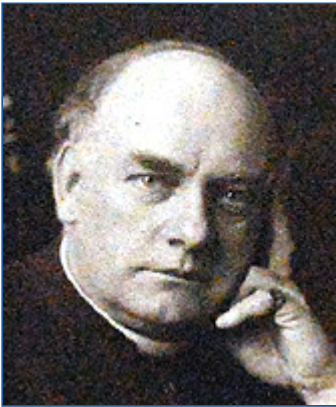


# Revd Richard Coad-Pryor MA



Revd Richard Coad-Pryor

## *Introducing Revd Richard Coad-Pryor*

Revd Richard Coad-Pryor, MA, was a well educated man, an excellent preacher and very popular, parishioners finding him considerate and sympathetic. He was very musical, with a good singing voice, and had a wide range of interests including golf, chess and astronomy. He loved children and used to write a special letter in the parish magazine for them, inviting them to write back to him on various topics. His wife was an enthusiastic worker amongst the women and girls.

During the war he took up the cause of married men who were called to the colours knowing that their wives and children had nothing on which to rely but the inadequate Government allowance. He was essentially a kind man and in 1922 we read in the Vestry Minutes that a vote of thanks was proposed to him *"for the excellent way he had carried out his work in the parish, for the intimate knowledge of the genuine cases of distress and wise help he gave in relieving them"*.

He was declared bankrupt in 1916, apparently because his stipend and private resources were not enough to run such a large vicarage and grounds. As a result he decided to live in just two rooms, separately from his wife, until he was out of debt and all his creditors had been repaid.

## *Appointment and induction*

Revd Coad-Pryor was the fourth incumbent at St James's and began communicating with the parish a few months prior to his institution by writing letters in the magazine, similar to those of his predecessor. The January 1914 magazine reported that he said: *"It is with no small diffidence that I venture on the task of taking up the reins so long and so wisely and lovingly held by Mr Job. .... I am glad that I shall have the kind co-operation of Mr Goldie, who has consented to remain with us."* He was instituted in February 1914 by the Bishop of London, and the Archdeacon of Middlesex inducted him to the living in March.

## *Significant developments during Revd Coad Pryor's incumbency*

The Great War overshadowed the start of Revd Coad-Pryor's incumbency and forced the slimming down of many of the local events previously encouraged by St James's. However, Social Gatherings, as they became known, picked up again after the war.

After the end of hostilities it was decided to erect a memorial to all those parishioners who had lost their lives. The War Memorial, designed by PM Andrews, was eventually unveiled on May 26th, 1920, and bears the following inscription: *"Their name liveth for ever more. These died the death of honour for God, King and Country"*. Some of the soldiers who were hospitalised in Upper Lodge, Bushy Park, were buried in twelve Canadian war graves in the churchyard, which also contains five British war graves.

After the war, an Enabling Bill, passed by a 300 majority in the House of Commons, gave the Church powers of self-government. Consequently in 1920 a meeting of the Church Electors (those on the electoral roll) took place to elect members to form a Parochial Church Council, and also three members of the Ruridecanal Conference (a meeting of clergy and lay people under the chairmanship of their rural dean to consider a wide range of church matters).

In order to improve the state of the church finances a Freewill Offering Scheme was adopted to

supplement the offerings and this was later superseded by a new Assessment Scheme whereby those who used the church could give their financial support by assessing themselves according to their means.

The war prevented any major development of the church building but repairs and redecoration were carried out, the organ was overhauled and an anthracite stove provided the first ever heating in the vestry. Stained glass windows were installed in the chancel in memory of the former vicar, Revd Job, and also Mrs and Lieut Colonel Butler in the north aisle.

The magazine was further developed and now included a Children's Column. Advertisements appeared and became a regular feature to help with the rising costs.

### *The end of Revd Coad Pryor's incumbency*

Revd Coad-Pryor was often not in very good health and from 1919 onwards was frequently unable to do his work. On his sudden death in 1923 it was said of him that he was one who *"had endeared himself to the whole congregation by his scholarly and helpful guidance which he always expressed in terms appropriate to the occasion and his listeners; whose ministrations to those in sickness or travail were always rendered promptly and with a full and sympathetic heart to all parishioners alike, quite irrespective of whether they were regular church people"*.

A guard of honour, consisting of the Church Lad's Brigade and the Girl Guides, lined the path from the vicarage to the church which was filled to overflowing for his funeral. Because of his keen interest in the young people of his parish large numbers of the school children were present. The service was very moving and at the graveside the 'Nunc Dimittis' was sung and the 'Last Post' sounded. The February 1923 magazine reported: *"The affectionate regard in which he was held by his parishioners, the village generally, and all sections of the Christian Church was strikingly exemplified at the funeral in the churchyard on 9th January. The church was filled to overflowing, with not only the members of his own flock but with members of the Wesleyan, Primitive, and Congregational and Roman Catholic Churches."* Windows were erected in the baptistry by parishioners and friends after his death in 1923 in memory of Mr Coad-Pryor: 'I am the Good Shepherd' and 'I am the Light of the World' (shown right).



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As the curate, Revd Campbell, left at the same time to take up work elsewhere, the Revd JR Laughton was again appointed Curate-in-charge, with the assistance of Revd JF Matthews Duncan, until a new vicar was appointed.