

ST ANDREW'S, THE STRAITS CENTENARY EXHIBITION 1914-2014



“Ron Baker’s drawing shows St Andrew’s Church in 1948. Mrs Fellows’ cottage is on the right, where she kept a shop before the Second World War - there was a brewhouse to the side. Mrs Fellows sold sweets. She had a lovely little bell on the counter. She gave it up when the war started because she didn’t want to bother with points (ie ration cards).”

This exhibition has been prepared by All Saints’ church member **Martin Jones** and is based on the pictures and memories of St Andrew’s church members at a Reminiscence Evening in February this year.

In addition Martin interviewed **Joyce Withers**, now a member of All Saints’ In the 1960s she was a St Andrew’s organist and youth club leader.

THE CHOIR



The choir of St Andrew's with the Bishop of Dudley on Easter Day in 2012

***“At the back of the church there used to be a platform on which the choir stood. The organ was on the left as you come in. Mr Abyss was the choirmaster in the 50s/60s. We used to come in through the kitchen, up a couple of steps.*”**

***In the 70s-80s our choirmaster was John Fell - he lived at 7 Byron Croft. Choir practice was held each Wednesday evening 7.30pm.*”**

***In April 1972 Jean Jones was the choirmaster, then Christopher Parker.*”**

Mr Pope used to play at Evensong at St Andrew's, then went to play at St Peter's for a while.”

A St Andrew's Christmas Fayre



Some past curates/priests with responsibility for The Straits

Roland Oliver May 1959-May 1962.

Michael Norton Dec 1959-June 1963

Michael Bromfield June 1962-1964

John Howe October 1964-Feb 1966

Ian Chisholm April 1966-April 1969

Paul Tongue August 1969-Nov 1970

John Curtis Feb 1971-

Anthony Lane 1994 to ?

“When he came to St Andrew’s there was no club. Jessie’s granddaughter was the first to go and serve on the altar. He got us involved in doing intercessions.”

Paddy Mitchell June 2000

Our most recent curate was **Rob Parker McGee 2010-2013** who left in December 2013 to become Vicar of Geddington. He lived with his family in the vicarage next door.

So who were your favourite vicars?

“Anthony Lane...Paul Tongue... John Howe.”



Rob Parker-McGee.



Rob Parker-McGee, Sarah, Thomas and Jasmine.

The opening of the new mission in 1914.



John Augustine Kempthorne, Bishop of Lichfield opened the new St Andrew's.

About The Straits

The oldest part of the Straits was the area around Straits Green. The 'hamlet', as it was described in 1914, consisted of a number of miners' cottages opposite a group of larger houses. The miners used to walk up a pathway through the woods around Himley to Baggeridge mine. In the 50s and 60s there were still mines in the Cotwall End area, very near the surface.



Straits Green in the 1930s



John Smith's house at The Straits, from where he ran a grocer's business.

Youth Clubs in the 1960s

by Joyce Withers

***“In the early 60s we began to develop youth clubs at St Andrew’s. There were three clubs, one for the 7-year-olds, one for 11-year-olds, and one for teenagers. There was a hedge all round St Andrew’s when we first started and it was quite enclosed. We had to empty the church for them to play snooker or table tennis - all the benches had to go outside and put back in afterwards, then we had to clean up. There was no church hall at that time.*”**

The youth club used to do community work - for example there was a cottage near the church lived in by an old lady and some members of the club cleared her garden in the summer holiday.

We took the group on holiday, first to Lavernock in the Vale of Glamorgan and then to Ferryside in Camarthenshire, both coastal resorts in South Wales.

We stayed in camping coaches, which were adapted railway carriages, one coach for the boys and one for the girls. We got there by train – it was quite a treat because most of the children had never travelled on the train. It was great fun, the carriages were fitted out with bunk beds and a kitchen.

In 68/69 Paul Tongue was there as curate. Unfortunately at that time the youth clubs finished at the church and transferred to the Miners’ Welfare Club.”

The Young Wives/Ladies Group

“Brenda Leach started the Young Wives in Michael Norton’s time – there was a need because there were a lot of young women with children on the estate who needed some form of social group.

The estate’s population increased rapidly in the 1960s, and most had families, so there were hundreds of children about.

The Straits school wasn’t big enough to take them all. Quite a lot of them had to be bussed to Redhall School in Lower Gornal.

Then they built Straits Green School, but by that time the increase in population had begun to level out.”



The Young Wives’ carnival float in the 1960s.



Brenda Leach, the first chairwoman of the Young Wives Club is at the front. Back, left to right: Barbara Westwood, Freda Baker, Josie Whitton (secretary), Olive Austin (Treasurer) and Eugenie Rhodes.

After this they changed their name to the Ladies Group. It continued to the early 90s. Their first outing was to Ruddesheim in Germany. It was organised by Don Everall Travel in Sedgley. Each time they went abroad they wrote about it for the parish magazine.

They went to Germany twice, Belgium, Holland, and France twice. They used to go over the May Day Bank Holiday Monday.

St Andrew's Abroad

Joint Amblecote/St Andrew's trip to the Holy Land in 1995



Father Anthony Lane on a camel.



The Dead Sea



Beryl at the Wailing Wall



Communion on the shores of Lake Galilee

Some past marriages at St Andrew's

“My wedding was held at St Andrew's in 1952. My maiden name was Eugenie Smith - I'm now Eugenie Rhodes.”



Recent visits by senior clergy



Father Dirk from South Africa. Introduced by Father Rob. Father Rob was on placement with him while training at Mirfield.



The Bishop of Dudley the Rt Revd David Walker (now Bishop of Manchester) visited St Andrews on Easter Sunday 2011.



**St Andrew's Team Service 29th May 2011
Fred Trethewey,
Archdeacon of Dudley.**



Father Dirk from South Africa. A Bring and Share supper 17 October 2013

Fetes and fayres at St Andrew's



Eugenie Smith and Irene Baines (sisters) at a church bazaar around 2011.

St Andrew's: a special place.



A memorable and joyful day: in the garden at the vicarage after Father Rob was made a vicar at Worcester Cathedral 2/7/11.

WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT ST ANDREW'S?

“It’s like a second home, a second family. It’s helped us all through the years, through sorrow and joy. It’s our coming home.”

“All my family and friends from the past have worshipped here and it feels like they’re here with you when you worship.”

“When I came through the door for the first time, God spoke to me in a very real voice and called me to the ministry. God told me this was where I belonged.” Jan

CHURCH SHARING

“St Andrew’s has always paid its way. When Pat died in 2007, the numbers dipped. We lost a lot of our congregation through illness and death, to the point where we were only attracting 23 or so people.

There was a period of 12 months when it was extremely worrying. The Straits Church were our salvation financially.

We worked together to refurbish the hall to a high standard which we couldn’t have done on our own.

Then our numbers picked up and things looked a lot better. Major work started within months of the church-sharing agreement. In fact it was the Straits Church who approached Stephen (Rev Stephen Buckley)... they were desperate for a home.

8 years ago they had been given notice to leave The Straits School where they were before. Now they pay more than half of all the bills. Tony Guy is the Pastor there.

IN THE PRESS

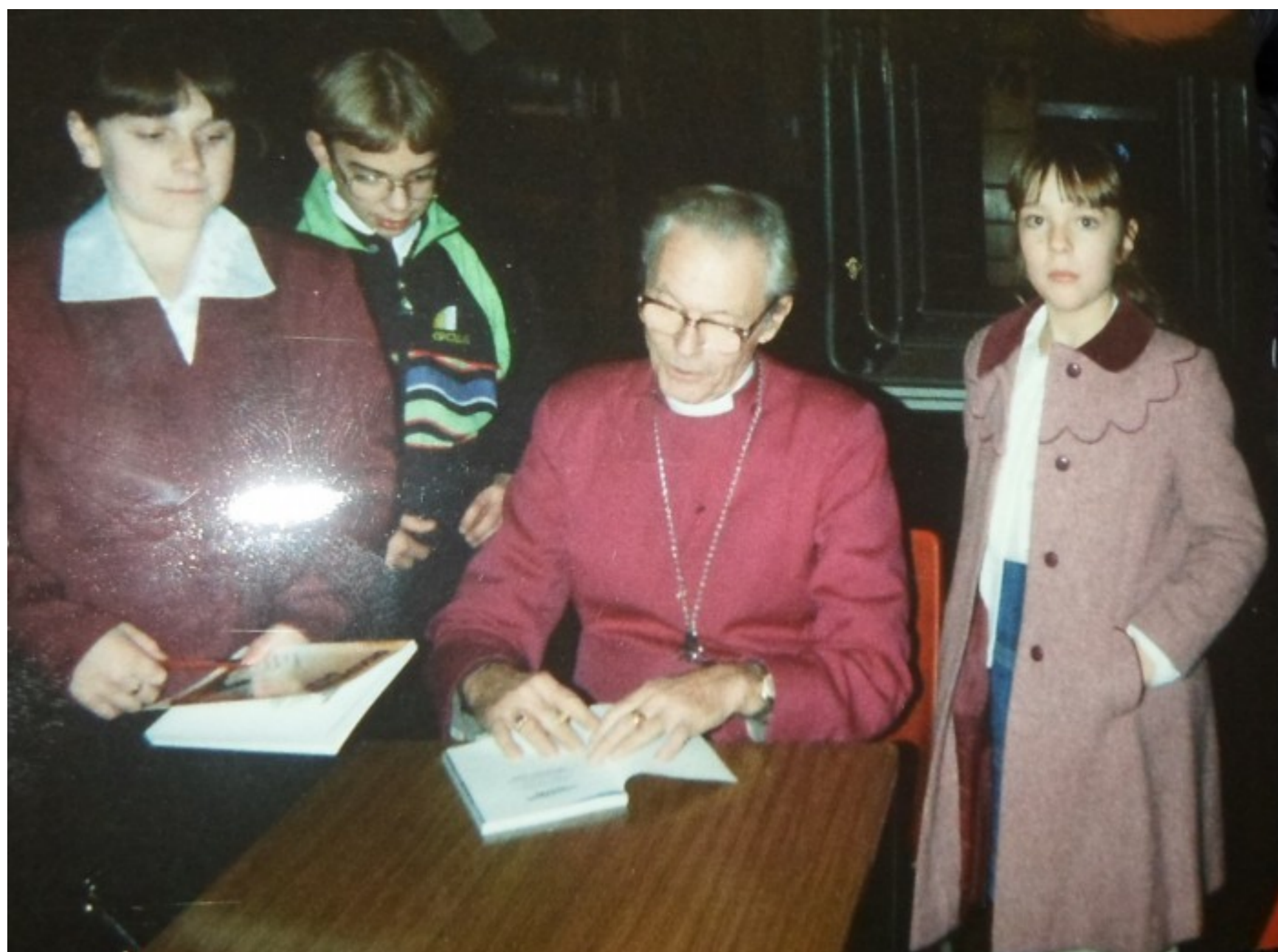


ST. ANDREWS CHURCH, Lower Gornal, held an Autumn Bazaar on Saturday, which raised about £250 for the restoration fund. Santa Claus paid a call, but when twin brothers Michael (left) and Matthew Smith were introduced they showed their feelings in very different ways.

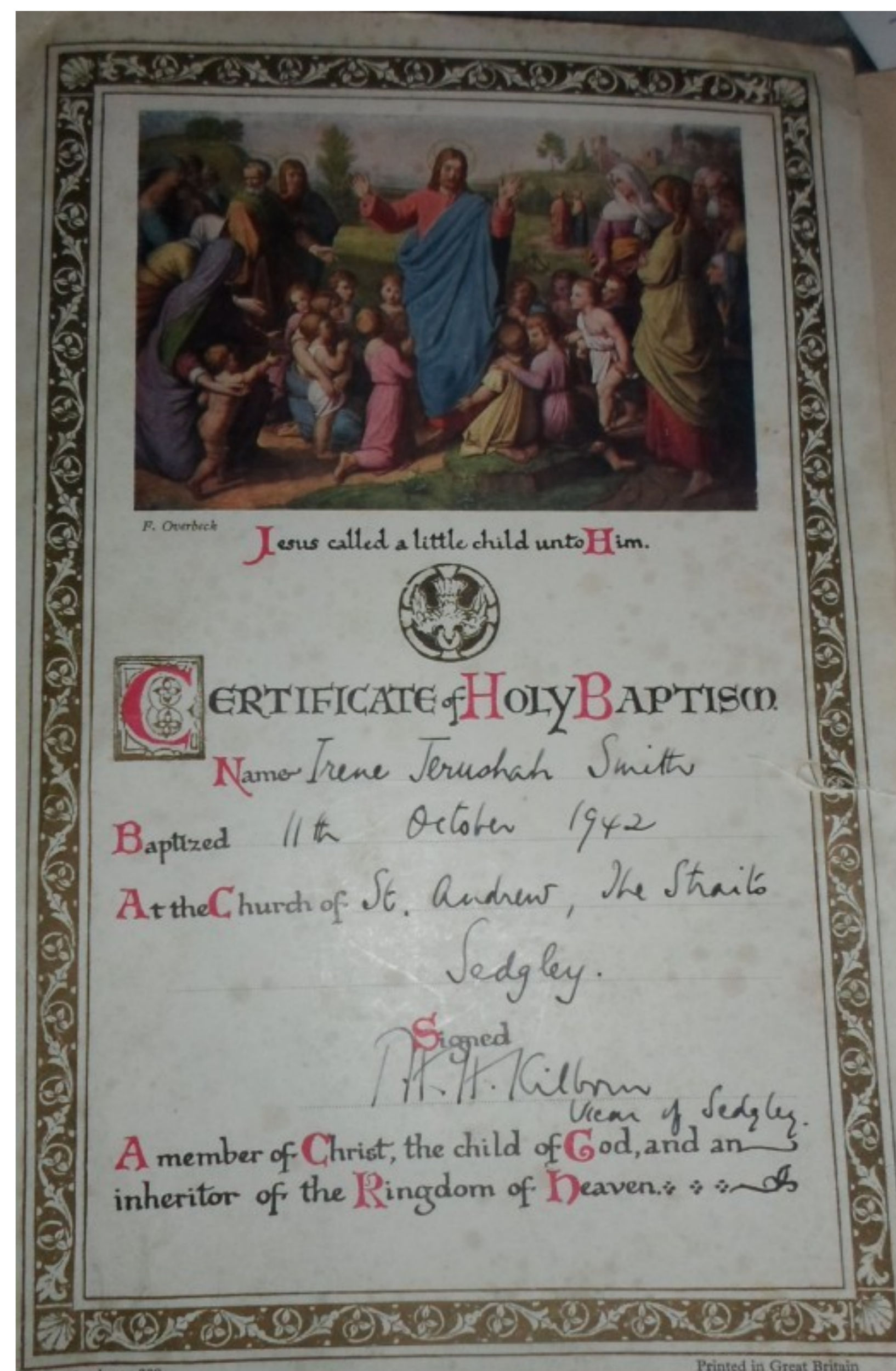
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Michael and Matthew Smith at a St Andrew’s autumn Church Bazaar with Father Christmas.

St Andrew's memorabilia



Mavis Gosling's granddaughter Clare being confirmed at the age of 14 by Tony Dumper, Bishop of Dudley.



Irene Baines' baptism certificate , 1942. The vicar was Trevor Kilborn.



A St Andrew's Church Parade in the 1980s



Irene Baines with her Christening gown, from 1942.

St Andrew's today!



Eugenie Rhodes. Founder of the Young Wives, Church hall Booking secretary, cleaner. Coming to church 82 years. Christened at the church aged two and a half.

Irene Baines, coming to St Andrew's 71 years. Flower arranger, and helper at church bazaars.

Mavis Gosling. 82, coming to church 30 years. In the choir, helper at church bazaars.

Jan Humphries. Part of ministerial team. Licensed as a minister for 6 years, coming to St Andrew's for 16 years. The last person to be confirmed at St Andrew's, by Bishop Rupert Hoare, in 1999 on St Andrew's night.

Pat Jones, coming 30 years. Choir member. Chalice assistant. Intercessions, Lesson Reader.

St Andrew's in the Parish Magazine

May 1914: The Sunday School has 120 scholars under Mr Timmins.
Note about the old sidesmen - T and A Passmore.

4th July 1914 . A march through the hamlet to the strains of the Gornal Wood Band and a 'Treat' - tea in a field with 170 children and teachers.

July 1914 Revd Swindell laments the impending war.

Nov 1914: New Harmonium: John Abbiss takes over as organist and choirmaster.

December 1914: accounts presented for the new church. The work of the Furnishing Fund committee.

April 1932: The Wardens are A Timmins and W Jones.

Oct 1944: Wardens are JA Smith and W Jones Sunday School is held morning and afternoon. Holy Communion every 2nd Sunday at 9am.

October 1963: Secretary of Straits Committee R Withers. Communion weekly at 9am, Sunday school in the afternoon.

November 1963: A warning about Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons in The Straits.

September 1963: St Andrew's Communicants -105

June 1978: Young Wives: Mrs E Rhodes. Choir: J Fell. Caretaker: Mrs I Smith.

June 1978: The Kneelers Project at All Saints' referred to.

November 1978: Patronal Festival led by Bishop of Lichfield.

November 1978: Sunday School 9.45am

Jan 1979: An Epiphany Supper

Jan 1982: Message from Andrew Ball. Communicants around 50 in Advent.

December 1982. Mrs E Rhodes: Church Hall bookings and Young Wives

December 1982: 'Priest in Charge' mentioned. Vicarage: 16 Browning Road

13th September 1983: Harvest Supper and AGM.

Jan 84: Andrew Ball goes to St Chad, Pheasey, Walsall.

Jan 1984: Institution of Andrew Ball in Walsall

Communicants Advent 1983: 41-46, 53 on St Andrew's Day.

April 1984: Looking back 70 years to the dedication in 1914.

July 1984 reference to 'David's licensing' Your New Curate' - introduction by David Standen