the County of Stafford and the Diocese of Lichfield and so far as circumstances will permit Upon further Trust to appropriate the said sum of One Thousand Pounds or the stock funds or securities in or upon which the same may be invested to the said Church or Chapel and to apply and dispose of the same for the benefit and augmentation thereof in such manner and with such powers and authorities as are provided mentioned or referred to in and by an Act of Parliament made and passed in the second and third years of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria intituled "An Act to make better provision for the Assignment of Ecclesiastical Districts to Churches or Chapels augmented by the Governors of the Bounty of Queen Anne and for other purposes" and of another Act of Parliament made and passed in the third and fourth years of the same Reign intituled "An Act to amend an Act passed in the first year of the Reign of his late Majesty King George the first intituled 'An Act for rendering more effectual her late Majesty's gracious intentions for the augmentation of the maintenance of the Poor Clergy' and to render valid certain Agreements which have been made in the pursuance of the said Act and for other purposes" **GIVEN** under our common seal this **Eighteenth day of March in the Year of our Lord One Thousand eight hundred and fifty two***

Parsonage Subscription Account 3rd July 1854

The Earl of Dartmouth	5	0	0
The Earl of Bradford	10	0	0
The Lord Wenlock	5	0	0
William Hanbury Esq.	50	0	0
William Stubbs Esq.	10	0	0
William Middleton Esq.	20	0	0
William Harrison Esq.	20	0	0
Messrs. G. & J. Brawn	10	0	0
Miss Mary Caddick	5	0	0
The Bishop of Lichfield	10	0	0
The Worshipful Chancellor Law	25	0	0
The Revd George Buckeridge	5	0	0
The Revd James Downes	5	0	0
Miss Simpson	25	0	0
A very generous Well-wisher	120	0	0
FR. Overton Esq.	5	0	0
George Strongitharm Esq.	5	0	0
Mr Musgrave	1	0	0
The Honourable E.S. Jervis	5	0	0
The Revd G.H. Newman	1	0	0
Lichfield Diocesan Society	200	0	0
Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty	200	0	0
	£742	0	0

FINAL SUMMARY – 1857

Cost of erecting St.James Church at Ogle Hay, including donations of many costly and valuable fittings	1286	17	6
Repair Fund	50	0	0
Endowment Fund and Expenses	1000	13	0
Endowment from 'Corden Fund'	400	0	0
Cost of erection of Parsonage House	932	9	6
	£3670	0	0

BALANCE SHEET FOR THE PARSONAGE HOUSE AT OGLEY HAY – 1856

Income

The Earl of Bradford	10	0	0
Mr. G. Buckeridge	5	0	0
Messrs. G.& J. Brawn	15	0	0
J. S. Bealey	1	0	0
K.C Tawnier	10	0	0
Miss. Mary Caddick	5	0	0
Mrs Croxall	5	0	0
The Earl of Dartmouth	5	0	0
Revd James Downes	5	0	0
Miss. Dyott	1	1	0
Mr. C. Eyland	1	0	0
Mr. W. M. Ellis	10	0	0
Mr. J. Forster	5	0	0
Governors of Queen Anne's			
Bounty	200	0	0
Mr. W. Hanbury	50	0	0
Mr. W. Harrison	50	0	0
Messrs. Hardwick (Builders)	5	0	0
Mr. Isaac Highway	1	0	0
The Hon. E. S. Jervis	5	0	0
Mr. J. L. Jennings	10	0	0
The Dean of Lichfield	15	0	0
Lichfield Diocesan Society	200	0	0
The Worshipful Chancellor Law	25	0	0
Mr. W. Middleton (Senior)	50	0	0
Mr. J. R. C McClean	10	0	0
Mr. John Mellor	10	0	0
Mr. Thomas Marlow	1	1	0
Revd G. H. Newman	1	0	0
Mr. F. B. Overton	5	0	0
Captain Robson	5	0	0
Mr. G. T. Robinson (Architect)	10	0	0
Mr. J. R. Robinson (Walsall)	1	1	0
Mr. W. Stubbs (Senior)	50	0	0
The late Miss. Simpson	125	0	0
The late Mr. G. Strongitharm	5	0	0
Mr. E. E. Stanley	1	0	0
Dr. Somerville	1	0	0
Mr. J. Spode (High Sheriff)	5	0	0
Mr. William Thomas	1	1	0
Mr. E. Tongue	1	0	0
Captain Tennant	2	0	0
Lord Wenlock	5	0	0
The Dean of Worcester	10	0	0
Interest from £500 deposited			
with Queen Anne's Bounty	35	0	0
Dividends on Mr. Green's Bank	2	15	6

£932 9 6

Expenditure

Builders Contract	847	10	0
Sewerage	15	0	0
Labour, etc,	6	0	0
Front fence	6	10	0
Front gates	6	5	0
Boundary posts and rails	5	5	0
Hall and staircase painting	3	0	0
Architect's Fee	18	0	0
Travel/Postage/Printing etc.	11	5	0
Bankruptcy Loss (Mr. Green)	11	4	6
Stone Laying Expenses etc.	2	10	0

£932 9 6

St. James's Parish Church Registers 1870 to 1878

Year	Income	Communicants
1870	£192-3s-11d	228
1871	£202-9s-6d	398
1872	£214-19s-0d	471
1873	£221-12s-6d	397
1874	£313-0s-0d	739
1875	£322-1s-8d	321
1876	£323-8s-11d	451
1877	£341-11s-3d	279
1878	£248-6s-0d	228

Subscription Account for the Incumbent – 1860

(Invested in an Endowment for Ogle Hay Church, with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to produce an income at 3¼% of £58 pa)

Mr. W. Harrison	200	.....	0	.....	0
Mr. P. Hussey	100	.....	0	.....	0
Mr. W. Hanbury	100	.....	0	.....	0
The Earl of Lichfield	25	.....	0	.....	0
The Bishop of Lichfield	20	.....	0	.....	0
The Earl of Bradford	20	.....	0	.....	0
The Earl of Dartmouth	10	.....	0	.....	0
The Dean of Lichfield	10	.....	0	.....	0
Mr. T. Caddick	10	.....	0	.....	0
Miss Caddick	10	.....	0	.....	0
Mr. W. Middleton (Warden)	5	.....	0	.....	0
Mr. W. Stubbs (Warden)	5	.....	0	.....	0
Mr. J. Haden	5	.....	0	.....	0
Mr. P. Shaw	5	.....	0	.....	0
The Earl of Harrowby	5	.....	0	.....	0
The Revd T. O. B. Floyer	5	.....	0	.....	0
Archdeacon Moore	5	.....	0	.....	0
Anonymous friends	13	..	18	.....	0
Mr. J. Fell	5	.....	0	.....	0
Mr. R. C. Chawner	5	.....	0	.....	0
The Revd R. Gordon	5	.....	0	.....	0
Archdeacon Hill	5	.....	0	.....	0
Mr. J. Brawn	5	.....	0	.....	0
The Worshipful Chancellor Law	5	.....	0	.....	0
The Revd G. Buckeridge	2	.....	0	.....	0
The Revd G. Poole	2	.....	2	.....	0
Mr. E. Wood	2	.....	0	.....	0
Mrs. Croxall	1	.....	1	.....	0
The Revd J. Dainty	1	.....	0	.....	0
Mr. B. Round	1	.....	0	.....	0
Mrs. J. Broadhurst	2	.....	6	.....	0
Mr. J. Till	2	.....	6	.....	0
Mrs. Osbourne	2	.....	6	.....	0
Bank Interest	6	..	11	.....	6
Lichfield Diocesan Society	300	.....	0	.....	0
Ecclesiastical Commissioners	900	.....	0	.....	0

£1800 .. 0

Personal Accident Insurance Records to Re-Roof the Church in 1980

Supervised by Mr Peter Downing from Diocesan Architects, Messrs Wood, Goldstraw and Yorath and Mr C Myatt, local professional builder.

Labour Force	Age	Experience	Occupation
Mr C Myatt	55	Local builder	Professional builder
Mr L Poynton	49	Roof -tiling experience	Plumber
Mr W Brown	40	Roof experience	Carpenter
Mr C Woodhouse	55	Housing experience	Plumber
Mr F Harvey	36	do	Carpenter/Teacher
Mr P Woodhouse	20	Amateur Experience only	Electronics apprentice
Mr T Tittley	35	do	Electrician
Mr J Mainwaring	50	do	Toolroom Manager
Mr G Arrowsmith	35	do	Office Worker
Mr D Powell	33	do	Printer
Mr W Cooper	38	do	Tax Inspector
Mr E Price	48	do	Office worker
Mr M Powis	48	do	Company Director
Rev H Thornley	50	do	Vicar
Rev P Richmond	25	do	Assistant Curate
Mr T Foster	58	do	Factory worker
Mr D Myatt	58	do	do
Mr W Baggott	62	do	do
Mr C Devey	70	do	Retired factory worker
Mr W Gourd	65	do	do
Mr V Cole	70	do	do

Mission Programme 22nd-28th February 1975

Visitors	Brother Gareth (stayed at the Vicarage) Brother Brian (stayed at 42, Great Charles Street) Brother Rufino (stayed at 9, St Johns Road) Sister Jannafar (stayed at 38, Seeds Lane).
Sat. 22 nd February	Social evening of introductions in hall.
Sun. 23 rd February	10.00am Parish communion with Commissioning by Archdeacon Richard Ninis. 6.30pm Evensong with accent on music.
Mon-Fri. 24 th -28 th February	8.30am Mattins. 8.45am Breakfast. 9.30am Meditation and Bible study. 10.30am Staff meeting. 2.00pm Visiting parishioners. 6.30pm Evensong . 7.00pm House group visits or Pageant.*

*The Pageant was an enactment from the Bible of "The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem through to His resurrection" (It was a most memorable costume drama performed by a large cast chosen from the congregation upon a raised stage in church.)

Stewardship Campaign Programme 5th-12th October 1975

The committee consisted of the following church members:-

Vicar	The Revd Harold Thornley
General Chairman	Mr Carlton White
Visitor' Chairman	Mr John Mainwaring
Hostess Chairman	Mrs Joyce Devey
Supper Arrangements Chairman	Mr Michael Powis
Joint Publicity Chairman	Messrs Dennis Powell and Bill Adams
Secretary	Mrs Phyllis Ashmore
Church warden	Mr Claude Woodhouse
Church Treasurer	Mr Don Myatt

Stewardship Campaign Programme

<i>Sunday, 28th September 10 a.m.</i>	PARISH COMMUNION Preacher and Celebrant: The Bishop of Shrewsbury
<i>Sunday, 5th October 6.30 p.m.</i>	Visitors Commissioning Service Preacher: Bishop George Sinker
<i>Thursday, 9th October 7.30 for 8.00</i>	Parish Supper Memorial Hall, Lichfield Road Principal Guest: Bishop of Stafford
<i>Sunday, 2nd November 10 a.m.</i>	Thanksgiving Service at Parish Communion

Christian Stewardship Prayer

O God our Father, source and giver of all good things, make us strong to use your gifts in your service. Help us to play our part in building up the Body of Christ, to pray with perseverance, to work earnestly for you, and to give generously to your church and to the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Please use this prayer each day so that constant prayer is made to God during the Campaign.

Menu

Sherry Reception
Fruit Juice
Cold Turkey, Pot., Salad and Buttered Potatoes
Apple Pie and Cream
Cheese Board
Coffee
Sweet Meats

Parish Punch served throughout

This committee worked hard and cheerfully to ensure the success of the campaign. The work included the preparation of a campaign Brochure, the planning of the Parish Supper, the recruitment of helpers, hostesses, visitors, and much organisational and secretarial work.

Campaign Prayer

O God our Father, source and giver of all good things, make us strong to use your gifts in your service. Help us to play our part in building up the Body of Christ, to pray with perseverance, to work earnestly for You, and to give generously to your work and to the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Visiting Preachers came prior to the campaign to encourage and teach us. This was important to us as the tasks we had committed ourselves to were challenging. The Bishop of Shrewsbury joined us and preached at the 10.00am Harvest Festival and Holy Communion service on 28th September 1975. Bishop George Sinker spoke at the Visitors Training Conference which commenced at 12 noon on Sunday 5th October 1975.

The main purpose of the conference was to prepare ourselves for the very important task of visiting people in the parish, and because of the significant value of the day, invitations were extended also to the PCC and others. 40 parishioners were present and it was particularly helpful to hear from Graham Forrester and James Benson speaking about their experiences when they had been visitors at their Stewardship Campaign, in Endon Parish, Stoke on Trent. Following the Conference at 6.30pm Evensong, at which Bishop George Sinker preached, 17 men were commissioned by Vicar Harold Thornley to go out into the homes of the parish. Everyone who was invited to the Parish Supper received a visit from a Hostess. All 24 Ladies under the leadership of Mrs Joyce Devey did a splendid job in encouraging a good attendance.

The Stewardship Campaign Parish Supper was held Thursday 9th October 1975 in the Memorial Hall in Lichfield Road, with the Bishop of Stafford as the principal guest. The catering was done by ladies of the parish who worked hard to produce an excellent meal which contributed so much to the success of the evening. After the meal guests heard from the lay members of the parish, followed by the Vicar and finally, the Bishop of Stafford who spoke on the meaning of Christian Stewardship. The lay speakers were Messrs Carlton White, Dennis Powell, John Mainwaring and Bill Adams. There were 200 parishioners present representing about 125 families and the evening had a happy family atmosphere, with the challenge of commitment to Jesus Christ strongly conveyed in the speeches.

Along with all this there was the outstanding Campaign Brochure (a copy exists in church archives.) It was entitled "We're Flying High at St. James". It was interesting, well presented and challenging. Explaining Christian Stewardship in words and pictures. It is not cosy, and only through commitment will come peace and joy. The standard of visiting during and after the supper was very high with a total of 269 families or individuals being visited.

This was a most exciting campaign, not only because it showed us at St James that we could meet the challenge and also reap the many rewards we enjoyed in helping the growth of the Kingdom at Brownhills. New and revised promises were able to help our difficult financial situation by providing increased income in the parish at 2.9 times the pre-campaign income from the same sources.



Picture from front of brochure

BISHOPS OF LICHFIELD

<i>John Lonsdale</i>	1843
<i>George August Selwyn</i>	1867
<i>William Dalrymple Maclagan</i>	1878
<i>Augustus Legge</i>	1891
<i>John Augustine Kempthorne</i>	1913
<i>Edward Sydney Woods</i>	1937
<i>Arthur Stretton Reeve</i>	1953
<i>Kenneth John Fraser Skelton</i>	1976
<i>Keith Norman Sutton</i>	1984
<i>Jonathan Gledhill</i>	2003

APPENDIX TWO

THE INCUMBENTS OF ST. JAMES

<i>The Rev. J. Downes (officiating minister)</i>	1851-1857
<i>The Rev. T. Jackson</i>	1860-1869
<i>The Rev. J. Singleton</i>	1870-1873
<i>Rev. J. Jordan</i>	1874-1878
<i>The Rev. C. B. Walton</i>	1879-1884
<i>The Rev. A. O. Cherrington</i>	1885-1889
<i>The Rev. H. A. Nash</i>	1889-1893
<i>The Rev. S. R. Arrowsmith</i>	1893-1916
<i>The Rev. W. E. Wibby</i>	1916-1944
<i>The Rev. J. H. Urwin</i>	1944-1950
<i>The Rev. M. Rees Davies</i>	1950-1961
<i>The Rev. N. D. Humphries</i>	1961-1966
<i>The Rev. W. R. H. Hesketh</i>	1967-1971
<i>The Rev. H. Thornley</i>	1971-1986
<i>The Rev. C. N. Thomas</i>	1986-2006
<i>The Rev. D Bishop</i>	2007-

APPENDIX THREE

CURATES AT ST. JAMES

<i>Rev. H. J. Brookman</i>	1856-1857
<i>Rev. T. Jackson</i>	1858-1860
<i>Rev. J. Woolaston</i>	1873
<i>Rev. J. W. Morison</i>	1875-1876
<i>Rev. T.B. Beesley</i>	1878
<i>Rev. F. Parrett</i>	1881
<i>Rev. C. R. Nunn</i>	1882-1884
<i>Rev. H. J. Langley</i>	1886
<i>Rev. W. Winning</i>	1887
<i>Rev. A. G. M. Wetherall</i>	1888-1890
<i>Rev. W. A. R. Hill</i>	1891-1897
<i>Rev. T. W. Wilson</i>	1920-1922
<i>Rev. G. E. Terrot</i>	1923-1934
<i>Rev. R. E. Jones</i>	1936
<i>Rev. V. D. Parkes</i>	1938
<i>Rev. D. P. Richards</i>	1939-1942
<i>Rev. J.E. Evans</i>	1942-1943
<i>Rev. D. Ormston</i>	1967-1970
<i>Rev. P. Richmond</i>	1980-1983
<i>Rev. G. Suart</i>	1983-1986
<i>Rev. D. Gardner</i>	1987-1991
<i>Rev. S. Girling</i>	1991-1995
<i>Rev. M. Branscombe</i>	1995-1999
<i>Rev. R. Bevan</i>	1999-2003
<i>Rev. P. Kelly</i>	2004-2007

CHURCHWARDENS OF ST. JAMES

1851-1857	Mr W Middleton Mr W Stubbs	1907-1910	Mr J Price Mr J Owen
1857-1863	Mr J Faulkner Mr T Rowley	1910-1917	Mr H Holmes Mr W Hughes
1863-1866	Mr T Rowley Mr C Jackson	1917-1920	Mr A Brammer Mr J Lane
1866-1869	Mr J Owen Mr C Jackson	1920-1924	Mr H Holmes Mr J Lane
1869-1870	Mr J T Bayley Mr C Jackson	1924-1925	Mr W Kirkman Mr H Holmes
1870-1871	Mr M Webb Mr A Barnett	1925-1926	Mr W Kirkman Mr J Kimberly
1871-1876	Mr M Webb Mr J. Thacker	1926-1927	Mr W Kirkman Mr T Craddock
1876-1877	Mr M. Webb Mr E. Bate	1927-1928	Mr W Kirkman Mr H Griffiths
1877-1878	Mr M. Webb Mr J. Cooper	1928-1936	Mr F Arnold Mr T Cox
1878-1881	Mr J Haddon Mr R Gibbs	1936-1960	Mr F Arnold Mr G Phillips
1881-1883	Mr C Jackson Mr R Gibbs	1960-1970	Mr G Pountney Mr G Phillips
1883-1884	Mr C Jackson Mr T Maddever (M.D.)	1970-1972	Mr R Bevan Mr G Phillips
1884-1887	Mr C Jackson Mr J Cooper	1972-1973	Mr D Powell Mr G Phillips
1887-1890	Mr C Jackson Mr W Moore	1973-1976	Mr D Powell Mr C Woodhouse
1890-1893	Mr C Jackson Mr G Hodgkins	1976-1984	Mr W Baggott Mr C Woodhouse
1893-1894	Mr J Bathurst Mr G Hodgkins	1984-1989	Mr W Baggott Mr D Powell
1894-1895	Mr J Moore Mr G Hodgkins	1989-1990	Mr G Mason Mr D Powell
1895-1896	Mr H Smith Mr G Hodgkins	1990-2000	Mr J Mainwaring Mr D Powell
1896-1897	Mr W Jackson Mr G Hodgkins	2000-2002	Mr D Powell Mr J Pearson
1897-1898	Mr T Bracebridge Mr G Hodgkins	2002-2005	Mr D Powell Mr J Higham
1899-1900	Mr H. Smith Mr G Hodgkins	2005-2008	Mr D Powell Mrs S Broomhall
1900-1907	Mr H Smith Mr J Owen	2008-	Mr D Powell Mrs A Deakin

APPENDIX FIVE

SUSHANNAH CHINCHEN 1884-1974

On Sunday, December 24th, 1939, (Christmas Eve) in Manchester Cathedral, The Bishop of Manchester, Dr. Guy Warman, presided at an Ordination Service. In his address he said among other things "This week I have ordained 24 people, 23 men and one woman; and she is going to work in the great hospitals of Manchester".

That woman was none other than Miss Sushannah Price (better known to those that remember her as Sushannah Chinchén) who worked in the parish of Ogley Hay as Deaconess for 24 years.

She was born in Hazel Slade on Saint Matthias's Day the 24th February 1884. Upon leaving school she taught infants at Chase Terrace until she was 17 years old after which she travelled to Nottingham to teach. It was here she met a Vicar whose influence fostered her desire to be a Lay worker for the church and perhaps become a Deaconess.

But this was not yet to be, because she particularly wanted to work amongst women and girls, and obtained a post as Welfare Worker in the silk and cotton mills of Macclesfield in Cheshire. After five years there she went to Poole in Dorset spending the next five arduous years including the 1914/1918 war at the Naval Base. In 1919 she married a man of the Army medical corps and this was how she became to have the old Dorset name of Chinchen, Sadly the marriage did not last, because her husband, a church warden, died a few years later.

Following her work in Dorset she came back to the Midlands and worked as a Youth Organiser at a "Victory Club" in Birmingham. From Birmingham in 1921 she went to Manchester spending the next 17 years in general welfare work until she was called to do assistant Chaplain duties, (as far as her Lay Worker qualifications would allow), in Manchester's large hospitals. The need however, was for more than a Lay worker, so she decided to train for ordination as a Deaconess at St Hilda's House. She was ordained on the 24th December 1939 at Manchester Cathedral.

As Deaconess she went back to her work in the Manchester hospitals after ordination until 1949 when she decided to return to her beloved Midlands. This time she took up the post of part-time worker at the Parish Church of Ogle Hay with Brownhills at a salary of £120 per annum. It was with St James that she remained doing valuable youth and Sunday school work as well as assisting at services until her 75th birthday when she thought it was now the time to retire. The people of the district so missed her that she slowly began work again by visiting the sick and lonely. This lady is well remembered for her service to Our Lord and the parish of St James even though as she approached 83 she again thought of retirement and actually officially did so, retaining her Diocesan Bishops permission to serve.



And just how well she served none know better than the people of Brownhills. She passed away on 18th November 1974 aged 90 years.

[The above information about this much loved lady of the parish was found in church archives along with the Deaconess's various authorisations, licences and certificates which not only bring back memories of her but also give a recorded testimony of her work for Christ and 'her people' of Brownhills and Ogle Hay.]

APPENDIX SIX

Feast Day and Patronal Festival of Ogle Hay Church

The church at Ogle Hay is consecrated to the apostle St James 'The Great', son of Zebedee, and elder brother of St John, who with St Peter and St John belonged to the privileged group of disciples, who were present at the Transfiguration and the Agony at Gesthsemane. Jesus named James and John together as the 'Sons of Thunder'.

St James was the first of the twelve to suffer martyrdom when he was beheaded by Herod 1st in AD44 (Acts 12.2)

The Feast and Patronal Festival day is every 25th July.

APPENDIX SEVEN

THE MISSION CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

In 1880 this Mission Church was built at a cost of £250 for the needs of the few inhabitants who lived at the area known as Muckley Corner where the Watling Street (A5) crosses the Walsall Road (A 461). It stood on the left hand side of the Walsall to Lichfield road at about 100m before the Watling street. The Walsall Road was a single carriageway in those days and within the Ogle Hay Rural Parish boundary.

In 1909 part of Ogle Hay Parish in which the Mission church stood was lost to the parish of St John the Baptist at Wall and it was not until in March of 1955 that it was welcomed back to Ogle Parish without any change of parish boundaries. Regular worship was held at The Good Shepherd Mission until 1968.

It was sold to Staffordshire County Council in 1970 for £450 which was passed to Lichfield and invested in the Lichfield Diocesan Trust Fund. It was demolished when the Walsall Road was widened to a dual carriageway the site being now beneath the Lichfield bound carriageway.

THE MISSION CHURCH OF ST THOMAS

The building was built by deed dated 1st August 1844 on the south side of the Watling Street at the junction of the Watling Street and what is now known as the Parade to serve as schoolroom for a voluntary Church of England school in the local community for the region at that time. It was erected by the Lichfield Diocesan Education Council of the day in the then parish of St James Norton Canes and licensed for services up and until 1854 when it was enveloped into the new parish of Ogley Hay.

The school was in regular use until 1875 when it was altered and adapted as a mission church and licensed for worship by Bishop George August Selwyn of Lichfield. Archive records reveal that in 1924 the whole building was renovated and redecorated after a new dedicated chamber was added to accommodate a new organ. It was bought from the Lichfield Diocesan Education Council by the Diocesan Trust on behalf of the Ogley Hay with Brownhills parish by conveyance dated 19th May 1967.

By deed dated 20th February 1969, 180 Square yards fronting Watling Street was conveyed to the Minister of Transport for road widening improvements when it became a dual-carriageway.

It successfully continued as a place of regular worship until 24th November 1973 when severe rising damp was found, making unsafe and too expensive to repair. It was condemned and ultimately demolished early in 1974 much to the sadness of the congregation who were provided each Sunday with transport so that they could attend the parish church.

The land site can still be seen and currently remains the property of the Lichfield Diocesan Trust.

SYNODICAL GOVERNMENT

(An brief historical overview of local Parish administration)

VESTRY MEETINGS

Meetings were held in the vestry (a room attached to the church) in which vestments, and vessels, etc. were safely stored for Divine worship. It was in here that clergy and parishioners would formally meet to transact the business of the parish, with the result that the word 'vestry' came to be used both for the 'body of parishioners' as well as the 'actual place' where they met. The vestry originally had both civil and ecclesiastical functions but by a Local Government Act of 1894, and subsequent legislation, its civil powers were abolished leaving the vestry to concern itself only with matters of church administration.

THE ELECTORAL ROLL

Prior to the passing of the Enabling Act of 1919 laypeople had very little say in the organisation of the Church of England. The Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure of 1921, amended in 1929, was set up to give laity a greater share in parish administration. The Electoral Roll is the basis of all which leads up to the representation of the laity in the National Assembly of the Church of England. In simple terms, it has the same relationship to the Church member as the Election Register does to the political voter. The Electoral Roll is the foundation of the whole structure of Synodical government in the Church. It is however, restrictive as to who is eligible, in that persons shall be a member of the Church of England, baptised, and be not less than sixteen years of age at the time of nomination. The Roll is updated and presented annually to the A.P.C.M. for approval. Names that are on the approved Electoral Roll are entitled to attend the A.P.C.M. and take their full and proper share in the affairs of the Parish Church.

THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (A.P.C.M.)

The A.P.C.M. is not a meeting which normally makes decisions, but it can however decide about the form of the elections and the number of people to serve on the P.C.C. The meeting in the main concerns itself with the Vicars Report, Electoral Roll Report, P.C.C. Report, Financial Report, Fabric Report, Deanery Synod Report, Election of the P.C.C, Election of Sidespersons, Appointment of an Independent Examiner, and Any Other Business.

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL (P.C.C.)

This committee, which is chaired by the Vicar, carries out a varied mixture of spiritual, legal, financial, pastoral, and missionary functions. It shares and co-operates in the responsibility of making decisions with the Vicar on matters concerning the whole mission of the Parish Church. It is work of wide and great possibilities and importance, it being nothing less than the furtherance of the mission of the Church, which is to win the world for Christ. Its primary duty is for the incumbent and the laity to share and consult with each other, at least four times a year, on matters of development, concern and importance in the parish. Most of the powers possessed by the old vestry and churchwardens duties relating to financial, church maintenance and record safe keeping were transferred to the P.C.C. by the this measure.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN ANGLICAN

(Extracted from <http://www.church-of-england.org> 23/09/99)

The Scriptures and the Gospels, the Apostolic Church and the early Church Fathers, are the foundation of Anglican faith and worship. The basic tenets of being an Anglican are:

“We view the Old Testaments as containing all things necessary for salvation and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.” “We understand the Apostles’ creed as the baptismal symbol, and the Nicene creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith”. “The two sacraments ordained by Christ himself—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—are administered with unailing use of Christ’s words of institution, and the elements are ordained by him”. “The historic episcopate is locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of his Church”.

Anglicans trace their Christian roots back to the early Church, and their specifically Anglican identity to the post-Reformation expansion of the Church of England and other Episcopal or Anglican Churches. Historically, there are two main stages in the development and spread of the Communion. Beginning with the seventeenth century, Anglicanism was established alongside colonisation in the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa. The second state began in the eighteenth century when missionaries worked to establish Anglican Churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

As a world wide family of churches, the Anglican Communion has more than 70 million adherents in 38 Provinces spreading across 161 countries. Located on every continent, Anglicans speak many languages and come from different races and cultures. Although the churches are autonomous, they are also uniquely unified through their history, their theology, their worship and their relationship to the ancient See of Canterbury.

Anglicans uphold the Catholic and Apostolic faith. Following the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Churches are committed to the proclamation of the good news of the Gospel to the whole creation. In practice this is based on the revelation contained in Holy Scripture and the Catholic creeds, and is interpreted in the light of Christian tradition, scholarship, reason and experience.

By baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a person is made one with Christ and received into the fellowship of the Church. This sacrament of initiation is open to children as well as adults.

Central worship for Anglicans is the celebration of the Holy Communion, the Lord’s Supper or the Mass. In this offering of prayer and praise, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are recalled through the proclamation of the word and the celebration of the sacrament. Other important rites, commonly called sacraments, include confirmation, holy orders, reconciliation, marriage and anointing of the sick.

Worship is at *the* very heart of Anglicanism. Its styles vary from simple to elaborate, or even a combination. The great uniting text is *The Book of Common Prayer*, in its various revisions throughout the Communion. *The Book of Common Prayer*, alongside additional liturgies gives expression to the comprehensiveness found within Church whose principles reflect through media the relation to its own and other Christian Churches

The Book of Common Prayer(1662) is a common feature of the Church of England’s worship. It is loved for its beauty of language and the services which it contains are widely used (in their entirety or in an adapted form). It is also the foundation of a tradition of common prayer and is fundamental source of Church of England doctrine.

The Scottish Church made certain modifications to *The Book of Common Prayer* and its wholehearted retention by the new Protestant Episcopal Church of USA as well as the emerging dominions and dependencies, ensured its place as a key ingredient of the growing Anglican Communion. Despite its widespread use, it did not emerge from the horrors of the Great War (World War I) without criticism. A modest revision prepared during the 1920’s was not approved by Parliament.

The Lambeth Conferences of the 1950’s and 1960’s called for more up-to-date national liturgies and this is still going on today. No matter how distinctive each is, they are all clearly of the lineage of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Another distinguishing feature of the corporate nature of Anglicanism is that it is an interdependent Church where parishes, Dioceses and provinces help each other to achieve by mutual support, financial assistance and the sharing of each others resources.

To be an Anglican is to be on a journey of faith to God, supported by a fellowship of co-believers who are dedicated to finding Him by prayer and service.

OGLEY HAY CENTENARY SERMON

(From church archives)

*Given by Reverend J. H. Urwin at the Centenary Day 7.30pm Festival Evensong on
Monday 15th October 1951.*

SERMON TEXT; The Book of Ezra Chapter VII verse 20.

“Whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of God, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow it out of the Kings Treasurer house.”

Good News Bible version.

“And anything else which you need for the Temple you may get from the royal treasury.”

This is what King Artaxerxes, told Ezra, to write as he set out to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem. Surely we may apply these words to those who built this our church of St James 100 years ago; for whatsoever was needful has been bestowed from the treasurer house of the King of Kings.

One hundred years ago there was no church here for many miles around. Where did they take their babies for Baptism, their brides to the Altar? Where did they bury their dead? There was indeed a great need in those days for the Church’s care for her children.

One hundred years ago there was a crying need for the Gospel Message of Salvation. Two quotations will show that need. The first from an article on “The Watling Street”: “Both before and after the road was made there were dreadful cases of highway robbery along the route. A gang of highwaymen, assisted by young girls (dressed as men), operated in the Brownhills area and were a terror to travellers.”

The second from a speech by Lord Shaftesbury: “With respect to the age at which children are worked in the mines and collieries in South Staffordshire, it is common to begin at 7 years old..... The tunnels are so low that only little boys can work in them, which they do naked, dragging sledge-tubs by the girdle and chain.”

Consciences needed to be awakened. If ever the church was needed, it was most certainly needed HERE. These were the great band who built the church with the abundant blessing of the King of Kings.

But it was not just enough to plant this House of God. You surely know how this Church and Parish has been supplied with an ever lengthening line of men of God who have laboured, prayed and ministered here, dispensing the Word of God and His Sacraments. You also know how in every generation men and women have served their Church, taught the children, and yes paid the bills.

There has been bestowed out of the King’s Treasury of Grace whatsoever was needful. “Others have laboured, and we are entered into their labours.” “Whereof we greatly rejoice.”

George Borrow writes of meeting an old man who said: “I am this day 100 years old.” “How have you passed your time?” asked Borrow. “As well as I could” said the old man “always enjoying a good thing when it came honestly within my reach not forgetting to praise God for putting it within my reach.”

A “Good Thing” has been put within the reach of the people of Ogle Hay with Brownhills: and today this church of St James can say : “I am this day 100 years old” and we must not forget to praise God for it here.

We have spoken of past needs and their fulfilment: what of the present? “What more shall be needful for the House of God?” One thing is needful above all others: men, women and children to continue and extend the work of the Kingdom in this place, begun so valiantly 100 years ago today.

The greatest need is for “Living Temples, acceptable unto God.” “Ye also, be ye built up in a spiritual house.” “Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?” “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is.” “What more shall be needful for the House of God?” Not just pews, pulpit, sanctuary and altar: not just organ pipes and heating pipes, but “that which every joint supplieth”: a body of worshipping and praying Christians. All other needful things must flow from this. Our hopes and projects, as it were, must be planned and built on our knees, for it is only out of the King’s Treasure House that all good things come.

Of those things that are needful for the House of God I will mention just three of many: First, a spirit of love and joy and zeal for the Church. “O how amiable are Thy dwellings: O Thou Lord of Hosts.” “I was glad when they said unto me: we will go into the House of the Lord.” “I am consumed with zeal for Thine House.” If these Centenary Celebrations deepen our true love and keenness for our Church, then indeed “one thing needful” will have been bestowed out of the Treasury of Grace.

