

ST ALBANS CHURCH

Earsdon



150th Anniversary
1837-1987

ST. ALBAN'S CHURCH, EARSDON

150th
ANNIVERSARY BOOKLET
1837-1987

Edited by Rev'd. Richard Bryant, M.A.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The History of Northumberland.

Richard Taylor's Village Notes.

Northumberland County Archivist's Department.

Bob Gowdy for writing parts of the historical sections.

Paul Gowdy for the sketches.

Keith Harrison for enhancing of sketches.

Bill Dingwall for the sketch of St. Alban's on
the front cover.

Members of the Booklet Committee for researching and
writing up several of the chapters.

Gladys Beston

Ian Hulme

Ken Knott

Marguerite Hall for preparing the typescript.

CONTENTS

Chapter 1	St. Alban.
Chapter 2	St. Alban's Church.
Chapter 3	The Village and the Parish.
Chapter 4	Folklore of Earsdon.
Chapter 5	Personalities of the Past.
Chapter 6	The Churchyard.
Chapter 7	From Parochial Records and Minutes.
Postscript	
Appendix 1	
Appendix 2	

FOREWORD

The anniversary of a church's building is an event of significance not just for the members of that church but for the entire community that church seeks to serve. Archbishop William Temple claimed just after the end of the 2nd World War that *"the Church is the only organisation which exists for the benefit of those who are not its members."* Further, like many parish churches, the current St. Alban's building was requested and paid for by the members of the parish along with one or two interested and wealthy parties from outside.

I am very happy, therefore, to commend this booklet as a contribution to both a church's celebration and a community's interest.

You will find in the pages which follow an outline not only of the church's history over 150 years and beyond but also a flavour of the community's struggles, attitudes and hopes which have helped to mould the church and in which the church has sought to help people discover the love and power of Christ's Gospel.

I wish to record my own appreciation of those who have assisted in the compiling of this booklet by offering articles, the fruits of research and photographs.

The booklet is produced in honour of those who have sought and worshipped God in this place, in whose tradition we are happy to stand. Perspectives, outlooks and emphases alter, but the Church's task remains of bringing within the scope of all people the *"unsearchable riches of Christ's grace"* (Ephesians 2:7).

I hope you find what follows informative, interesting and illuminating.

Richard Bryant.

CHAPTER 1

ST. ALBAN

ST. ALBAN

In view of his acknowledged status as the first English Martyr, it is surprising that only eleven churches in England are dedicated in the name of St. Alban, and how few people know his story. It was set in the city which now bears his name (but was then known as Verulamium) in Hertfordshire.

The details of Alban's martyrdom are provided by Bede in his *"History of the English Church and People"*, which he completed in 731 A.D. The backcloth to Alban's death was a series of rebellions in Britain which incurred Roman imperial wrath and led to various surges of Roman force to quell the revolting inhabitants. As religious allegiance became one of the tests by which adherence to the Roman Emperor was judged, so pressure on Christians increased. According to Bede, Alban, at that time a pagan (and quite possibly a prominent Roman citizen) gave hospitality to a Christian priest in flight from his military pursuers. Alban became so impressed by the priest's constant prayer and devotion to his God that he sought further instruction and eventually *"renounced the darkness of idolatry and sincerely accepted Christ."* After a few days word reached the "evil ruler" that a priest was concealed in the locality, and a search was begun. By the time the persecutors reached Alban's house, he had donned the priest's long cloak and was arrested in his place. When Alban's deception was detected, the judges tried both persuasion and torture to get Alban to recant his new found way - but to no avail: Alban was led out to be executed on a hill just outside the wall of the Roman city of Verulamium. He was beheaded with a sword on the 22nd June *"near the city of Verulamium, which the English now call Verulamacaestir or Vaeclingacaestir. Here when the peace of Christian times was restored, a beautiful church worthy of his martyrdom was built where sick folk are healed and frequent miracles take place to this day."*

Bede embellished the story of Alban with several miraculous features - the bed of the river Colne dried up, a perennial spring welled up, the proposed executioner could not carry out

his duty and was beheaded alongside him, and the eventual executioner's eyes dropped out thereby preventing him from seeing the awfulness of his deed. As with Bede's treatment of other great Christian heroes fact and fiction are interwoven, and we find it difficult to separate them.

However, several things can be stated with some certainty. First, Alban is likely to have been a Roman citizen - decapitation was the death penalty for Roman citizens, while others would be thrown to the wild beasts or burnt. Secondly, the context in which Alban's death is most likely to have been set is the invasion of Britain by the Emperor Septimus Severus and his two sons Bossanus and Geta in 208-209 A.D. to bring deserting tribes into line. We know that Geta was left to rule the south of England while his father and brother journeyed north, and that after his father's death at York in 211 A.D. he too became an enemy of the Roman state and of his brother Antonius (better known as Caracalla), the new Emperor - this would fit in with Bede's assertion that the judge (who is not named in the account but might be identified as the "evil ruler") *"astonished by these many strange miracles, called a halt to the persecution, and whereas he had formerly fought to crush devotion to Christ, he now began to honour the death of his Sants."* Thirdly, the site of Alban's execution is almost certainly Holmhurst Hill, where the present cathedral of St. Alban stands.

Bede's is by far the fullest but it is not the only evidence that we possess for the life and martyrdom of Alban. In the 5th century *"Life of St. Germanus of Auxerre"* we read that Bishop Germanus visited Britain to purge it of the Pelagian heresy (that people could get to heaven by their own efforts) and incidentally (?) of attacks from Picts and Saxons; after his triumph he gave thanks to God at the tomb of St. Alban. In 540 A.D. Gildas, who was born possibly on Clydeside about 500 A.D., wrote in his *"Concerning the Ruin and Conquest of Britain"* that Alban was a Romano-Britain who was executed at Verulamium during Diocletian's persecutions in 305 A.D. The Italian bishop and poet Venantius Fortunatus (composer of the Passiontide hymn "Sing my tongue the glorious battle" - A. & M. Revised No. 97, E.H. No. 95) referred to Alban and

Britain in these glowing terms: "*Albanum egregium fecundia Britannia profert*" ("*In fertile Britain was noble Alban born*").

The dedication of the chapel at Earsdon in St. Alban's name was no doubt because the Priory of Tynemouth, in whose gift it was, was established by monks from the Benedictine monastery at St. Alban's. The present church contains two visual reminders of its dedication - a large picture of Alban forgiving his executioner (painted by M.W. Sawyer in 1967), which confronts people as they enter the building, and a stained glass window on the north side of the church entitled "*The First English Martyr, St. Alban*" and dedicated "*to the glory of God and in loving memory of Edward Arkless, Priest, Vicar of Earsdon 1895 to 1925*".

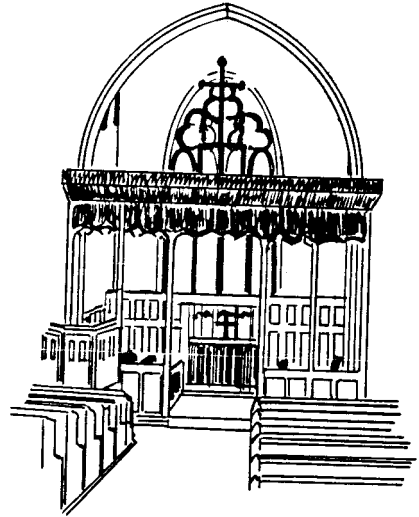
The precise year when the first St. Alban's was built in Earsdon is impossible to ascertain, but in the ordination of the vicarage of Tynemouth in 1250 A.D. the Vicar of the Mother Church is ordered to "*provide a chaplain and clerk to serve daily in the chapel of Earsdon, and to find them lodging procure wine, lights, vestments and vessels for the chapel and sustain all ordinary charges*" (*A History of Northumberland*). To the history and development of both church and parish we now turn.

CHAPTER 2

ST. ALBAN'S CHURCH



ST. ALBAN'S CHURCH



(Picture by courtesy of Whitley Bay Guardian)

The gaunt tower stands over 60 ft above the ground, its pinnacles defying the wind and elements, the red cross of St. George flying over its battlements. It commands a position on top of a small hill, the land falling sharply to the north and west, such that the building is a landmark for 10 miles or more around.

That such a spot should have a fortification or church seems evident: it would give views out over the moors and forests (later to become farmland). Ships could even be sighted out to sea and give due warning of approaching trouble or good fortune.

In this section we trace the history of the various chapels and churches which have stood hereabouts and chart the building and development of the present church.

Of the building mentioned in the earliest records, we know nothing, so we turn first to the second known building which preceded the present building and was erected probably in the 16th century.

EARSDON CHAPEL

We have used this name to distinguish the older building from the present St. Alban's. This building was probably a little nearer the centre of the village than the present church and on the site of or near the adjoining farmyard. The old chapel was a plain structure without aisles, transepts or tower. A porch at the west end of the nave, on the south side, and a door into the chancel were of a traditional or early English character. There were stone seats inside the porch and a sundial over the outer doorway. At a later date the pitched roof was lowered, a belfry with a single bell was added to the west end, the chancel door was blocked up, and rectangular windows were substituted for the original lights.

THE NEW CHURCH

Two factors prompted the erecting of a new church in 1837. First was the dilapidated state of the existing building, and second was its limited seating capacity (only 200 seats), which made it difficult to cater for a population which was rising rapidly with the spread of collieries throughout the parish.

A Report in 1831 summarised the nature and extent of the parish in these terms:

"As well as the Church of St. Albans it contains Chapels at Blyth and Seaton Delaval; the living was a perpetual Curacy with a Cure of Souls. It measured 7 miles from North to South and 6 miles East to West. It contained 8 townships and 2 seaports of Hartley and Blyth and comprised 66 $\frac{1}{3}$ farms each of whom originally had to pay 6s 8d towards the work of the Parish. The Parish was still in the diocese of Durham and the deanery of Newcastle".

The $66\frac{1}{3}$ farms referred to were as follows:

Earsdon Township contains	8 farms
Backworth	10
Seghill	10
Burradon	5
Seaton	11
Hartley	9
Holywell	$6\frac{2}{3}$
Newsham	$6\frac{2}{3}$
	<hr/>
	$66\frac{1}{3}$ farms

The proprietors of all these estates were informed by the Church Council of the hopes for a new church and were invited to respond generously to the Appeal which was launched in this letter:

"CIRCULAR TO THE PROPRIETORS OF ESTATES IN THE PARISH OF EARSDON.

Sir,

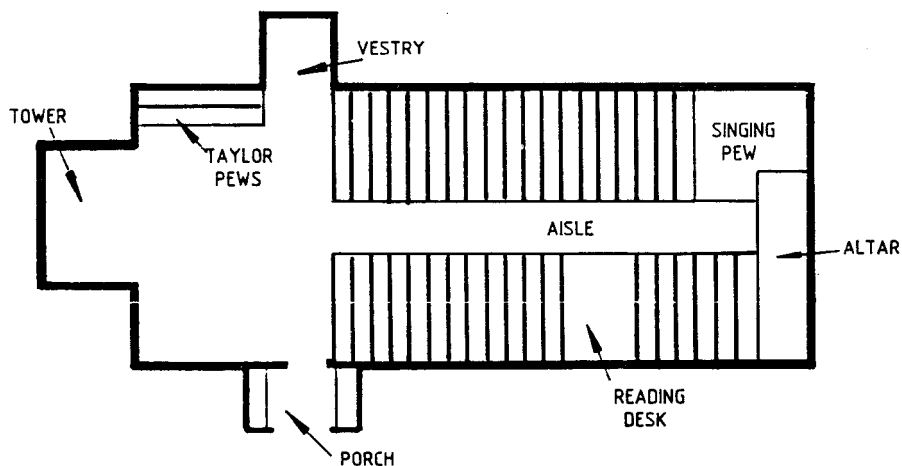
I take the liberty of addressing you as the proprietor of an Estate in the Parish of Earsdon to state that our Parish Church is in a most ruinous and dangerous condition, and it is much too small for the increased population, that our Burial Ground is of so limited an extent as to occasion the most distressing feelings by the necessity of prematurely disturbing the remains of the dead.

Under the circumstances the following subscriptions have been offered to rebuild and enlarge the Church and extend the Burial Ground.

	£
His Grace the Duke of Northumberland	700
Society for Rebuilding Churches	600
Owners of Backworth Colliery	100
Owners of Earsdon Colliery	100
Owners of Holywell Colliery	100
Hugh Taylor Esquire	100
Thomas Taylor Esquire	50



EARSDON PARISH CHURCH (OLD)
1833



EARSDON CHAPEL

A sketch of the church and a plan of its interior are shown, drawn in the year 1833 (taken from the picture hanging near the font of the present church).

From a plan and Estimate made by Mr. Green, of Newcastle, Architect, it appears that the whole may be completed for the sum of Twenty Four Hundred Pounds.

The favour of your approbation, advice and assistance is most respectfully solicited, and as our case is so extremely urgent an early reply will be esteemed an additional obligation.

With the utmost deference and respect

I have the honour to be, Sir

Your most obedient and faithful servant
Henry Warkman Min^r of Earsdon."

Discussion about the erection of a new church was under way on 15 February 1832, but grave doubts were expressed about its size, "proceedings were ultimately suspended over an apprehension that the large church contemplated to be erected might from its greater pressure endanger the foundation."

However, on 25 May 1835 a Meeting was held in the Church Vestry

"To promote the erection of a new Church at Earsdon and concur in opinion that under all circumstances the small edifice to contain only 600 sittings is desirable and expedient, The said sittings to be apportioned as follows:

To replace sittings of old Church	200
To Church Building Society	200
To Subscribers	200
	<u>600</u>

Resolved That the following gentlemen to be appointed, as a Committee to obtain plans and estimates from Mr. Green for the proposed Church and to correspond with the parties originally subscribed and others with a view to ascertaining what sums they will respectively contribute.

Rev H Warkman
John Jobling
Thomas Taylor
Hugh Taylor
J H Pyle

{ Church Wardens
for the
time being

John Hedley, Secretary".

On 8 February 1836, the Committee laid before the meeting Mr. Green's estimate of costs as follows:

Amounts of several works including all materials and Workmanships, also per centage for Architect	£2150
If warmed with hot water in the aisles including masonry and pipes add	78
Expence of stowing old collierie workings beneath the foundations of the proposed Church	50
	<u>£2278</u>
Deduct	
For customable & exciseable materials	£155
also for old materials in present Church	£123
Total exclusive of bills	<u>278</u> <u>£2000</u>

The entire work was to be advertised in one Newcastle paper for two weeks with reference to Mr. Green as to details and specifications. Sealed offers were to be left with the Secretary, John Hedley. "Satisfactory security will be required for the due performance of the contract", the Minute concluded ominously (vandalism, it seems, is not just a modern phenomenon!).

THE ADVERTISEMENT

"TO BUILDERS. TO BE MET BY PROPOSAL.

The erection of a new Church at Earsdon. Plans and specifications may be seen after Monday the 23th inst. the office of Mr. Green, Architect, Northumberland Place, Newcastle. Sealed tenders to be sent to the Secretary of the committee: Mr. John Hedley, Holywell Colliery, Earsdon, on or before Tuesday the first day of March. The name and residence of two competent sureties to be specified in each tender."

At a meeting on March 18 1836 it was resolved: "To accept Mr. Turner's offer for all the joinery, plumbers, slaters, entire work for Earsdon new Church except Masonary for the sum of £1107. 10. 0. leaving the amount of mason work to be hereafter determined, in case Mr. King of Morpeth should decline, confirming his offer of £700."

The work was duly put in hand, and at a Meeting on October 2 1837 it was "Resolved unanimously that the new Church is in a fit state for consecration the Minister of the Parish to communicate the same to the Lord Bishop of Durham and request his lordship to fix a day for that purpose. It is desirable that the building committee and Church Wardens should assist in making arrangements for the consecration ceremony.

*William Clark King
Chairman".*

The Bishop responded with haste (out of eagerness or fear we do not know!) and consecrated the new St. Alban's for worship on 12 October 1837.

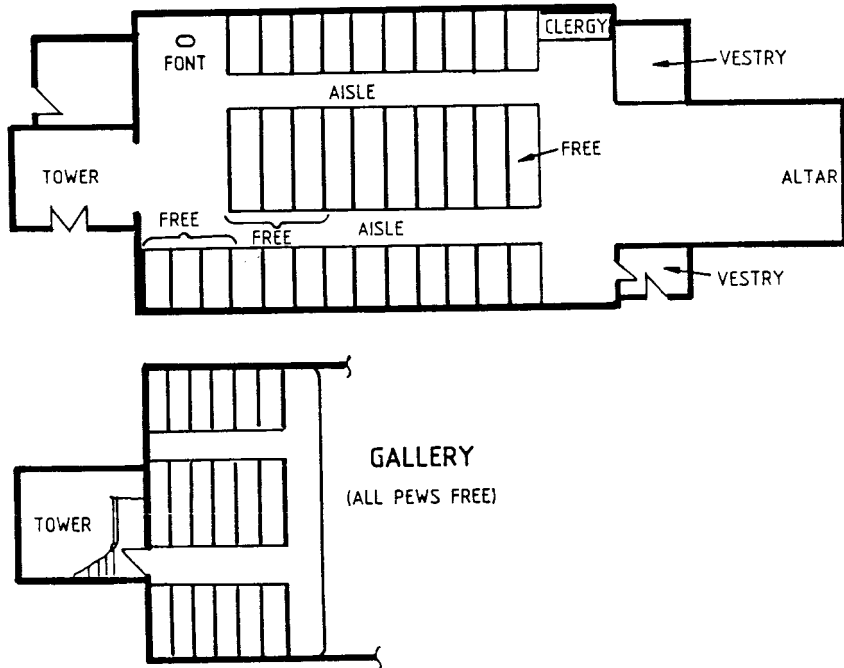
Much remained to be done internally - not least the allocation of the pews. A Meeting on April 1 1839 "Resolved that a meeting of proprietors of the Parish be convened for Monday, 20 May at 12 o'clock for the purpose of apportioning the pews".

On May 20 1839 a further Meeting made the following arrangements

<i>To replace sittings in old Church</i>	221
<i>Free sittings per arrangement with Church Building Society</i>	200
<i>Appropriated to subscribers</i>	<u>196</u>
	<u>617 "</u>

In 1818 Parliament had voted £1million towards the building of Churches in new districts, mostly in newly industrialised areas and large towns. In poorer districts the Church Commissioners contributed to the cost, and nearly 300 Churches were built between 1819-1839. Importantly, half the seats in such Churches would be 'free'.

The lead roof and oak beams of the old chapel were sold off by auction to help raise money for the new Church.



PLAN OF THE NEW CHURCH 1837

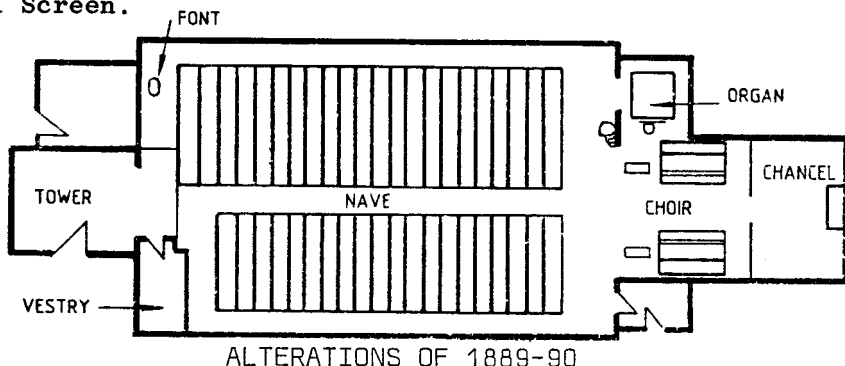
The austere shell of the church was gradually beautified and laid out to fit the changing patterns of worship in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, influenced, perhaps, by the Tractarian zeal of the neighbouring incumbent of Holy Trinity, Seghill (once, of course, part of St. Alban's parish). The Rood Screen and adorned pulpit, inserted in 1910, are the most visible expression of that influence.

The Tractarian Movement began with a sermon in Oxford in 1833 on the revival of ancient ritual. This required churches with "proper" altars and deep chancels. There was a tremendous response, churches were rebuilt and new ones erected. This revival of liturgical interest and colour may well have been in the minds of those considering the rebuilding of the church at Earsdon. The church in no way followed the design of the Commissioners' churches: it conceded to a west gallery to help with the growing population, and nearly half its seating was to be free. With its proposed deep choir, the emphasis was to be on the ritual of the service, where sight came first and sound second. The brothers John and

Benjamin Green of Newcastle were entrusted with the design. B. & J. Green were architects of a number of important buildings in Newcastle during the Grainger/Dobson era, including the Theatre Royal. They were in demand as architects for churches, being concerned with the Holy Saviour, Sugley (1837), Dalton (Newburn) also 1837, and later Holy Trinity, Seghill (1849), and Holy Saviour, Tynemouth (1841).

ALTERATION AND CHANGES

The original building contained a balcony but was otherwise very austere. Considerable alterations were made in 1889-90, and the plan below shows the layout of the church as then organised. Note the position of the font, the smaller organ of that date, the nave pews and the absence of a Rood and Chancel Screen.



Pulpit Screen and Rood

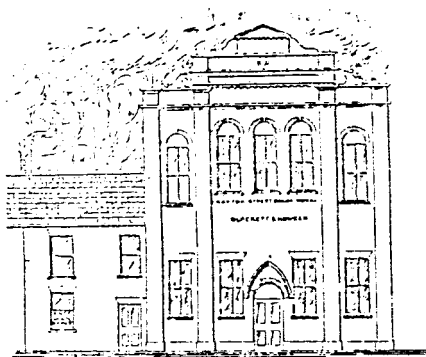
To stand on an elevated stage to speak to a gathering is an ancient and universal practice - an edict of 1603 stated that every church should be provided with a '*Comely and decent pulpit*'. The wording on St. Alban's partly obscured by the screen reads "*BE YE DOERS OF THE WORD AND NOT HEARERS ONLY DECEIVING YOUR OWN SELVES*".

In April 1903 plans were approved for a major change to the visible appearance of the interior of the church, with the erection of an oak reredos and Chancel screen and pulpit; the estimated cost was given as £150 to be raised by voluntary subscriptions.

The Rood (old English for Cross) on top of the screen would many centuries ago have been a simple cross; the figure of Christ was added to make it a Crucifix, with Mary on the right and St. John on the left as supporting cast. This work was completed in 1910. At about the same time the second major re-shaping took place, with the removal of the font to its present position to enable a new vestry (north side) to be created for the choir. This necessitated the removal of some pews and the erection of new oak pews in the nave.

THE ORGAN

Very little is now known about the original organ in the Church. A note in the Earsdon Chapelry Resolution tells us that it was purchased from a Mr. Graham in 1846 for £30. 0. 0., £32. 14. 0 having been collected for the purpose. At the same time £2. 17. 0. was spent on music books, psalms and 212 manuscript books. The present organ was supplied by Blackett & Howden of Grafton Street Organ Works, Heaton. The invoice, dated 9 November 1910, gives details of the cost and some of the specification, including the detail that the old instrument was taken in part exchange.



Blackett & Howden,
... ORGAN BUILDERS,

GRAFTON STREET ORGAN WORKS, HEATON,

Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Telegrams: "DIAPHRON, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE"
Nat. Tel. 317 Central

AND
187, West George Street, Glasgow.

*"To Supplying and Creating New Great Organ,
making bellows chamber, Manual compass cc to c
61 notes, pedal compass ccc to F30 notes £612. 11. 5d*

Old organ (in part exchange) credit £ 82. 12. 6d

The bellows to be of ample size to ensure a steady supply of wind to the full organ and to be constructed of substantial material and strongly framed with ribs to be leathered with best sheep skin."

REPAIRS AND REFURBISHMENTS

Over the years many people have contributed to the upkeep and enhancing of the church. We list below some of the most visible items.

Verger's Stave. Made by Dorothy Langland, a Newcastle goldsmith, in business 1804-1845.

1856: A patented Gill stove was installed by Mr. Mather of Newcastle at a cost of £62. Subsequently a Parish rate was levied for heating expenses. The stove was removed later and the present hot water heating system installed, since converted to oil fired.

1865: First experiments with paraffin lighting.

1866: Gift of 3 bells, founded by Mears and Stainbank; also an 8 day turret striking clock (at a cost of £407. 5s. 6d.) was given by Hugh Taylor to replace the original painted clock face.

1874: Lord Hastings of Delaval Hall presented two windows of rare Tudor glass. The first lancet windows on the north and south side of the nave, nearest the chancel, are believed to have been made by the famous Galyon Hone in 1531. The story goes that when Henry VIII discarded the unfortunate Anne Boleyn he ordered that all reminders of her presence be removed, and even the chapel windows had to go. The Hastings family of Delaval Hall acquired and preserved the offending glass, and in 1874 Lord Hastings presented it for use in St. Alban's. The windows display the Royal Arms of England (Henry VII and Henry VIII) and of France. The windows were reset and the glass put in better order in 1958 by Professor Evetts of Newcastle University, who wrote a short booklet on the history and details of the glass (published 1961) - see Appendix 1.

1879: The second window from the screen on the north side was given in memory of Mr. John Taylor who died in that year. This is thought to be of German origin, ascribed to the Maeir family, who are well known as glass craftsmen, and is based on the text from Revelation 3:20 *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock"*. The window has recently been restored and re-lead.

1934: The south west corner of the tower had settled by some 2 inches, and urgent restoration was called for. The foundations were underpinned with compacted cement and reinforced concrete columns and arches were placed within the lower tower.

1937: The carved oak font cover was given in memory of W.T. Dixon, MD.

1950: In November the War Memorial was removed from the south-east corner of the nave and re-erected on the west wall.

1959: Permission was given for the use of an altar cross, now on the shelf of the reredos above the altar.

1960: Cresting was removed from the reredos behind the altar. The altar was lowered, and a new oak platform was made with a single 4 inch step, replacing the previous double step.

1962: New gates were put to the entrance to the churchyard, and a pair of candlesticks were given to the church.

1977: Henry VIII insisted that a Royal Coat of Arms be inserted in every church to mark the cleavage with Rome and to confirm that the King was supreme head on earth of the Church of England. The present one at St. Alban's was unveiled on 16 June 1977 (H.M. The Queen's Jubilee Year).

1984: A two-tier oak cabinet was given to house the Library and hymn and prayer books.

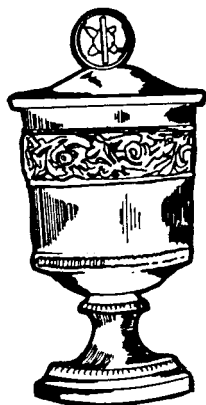
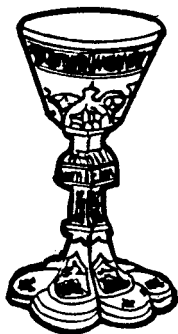
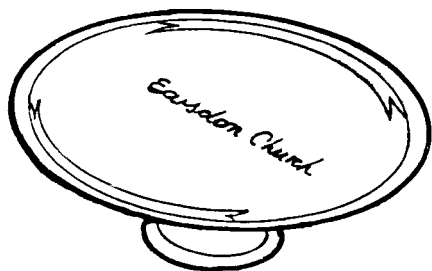
1986: Three oak items were presented - a prayer desk, display case and a seat for the churchyard.

The Gold Frontal for Christmas and Easter was made by Mrs. Margaret Pooley in memory of her parents and in honour of all the saints. The saints depicted represent the churches in Whitley Bay, Shiremoor, Earsdon and Backworth and 4 saints of

Northumbria; they are from left to right: St. Paul, St. Mary, St. Peter, St. Mark, St. Alban, St. John the Baptist, St. Aidan, St. Cuthbert, the Venerable Bede and King Oswald.

CHURCH PLATE

A chalice, whose base and stem are described as Early English Elizabethan, is the oldest piece of silverware in St. Alban's possession. Other items of interest include a paten with small feet marked 1725, a silver flagon or tankard marked 1814, and a gilt ciborium, the silver base of which is from the reign of George III and dated 1813 (a ciborium resembles a chalice with an arched cover: the bread for distribution at the Communion is deposited in this vessel).



THE CHOIR

The choir has played a distinctive and important role in the development of St. Alban's worship. In the 1930's, when Evensong attracted large congregations, the choir stalls were packed with men and boys, and often extra chairs had to be found to seat them all. Guest appearances at local churches, including the Cathedral, were an indication of the high esteem in which the choir was held, and attendance at the practices on Fridays (and sometimes Wednesdays) was strictly enforced.

In 1954 the choir became affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music, and by then worship and attendance patterns were beginning to change: Evensong was being replaced by Parish Communion as the liturgical highlight, and females were being admitted into what had been a male stronghold. At first, apparently, female choristers had to sit in the front pews in the nave before eventually being admitted into the stalls themselves. Now, of course, the situation is reversed! The choir is largely, but not entirely, female dominated - and there is spare room in the stalls! However, the fine tradition established over many years at St. Alban's continues.

CHURCH WARDENS AT EARSDON 1937 - 1987

1937 - 1940	Messrs. Mather and Winter
1941 - 1943	" Mather and Agar
1944 - 1945	" Winter and Agar
1946 - 1947	" Winter and Bennett
1947 **	At the Vicar's suggestion 4 Wardens were elected; this was acceptable until 1964 when the Diocese decided that only two Wardens were allowed.
1947 - 1950	Messrs. Jackson, Vale, Patterson & Weightman
1951 - 1952	" Rhodes, Rutherford, Patterson & Weightman
1952 - 1954	" Jackson, Elliott, Patterson & Constable
1955 - 1956	" Breckons, Mitchell, Patterson & Constable
1957 - 1958	" Breckons, Mitchell, Patterson & Arcol
1958 - 1959	" Breckons, Mitchell, Lisle & Arcol
1959 - 1960	" Knott, Mitchell, Lisle & Arcol
1960 - 1961	" Knott, Chapman, Lisle & Arcol
1961 - 1962	" Knott, Chapman, Bennett & Arcol
1962 - 1963	" Knott, Chapman, Bennett & Liddell
1963 - 1964	" J. Brown, Chapman, Bennett & Liddell

1964 - 1965	Messrs. J. Brown and Bennett
1965 - 1966	" Constable and Bennett
1966 - 1967	" Constable and Chapman
1968 - 1969	" Turnbull and Chapman
1969 - 1970	" Turnbull and Bennett
1971 - 1973	" Knott and Bennett
1974 - 1975	" Montgomery and Bennett
1975 - 1976	" Montgomery and T. Brown
1977 - 1978	T. Brown and Miss M. Turner
1978 - 1979	R. Gowdy and Miss M. Turner
1980 - 1982	Messrs. Harbottle and Montgomery
1983 - 1984	" Harbottle and Arcol
1984 - 1986	" Arcol and Knott
1987 -	" Arcol and Knott

VICARS SINCE 1536

1536	Richard Watson	1716	George Lyon
1563	Thomas Cassel	1746	Mark Hall
1577	Leonard Hall	1768	William Warkman
1578	Thomas Anderson	1811	Henry Warkman
1586	Walter Denton	1857	Richard Evans Mason
1604	William Lawson	1869	Richard Argustus Gould
1606	William Hamilton	1881	Edward Greenhow
1620	Ralph Watson	1892	Edward Owen Hall
1654	William Henderson	1895	Edward Arkless
1662	Ambrose Kipling	1926	Cecil John Charles Pratt
1664	John Consett	1943	Charles Garratt Udy
1666	Joseph Dakers	1955	Leonard Paulin
1673	David Walsall	1968	Eric Zachau
		1982	Richard Bryant

The long family connection and service of the Warkmans (father and son) should be noted. William Henderson, the entry for 1654 was ejected from his cure under the Act of Uniformity of 1662; he fared better than most, becoming a chaplain to Sir Ralph Delaval. He continued to write and speak against conformity.

Until the beginning of the 18th century the Curate ('Chaplain') of Earsdon was appointed by the Vicar of the Mother Church at

Tynemouth, but after a disagreement resulting from the appointment of the Rev. George Lyon to the Cure in 1714 (the incumbent was in ill health and George Lyon was brought in to assist), the landowners of the Chapelry assumed the patronage, confirming My. Lyon in the appointment in 1716, following the death of the previously appointed Curate. In the election of a Minister each landed proprietor had as many votes or fractions of votes as the number of 'farms' at which his property was assessed in the church books. This method of presentation continued in use until the year 1891, when the landowners surrendered their rights to the Bishop of the diocese.

From a Bishop's visitation, circa 1736, the parish is described as *"being 335 families, 4 presbyterians and 3 papists; services twice on Sunday, catechism taught, sacrament 4 times a year, about 70 people attended."*

To a consideration of the people and the parish we now turn.

CHAPTER 3

THE VILLAGE AND THE PARISH

EARSDON - THE VILLAGE AND THE PARISH

HISTORICAL ASPECTS

From evidence available, Earsdon is one of the oldest villages in Northumberland. The Romans were never able to completely subdue the tribes north of the Roman Wall, and there is little evidence of any Roman occupation to the north in Northumberland, but in 1812 a valuable find of Roman ornaments, utensils and coins was made to the north-east of Backworth.

The Angles invaded this area on a number of occasions, founding settlements and living in timber and wattle dwellings. Earsdon would have made an ideal settlement, standing on a hill and being easy to defend, with soil suitable for cultivation. There is evidence of human occupation as far back as the early Iron Age. 'Erdesdun', the cultivated hill, or the hill of red earth, is mentioned in a grant of land made by Henry I to the Prior of Tynemouth.

After the Norman Conquest the region was part of the Mowbray (Earl of Northumberland) Barrony, but in 1095, as is reported in Sykes local records, Mowbray raised a rebellion against William Rufus, son and successor of William the Conqueror. The earl converted Tynemouth monastery into a castle to defend his land but the king marched with his army against him and after a siege lasting two months took the castle by storm and made Mowbray his prisoner. Mowbray's land, including Tynemouth Priory and Earsdon, were granted to the Benedictine Monastery of St. Alban (Hertfordshire). Thus the first church in Earsdon was dedicated to St. Alban.

Roundhead soldiers were quartered in the village in the 17th century and in the 19th century the village was a base for French prisoners from the Napoleonic wars.

VILLAGE ASPECTS

The village still retains the charm of a country setting although now as part of a densely populated area. Church Way is a typical backwater being a lovely lane leading down from the Vicarage grounds, past the old school (now the community centre) and the old quarry to the main street.



The oldest house in the village is "Garth House", once called the "Whiteside", and was originally the Manor House of the village being built at the end of the 16th century. At that time the front lawns would extend much further forward (over the main road). A tower stood at the back (now almost disappeared) and the house with its three foot thick walls would be capable of defence against such as the Scots who sporadically raided south as far as the Tyne. In the cellar was a 20 foot drop well perfectly hand cut out of the rock.



The most imposing building in the village is the present Manor House, which was built in 1780, altered in 1822 and recently restored and converted into two houses. It was one of the buildings used to house French prisoners of war and their guards. At one time an engineer, Mr. H. Davies, lived in it; his claim to fame is that he invented the first submarine escape system.



An important part of the social life in any village is its hostelries. Earsdon had three at one time, the Cannon Inn, originally called "The Spread Eagle", the Red Lion and The Pheonix. The latter was converted several years ago into a private house sited opposite the junction of the main road. The original Red Lion was sited opposite Box Bros. Garage. The Cannon Inn is the oldest public house in Earsdon and has in front of it the last fragments of the village green.



The last building on the road out of the village to Backworth is the Eccles Hall which comes under St. Alban's responsibility. At one time it was renowned in the district for its Saturday night dances and other village activities. The land it stands on is part of the Duke of Northumberland's estates, and the church has to pay an annual rental of the princely sum of one "shilling". The Hall was built by Edward Eccles, owner of the pit which bore his name in Backworth. For many years there was an insistence that the hall be referred to as "The Edward Eccles Hall". The stone plaque on the south wall gives the year of erection as 1910, and on 31 December of that year the Diocesan Society leased the land formally from the Duke.



THE VICARAGE

The Vicarage stands in its own extensive grounds adjoining the most southerly part of the extensions to St. Alban's churchyard and to the east of the church.

The present house was built at the same time as the church by the same architects, John and Benjamin Green, but a note of the Bishop of Durham's Visitation on 30 July 1729 gives a description of a former dwelling remarkably similar to the present edifice: *"A house with a yard and garden adjoining, formerly purchased by the parishioners for the use of the Incumbent. Built of freestone and mud and freestone and mortar and covered with tiles. Containing 9 rooms - 5 lower 4 upper"*.

A note from the Terrier of 1806 adds some background information, to the effect that the house was *"a freehold dwelling house adjoining the churchyard with a garden behind, originally purchased by and vested in the proprietors of lands in the Parish of Earsdon for the use of the Incumbent, as appears by a note inserted in an ancient parish book in the year 1656"*.

The address of the present building at its erection in 1836-7 was given as *"Church Chare"* - when it became Church Way is a mystery.

THE STABLE AND COACH HOUSE

The building now used as a garage and Scout hut was originally the stable and Coach House. It had to be completely rebuilt in 1878 owing to its "dilapidated" condition - the cost of £290 being borne by the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty (the forerunners of the Church Commissioners) who made provision for *"the more speedy and effectual building and repairing or purchasing houses and other necessary buildings for the use of their benefices"*.

We imagine that the Vicar in former days would have employed a coachman, who literally lived on top of his job! The ground floor comprises two rooms; one would have been the stable and the other the "tack" room in which the coach or trap was housed together with all the associated paraphernalia. In the latter room, in the corner, you can find the original small cast iron fireplace which was continually kept alight in the winter months to ensure that the leather was "preserved" at the correct temperature.

A small stairway leads from the stable through a trapdoor to the coachman's living quarters above where it is easy to imagine he would be very comfortable in this pleasant room with the large open fireplace at the north end and the side opening windows giving a fine view towards the sea.

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL

Prior to 1870 children were not by law entitled to free education, and the village was without a school. On the 28 November 1853, a meeting of ratepayers was held with the Rev. H. Warkman in the chair to consider this lamentable situation: *"the township is destitute of any erection appropriate for a school, and the children of the inhabitants are deprived of an efficient and permanent master."* The decision arrived at was that there was sufficient room for erecting a suitable building on the garden ground of the village constable (known as Constable Garth) to accommodate 80 scholars, and such should be done at their own expense.

It was now that Mr. Hugh Taylor, and his two sisters, Sarah and Emily, came to the rescue and offered to defray the cost on condition that:

1. The principal master shall be a member of the National church.
2. That reading the bible shall be part of the daily routine, and a form of prayer approved by the Governors shall be read daily at assembly and on dismissal.
3. The ratepayers keep and maintain the school in good repair.

These were agreed, and the school was built in 1855 at a cost of £692. 18s, 11d. The school closed shortly after celebrating its centenary, to be replaced by the South Wellfield Junior School (now First and Middle schools).

COAL

A glance at the parochial Baptismal Registers over the past 150 years indicates the dominance of coal mining. In 1900 nine out of ten fathers, who had children baptised at St. Alban's, were miners. The increase in the parish's population from 5000 in

1836 to nearly 11000 in 1851 was due entirely to the need for coal to service the industries which sprang up in the "Industrial Revolution".

The Parish's principal collieries in the mid-19th century were at Cramlington, Seaton Delaval, Seghill and Hartley, with smaller ones at Cowpen, Holywell, Backworth and Earsdon.

The mid-19th century was indeed a time of some turbulence in Earsdon Parish. The so-called "Chartist" disturbances, which broke out all over Britain as a result of the conflicts between pit owners and pit workers, found expression in Earsdon in 1839 and 1844. The "History of Northumberland" describes the 1844 strike in these terms, "*a force of half a company of infantry, some cavalry and several mounted policemen, and 80-90 special constables and police was established in the parish for four months (18 July to 24 November).*"

The disturbances increased, no doubt, as people were evicted from their cottages by order of the pit owners. The "History of Northumberland" again sums up the local situation - with some bias, it must be said - in these words, "*There is no mining parish within Northumberland and Durham, the people of which have given so much trouble to their employers or have broken out into such acts of violence as this*". It goes on to record that "*the people were entirely under the influence of Chartist leaders, delegates of the "Colliers' Union" and their local preachers, chiefly of the Primitive Methodists*". Gatherings by the roadside of 100-400 men were common as prayers were offered for the success of the strike. On the less savoury side injuries to those brought in from a distance to work the collieries, known as "black legs", were not always accidents Grisly reminders of those riotous times hang in St. Alban's vestry - a policeman's truncheon and handcuffs!

On 16 January 1862 occurred the most remembered and horrific event associated with these parts. At 11 am on what was described as a "crisp January day" the engine beam over the only shaft at Hartley pit broke: tons of iron crashed down the shaft, completely blocking off the only means of escape for 201 men and boys trapped beneath. It took a week for rescuers to dig down and recover the bodies, many of them lying in rows, boys with their heads on their fathers' shoulders. As St. Alban's was the

parish church, most of the bodies are buried in the churchyard, and the mass funeral of 159 men and boys took place at St. Alban's, with 20,000 people in attendance.

Sketches illustrating the funeral procession from Hartley, the scene inside a collier's house and the burial itself hang near the font in St. Alban's. Those who died are commemorated by name on the Hartley Disaster Monument in the churchyard, together with their ages - the youngest being boys of 10 years of age, the oldest a grandfather of 71 years.

As a direct result of the "Disaster" the law was quickly altered to compel pitowners to ensure that each pit had at least two exits and entrances.

All the pits in the parish both as it is now and as it was then have closed. A pit heap and some buildings now used for the manufacture of mining equipment are the sole visible remnants of an era which revolutionised outlooks and lives past and present.



THE CHURCH

The growing population of the area led to a number of changes in the 1840's and after. One of these was the need to establish an afternoon service, and to this end a lecturer (Reader) was appointed in August 1840, the stipend being paid quarterly. The other was the break up of what was an extremely large parish, and the setting up of separate districts with their own churches and chapels.

Until 1846, the Earsdon Chapelry extended to include the townships of Earsdon, Backworth, Burradon, Seghill, Holywell, Hartley, Seaton Delaval and Newsham (part of Blyth). The parish had been of this size since at least 1363, a span of more than 500 years in which the area had been administered as one unit.

Seghill was constituted a separate parish in 1846, with the Church of the Holy Trinity being built in 1849. Burradon was annexed to the newly formed parish of Killingworth, the Church of the Good Shepherd being consecrated in 1894. A donative chapel at Blyth had been built in 1751 to supply the needs of the northern part of the Earsdon Chapelry, and Newsham (Horton) was made a parish in 1883. The parish of Blyth was also declared in 1883, with the Church of St. Cuthbert being consecrated in 1885. A chastening note in St. Cuthbert's records declared: *"its severance from Earsdon has resulted in more attention being paid to its spiritual affairs"*! Our Lady's Church at Delaval was taken out of Earsdon Parish in 1891, and the small wooden church at Hartley was rebuilt in 1900 to become St. Michael and All Angels.

St. Mary's Church, Holywell, originally a Chapel of Ease was made part of Seghill parish in the 1950's. With the departure of the last Priest-in-Charge at St. John's, Backworth in 1955, the parish has been administered by the Incumbent on his own (until the arrival of a Non-Stipendiary Minister in 1984) and is now known as the Parish of Earsdon with Backworth.

The church's position on top of the highest hill in what was then south-east Northumberland meant it could be seen by all the townships for which it was at one time the Mother Church.

CHAPTER 4

FOLKLORE OF EASRSDON

FOLKLORE OF EARSDON

The dictionary defines "folklore" as "the tales and traditions of a people". Earsdon as such can be said to be steeped in folklore with its rich heritage of stories from the past. Many of these are possibly "coloured" with the course of time, but all have more than a modicum of truth in their origin.

THE PRISONERS

French prisoners of war from the Napoleonic era were housed in the Manor House and also in the cellars of the buildings opposite Box Brothers garage in Earsdon. Little is known, other than that they used to exercise in the backyard area. It is purely conjecture, but, because of their being imprisoned so far north, it is likely that they were brought ashore locally, possibly from a prize ship captured after the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, having been pursued up the east coast. In this case they surely fared better than the poor monkey that came ashore at Hartlepool which was hung, drawn and quartered by the incensed population as one of those hated "Frenchies". Noting that the wars with the French did not finish until Napoleon "met his Waterloo" in 1815, they may have been in Earsdon for up to ten years.



THE VILLAINS

It was compulsory during the early part of the 1914-18 war for officers to be billeted where householders had spare accommodation. Barrels of beer were stored in a nearby farmhouse cellar (Whiteside) for the Officers' Mess in Nowton Hall (on ground next to the present Red Lion). Some of the locals helped themselves to considerable quantities by knocking the



hoops back on the barrels, drilling holes and filling their buckets. They replaced the equivalent amount of beer with water and fitted spill bungs into the holes and knocked the hoops back into place. The condition of the beer was reported to the brewers who soon detected what was happening. The villains were never caught.

Nowton Hall became a social club in 1920 but had its licence withdrawn a few years later for misbehaviour. It was purchased by the Tyneside Water Company who demolished it with a view to constructing a reservoir which never materialised. Houses were recently built on this site.

THE MODEL

In the years following the 1914-1918 war, many of the members of the forces, on returning to civilian life, had great difficulty in finding work, especially in the years of the depression. We suppose, markedly similar to today's problems of unemployment, they were glad to obtain any work going, however unusual. One such soldier who was a staunch member of St. Alban's congregation for many years, until about 1980, earned 6d. (old money) by sitting and posing in uniform for a Blyth sculptor, W. Endean, who specialised at that time in producing war memorials. If you remember Mr. Alec Crozier, you may recognise his features on some of the local war memorials. An example of one for which he posed is at Shiremoor.



GREATER LOVE
HATH NO MAN
THAN THIS -
THAT HE LAY
DOWN HIS LIFE
FOR HIS FRIEND

THE GHOST

There are several ghost stories connected with Earsdon, and the one we are relating is true, as attested by two surviving witnesses.

Back in 1928, in Vicar Pratt's time, the village was in an uproar. For two nights in succession, a ghostly apparition appeared in the village and churchyard close to St. Alban's and scared the living daylight out



of some imbibers from the local taverns. On the third night, on the witching hour, practically the whole village, and many from far and wide, turned out to the churchyard. Sure enough, close to midnight, a spectre, all in white appeared. The sceptics among the crowd gave chase and finally literally ran the ghost down to earth. It turned out to be a nineteen year old pitman having a lark, covering himself with a white sheet and making appropriate noises.

THE WITCH

We associate witches with the Middle Ages, but this tale allegedly took place in the first half of the eighteenth century.

An old beggar woman called at a cottage in Earsdon and was sharply dismissed. No sooner had she gone, than a child in the cottage began to cry "Mother, that old woman is tearing the heart out of me".

The boys from the village school (run at that time by Mr. Lyon who was also the Curate of the Chapel) chased after the beggar woman and caught her. The child pricked the woman on the forehead with a pin until the blood came, and the spell of torment she had laid upon it was dissolved.



THE EARSDON IMP

Who was responsible, some years ago, for the shaking of St. Alban's tower so that it had to be given a new set of foundations? Who, more immediately, kept stopping the church clock around about three o'clock?

It all started centuries ago when the first Christian church was being built on Earsdon hill. Up to that time the hill had been the undisputed hunting ground of a small devil called the Earsdon Imp. He much resented the intrusion and frustrated the builders as much as he could but was routed at last by the guardian angel of the new church, who reduced him to impotence except, by way of concession, between the night hours of three and four. The tradition is that this concession would stop,

and Earsdon no longer be disturbed by the Imp when certain words were said inside the tower. Unfortunately, no one knew what these words were.

A Harold Thompson of Earsdon spent many weary hours in the tower grappling with the idiosyncracies of the church clock. Time and time again he was reduced to near despair by the clock's behaviour - especially between the hours of three and four. This despair, combined with the cold and dirt of the clock-chamber, caused Mr. Thompson to utter certain words. What they were he has not disclosed, but we are hoping that they were the words necessary for the final breaking of the power of the Earsdon Imp. For now, even between the hours of three and four, the clock ticks triumphantly on, and once again, as the Vicar lies at night sleeplessly pondering the ultimate fate of the village, the time is measured by the chiming of the hours and quarters.

For mending the clock at such great cost of his time and patience - and for pronouncing those mysterious words - the whole of Earsdon is most grateful to Mr. Thompson.

But if in the future the Imp ever again starts his malevolent work, we shall know that they weren't the right words after all. What were they, we wonder?

CHAPTER 5

PERSONALITIES OF THE PAST

PERSONALITIES OF THE PAST

THE PRIZE FIGHTER

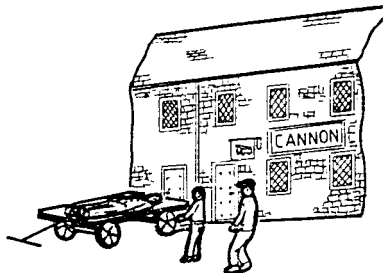
A famous local character was the gentle giant, Willie Carr, who lived at Clark's Houses where the Beehive Inn now stands. Son of a blacksmith, at 17 he weighed over 18 stones and performed feats of phenomenal strength as carrying ships' anchors from Seaton Sluice to Blyth. Entered by the Delavals for a bare-fisted fight prize with a large sum of money at stake he shook hands with his opponent and burst his fingers, so tight was his grip. His opponent withdrew. Willie developed back trouble at an early age, and the rest of his life he was bedfast.



LUCKY FOR SOME - UNLUCKY FOR OTHERS

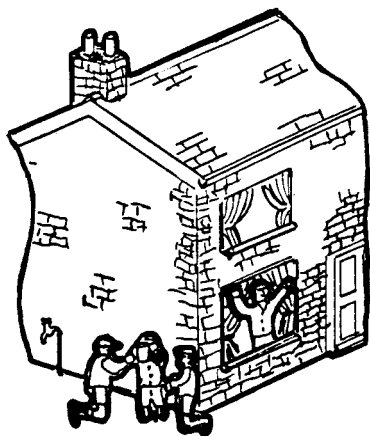
In the year 1773 in Earsdon, a Mr. Davison, appearing dead, lay as a corpse for two days, when the funeral was put off until the third day, in consequence of the absence of a relation. In this interval Mr. D. revived and in a few days was quite well again. Lucky Mr. Davison!

Not so lucky was the last man to be hanged in Newcastle in the nineteenth century. His body was put in a cart and brought down to either Curry's point opposite St. Mary's Island or Brown's Point at Cullercoats, where he was drawn and quartered. The link with Earsdon is that the cart actually stopped outside the Cannon Inn ... and the worthies of the village all came to have a look at him.



THE MIRACLE

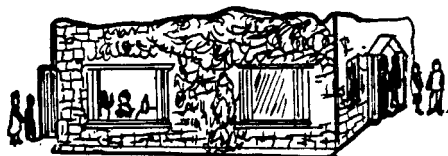
At the beginning of the century, it was common practice to fetch a jug or can of ale from the local pub. One day in 1922, Mrs. Basey of Duchess Street, which used to be behind The Bluebell in Shiremoor, put her jug of ale beside the open window. Three young rips, when she left the room, took the jug, drank the ale, and filled it with water from the street standpipe and returned it. I am not sure if she thought the miracle of the wine had worked in reverse, but she swore she would kill whoever pinched her beer if she caught them.



There is only one member of the scamps alive and kicking today, who is a well loved and respected Earsdonian and a staunch member of St. Alban's.

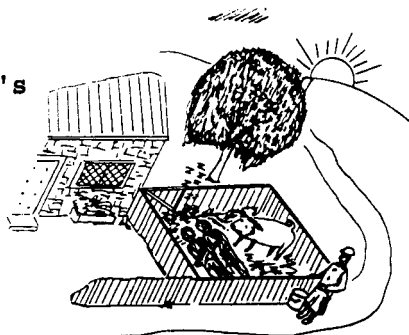
THE TREAT

In the mid 1800's on every Christmas Day, after the church service, the Sunday School scholars were marched down by the back lane into the Manor House by the back door. Mr. Hugh Taylor presented each one with a glass of wine and a "Yule Doo" and marched them out by the front door.



THE REPROBATES

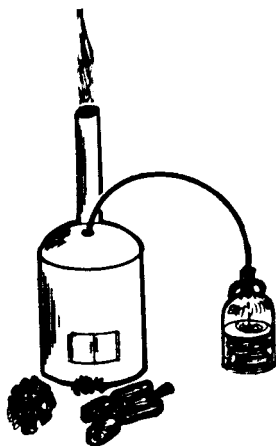
One fine summer's evening in the early 1800's, two eighteen year old youths called Brown and Taylor, were returning home blind drunk from a night's drinking session at Killingworth. At that time, at the top of what is now Garden Terrace in Earsdon, there was a cottage with an adjoining pigsty. Our two revellers stopped outside the sty, leaned over the wall and fell flat among the pigs in a drunken stupor.



The next morning, the good lady of the house came out to feed the pigs. She tossed a bucket of scraps and swill over the wall and covered our worthy heroes. When she saw them she screamed and chased them out of the sty, shouting that they were disgracing her pigs and dirtying their sty. They were so mortified and contrite that they completely turned over a new leaf, swearing that they would drink no more. In fact they became veritable pillars of society, as stonemasons, and one was responsible for building Backworth Pit Buildings and became quite famous in the area. The other came out of retirement to sculpt the Hartley Pit Disaster Memorial in Earsdon Churchyard in 1862.

STRONG BREW

The "Phoenix" Inn tenancy was held by a Mr. Alex Clark during the 1914-18 war, and the bulk of his trade came from soldiers camped nearby. Profits on his own behalf, unknown to the brewers, came from the sale of illicit whisky made by someone in the New York area of North Tyneside, and this brew was locally known as "Hellfire and Turpentine".



BENEFACTORS

There are several legacies from the past for the clergy and people of Earsdon some of which are still in force.

One of the first was given by Mr. John Pigg, who died in 1688. He was a Newcastle weaver notorious for his eccentricities and for the fervour of his religious beliefs, and he owned Earsdon Moor Edge and Earsdon Town West farms. Part of his estate was to be employed for charitable purposes, and his testator directed *"that £5 per annum for ever, should be paid out of the income of his property in the Manor of Tynemouth to the Minister of Earsdon for the time being, if he should be an able godly and preaching Minister for want thereof, to such other deserving so that such Minister should preach at least 5 sermons in every year at Earsdon Church for the said sum of £5, and if not thought fit to be given to such a Minister then the Testator appointed the sum should be given to the poor of the Parish of Earsdon and paid into the hands of the Church Wardens or Overseers of the poor of the Parish."*

The income was taken over by the Church Commissioners in the late 1950's.

Hugh Taylor of Earsdon made two bequests in his will, dated 3rd December 1868, both using the dividends of a sum of money - one for the education of children of *"artisan and labouring classes or of persons in indifferent circumstances"* at the school built in 1853 by himself and his nieces, the other for the distribution on the eve of Christmas Day to *"poor and deserving persons and Families resident within the Township of Earsdon"*. The distributors consisted of the Incumbent and three or four other persons elected at an Annual Meeting. Both these charities have only recently been registered with the Charity Commissioners, and negotiations are underway to have their deeds of instrument altered to cater for today's somewhat different circumstances.

THE CLERGYMAN

Rev. Henry Warkman was first Curate (1806-1811) and then Vicar of Earsdon from 1811-1857. In these days of relative affluence it is sometimes a salutary lesson to consider the trials and tribulations of days gone by. The following is a statement made by the Rev. H. Warkman which gives an insight of life in those times.

"I have been incumbent of this parish 40 years. The parish is seven miles long by six broad. The population when I first came to it was about 4000; it is now upwards of 11,000. My income is under 100l. a year, exclusive of house and small garden. My income has been twice reduced; first, by a portion of Queen Anne's bounty being deducted, to pay for the rebuilding of my house; and secondly, by the Registration Act depriving me of fees for christenings. I do three duties on Sundays. After morning service here, I go to Seaton Delaval Chapel, 3½ miles off. I return for evening services here. Of course I am obliged to walk, as I cannot keep a horse. I have eight children, and have been obliged to bring up my sons as mechanics. I am a member of the University of St. Andrews. I have been resident in this parish without interruption during the whole time of my incumbency.

I have no Sunday School: my time is too much occupied on Sundays to enable me to attend one. There is no national school in the parish. There are schools connected with the Dissenting chapels, of which the parish contains 14.

It is in contemplation to form a district out of this parish, to comprise about 4000 of the population. If this is done it will still further reduce my income, and I do not see how it is to be made up. I receive assistance in aid of my income beyond what makes it about 100l. a-year. It is made up thus: I receive 20l from a farm belonging to the incumbency, 20l. from the Duke of Northumberland, 40l. from Lord Hastings, for serving the chapel at Seaton Delaval; fees, &c., are under 20l. more."

Quoted in the "History of Northumberland".

From a letter to a local newspaper in 1893, the Rev. H. Warkman was described as *"being about mid-height, clean shaven, and he wore a stovepipe hat, black swallow tailed coat, black breeches and black gaiters buttoned up to the knees."* The writer paid him the highest Northumbrian compliment for his kindness of heart and good nature, saying *"He was a real canny man"* with a large family of sons and daughters and an income under £60 a year. Part of his duty was *"to tramp to Seaton Delaval to conduct Divine Service every Sabbath afternoon"*.

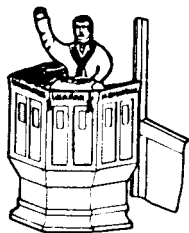


His father, William Warkman, was also Vicar of Earsdon from 1768-1795.

THE SERMON

Controversial sermons and pronouncements by radical Bishops are nothing new. The following is an extract from St. Alban's Vestry Records over 300 years ago.

"1650. Ult. Junii. I (The Rev. Ralph Watson) was affronted after my sermon by a trowper. Mr. Ramsbottom by name, in dispite, because I would not give my consent that he should preach in my place, saying that I preached a naked church, as he would show me in the aftermoone. But when the aftermoone came, he came to my house with all his trayne; and when I looked that he would question me concerning what I had preached, he began to deny or to doubt our lawfull calling, and that we were of the Church of England but not of the Church of Christ, and soe fell upon baptisme and houlding of baptising of infants utterly unlawfull; which I answered so far as I could be permitted, for they would pseak all and heare nothing that [I said]. So he asked leave to preach and I permitted him "



Another version from the Parish Register is that a Roundhead sergeant who was billeted in the village became impatient with the milk and water sermons preached by the Vicar. He ordered everyone to turn up for Evensong to hear a sermon tull of fire and brimstone. When no one appeared he had the village rounded up by his trooper into the church at sword point where they were subjected to a harangue lasting three hours.

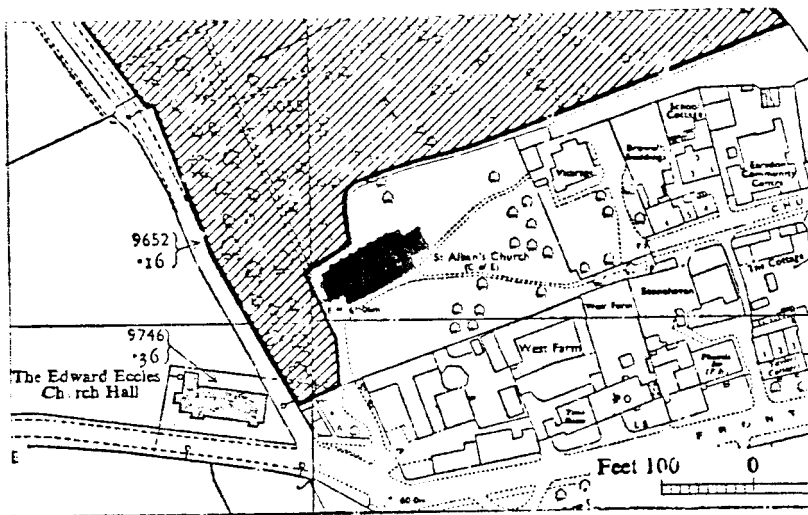
CHAPTER 6

THE CHURCHYARD

THE CHURCHYARD

Among the most fascinating aspects of any of the older churches are the inscriptions to be found on the gravestones, and in this respect St. Alban's is no exception, having an abundance of interesting stones.

Except for the Engine Driver's grave and the Hartley Memorial all the graves described are close to the south side of the church and are readily accessible from the pathways.



HARTLEY PIT DISASTER

Many articles have been written about the Hartley Pit disaster, and the most visited memorial is on the north side of the church, listing all 201 victims of the terrible local tragedy. A news report of January 1862 records the full story graphically, and a large extract from it is printed in Appendix 2. Our concern in this chapter is with the funeral service and St. Alban's involvement.

We print below the text of an extended note found in the Earsdon Chapelry Resolution Book.

"MEMORANDUM OF THE CATASTROPHE AT HARTLEY

at 11am. on Thursday January 16th 1862 the most terrible calamity that ever visited any coal mine in this country occurred at New Hartley.

The engine beam broke in two and one part fell into the shaft

The bodies were not extricated till Sunday 26th January. The work of bringing up the bodies commenced at 2am. and finished at 10am. The funerals took place on the same day (Sunday). The burial ground was found to be totally inadequate to the extraordinary requirements, and provision had to be made outside the Churchyard for nearly the whole of the bodies, and the ground for the purpose was given by the Duke of Northumberland. Nearly 50 men were employed in the work from long before daylight on Saturday to twilight on Sunday. The work was excessive - the solid rock in many places had to be cut into to a depth of about 6 feet. The work was supervised by John Edwards, Churchwarden, and here about 170 of the sufferers were decently and reverently interred. The Reverend Mason read the solemn service of the Church assisted by the Reverend D.T. Jones, Curate, and the Reverend E Carr of London, brother of the owners of Hartley Colliery. The arduous labours of Mr. Mason were partly undertaken also by the Reverend Hugh Raylor, late of Shilbottle.

Earsdon January 1862".

Some stories of special or historic interest are mentioned in the next few paragraphs. The churchyard tells the stories of families, some well known and others less so, who all contributed to the development and growth of this area: many give an insight into the industrial or commercial life that developed to help make the north east an important industrial area. A walk around will be well rewarded.

A favourite one is the 'Hero's Grave' which has the following inscription:

"Joshua Walker of Hartley

*On April 17th 1810 in a noble but unsuccessful attempt
to rescue several fishermen off Hartley Bates from a
watery grave.*

*Yet shall remembrance from oblivion vale,
Snatch thy loved image and with grief sincere,
and soft compassion at thy mournful tale,
Silent sorrow drop kindred tear".*

Staying with the sea, many gravestones in the churchyard record resting places of mariners, from captains to fishermen, but the one that brings home the awesome power of the sea in a few stark words is the 'Lost Sailors' grave.

"James Wood Armstrong

Lost at sea

*In the ship 'Betsey' with all hands
on the 2nd March, 1820. Aged 21 years".*

These few words conjure up a terrifying picture of the storm tossed seas breaking over a sailing ship's deck, strewn with broken masts and torn sails flapping frantically in the shrieking wind. The crew are gradually one by one washed overboard within sight of the helpless watchers on the shoreline cliffs with the ship's back finally breaking over the rocky reefs and slowly disappearing under the pounding seas.

Lloyds, the maritime insurers, have records dating back to the seventeenth century of sea disasters, and from these we gleaned that the ship was in fact a seven gun schooner built in France in 1801. The Master and owner was a Mr. W. Adams, and it normally plied between Plymouth and St. Ives, Cornwall. There is unfortunately no record of where or how it was lost; however the tragedy was very real and is epitomised in these few words *"lost at sea with all hands"*.

There is another grave of a similar nature with the inscription

"John Cleghorn

Aged 43 years

Master of the Ship 'Edith'

*Lost at sea with all hands on a voyage
to Capetown 1877.*

Gone but not forgotten".

Lloyds confirmed that the 'Edith' was a barque of 387 tons, built in 1862 by a firm called Pickersgill at Gloucester, and it was registered at North Shields, the owner being E. Nicholson. The ship was 122 ft. long x 28.2 ft. wide x 17.1 ft. deep. It was a casualty posted late because it was a while before it was realised that it was lost. How, when and why is one of the mysteries of the sea that will probably never be solved.

Many of the graves are from Victorian times, and the 'Coachman's grave' gives a typical insight into this era.

"Jacob Wilkin was interred here.

Was for 46 years coachman to the late

Hugh Taylor of Earsdon.

*Members of whose family have added this
inscription as a mark of respect for a
faithful and highly valued servant.*

Died 21st August, 1879 Aged 85 years".

The Taylors lived in the big house which stood in the area behind the "Red Lion".

'Engine Driver's Grave'. This title was due not only to the inscription but to the steam engine depicted in relief on the headstone as follows:

*"In loving memory of Richard, the beloved husband of
Sarah Hedley*

Engine Driver of Seaton Delaval

Died October 16th 1890. Aged 62 years".

The world's first passenger train, built by the firm George Stephenson and his son Robert, started its historic run on a fine September morning in 1825, carrying 600 passengers in converted coal wagons through the Durham countryside just three years before Richard Hedley was born. During his career as an engine driver he, therefore, worked through the period that was known as the age of "Railway Mania" when the whole country was eventually covered by a close network of railways.

Some of the grave headstones are interesting from a historical viewpoint. One such simply states:

*"The burial place of Henry Wake
of Howdon Panns - Salt Officer
Died 14th November 1787. Aged 76 years".*

In these modern times we take salt for granted and may wonder why so much importance was attached to this commodity which is now used mainly as a condiment.

Some reasons are obvious, such as no refrigeration or none of the modern methods of preserving food, etc. The salt trade was carried out at Howdon from before the 10th century until 1789 when Excise Duty, Scottish competition and the vagaries of war killed this local industry. The Howdon Salt Panns could each produce $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons of salt a week which was of great purity. To make this amount, 14 chalrons (nearly 8 tons) of coal was required. In 1725, those who pumped the salt water into the Panns received 5d. a day and those tending the fires 6d. This was the period when probably Henry Wake started work in the industry, and one can imagine his progress until he reached the exalted position of Salt Officer. Presumably he was overall manager of maybe the equivalent of Quality Assurance Inspector.

The area to this day is named the "Parish of Howdon Panns", a reminder of the days the salt makers were worthy of the fine salt they made. Note the spelling of Howden; the story is that long ago someone mis-spelt the name (e instead of o) and it would need an Act of Parliament to change this to the correct spelling. A similar trade had been carried out within the parish at Seaton Sluice since 1236; the famous Hartley Panns were on the right bank of the Seaton Burn just below the present bridge.

There are a number of war graves in the old part of the churchyard, north of the church, which the War Graves Commission maintains and inspects. We wonder if the War Graves Commission existed in bygone days, for there is a grave near the farm wall in memory of

*"Thomas Thompson
of the 28th Regiment sited at the
seat of the war in the Crimea
on the 14th February 1855, Aged 24 Years".*

This was fought from 1854 to 1856 by Britain, France and Turkey, against the might of Russia at Crimea, which is a peninsula in the Black Sea and was linked to the mainland of Russia by the isthmus of Perekop. There was a battle fought at or just before that date. It is more likely though that he would have died of some disease which was rife and decimated thousands in the ranks of the troops.

FROM DEATH TO LIFE

Disposal of the dead is for any society a matter of hygiene and propriety. These two factors have no doubt influenced both the church and local authorities to ask for and the Duke of Northumberland to offer extra ground to the west and north of the church for burial from the mid-19th century onwards. An order had been made in Privy Council on 13 November 1858 for Earsdon churchyard to be closed for burials on and after 1 June 1859, except for those who had family graves in which there was still space - the churchyard then consisted of the land to the south between church and farm and to the east between church and vicarage.

The churchyard was extended on several occasions in the 19th century on the north side before the local authority began to use the land at the northernmost extremity as a council cemetery in January 1938.

On 8 February 1984 an order was again issued in Privy Council for a discontinuation of burials in the extensions to St. Alban's churchyard, subject to the same qualification as in 1858. This order enabled the Church Council to ask North Tyneside

Council to take over the churchyard's management and maintenance, which by law it had to and which it was pleased to do as from 1 September 1984.

Legal obstacles took a further two years before work could commence to improve and enhance the churchyard, and readers of this book will have noticed the fruits of such work, which began in November 1986.

The primary concerns in any churchyard are for the safety of visitors and respect for the dead - and they remain much in the minds of St. Alban's Church Council and North Tyneside Borough Council (both of whom share responsibility for Earsdon churchyard).

The churchyard has also developed as a shelter for wildlife and a fertile area for a variety of fauna and flora. There is something deeply primal and at the same time obviously Christian in the new life that springs up from an old burial ground, and both the Church Council and the local authority are anxious to preserve and foster the richness of such creaturely activity. The churchyard makes an ideal start for the Earsdon Nature Trail, and copies of the Guide may be obtained from the church and from the Borough Council offices.

CHAPTER 7

FROM PAROCHIAL RECORDS AND MINUTES

FROM PAROCHIAL MINUTES AND RECORDS

*O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursel's as others see us!*

We might well be reminded of the words of Burns as we plough through the records of those earlier days. The Minutes of Parochial Church Council and Annual General Meetings coupled with snippets from old Parish Magazines provide us with fascinating flavour and some understanding of the problems facing those servants of the Church. In this field St. Alban's proves no exception! Much humour, sadness and hope lie between those pages.

We record below some of the highlights from the records.

The main sources of information have been the "Earsdon Chapelry Resolution Book" of the 19th century, which recorded decisions taken by the 'Four and Twenty' (the forerunner to the Parochial Church Council) and other Meetings convened to attend to church matters, and the Parochial Church Council Minutes, which began in 1920. We have to record an absence of all records and minutes for the first 20 years of this century.

THE WAY AHEAD

On 12 April 1920 the first PCC was elected from the Electoral Roll which then contained 350 men and 407 women.

This Council was to consist of the Clergy, Wardens, Sidesmen of the Parish Church, three representatives from the Parish Church and six from St. John's, Backworth and St. Mary's Holywell. Later that year on 9 November the PCC agreed to meet monthly, and this it has been doing ever since with only the odd exception.

Support was there in the Diocese, for a note on 5 May 1920 refers to a Central Council in the Diocese to keep in touch with PCC's. Each PCC was to control its own finance, alterations in services, ornaments in church and *"to have an effective voice in the appointment of Incumbents"*!.

FINANCE

It appears that St. Alban's has always found the diocesan quota a heavy burden on church finances.

On 2 June 1922 objections were raised to the quota of £54 even though £50 was received back in grants from the Central Board of Finance! In 1922 a letter was read from the Central Board of Finance requesting 15% of our quota - *"the meeting received the news without enthusiasm"*!

In 1925 *"only £13 has been paid towards the quota; a special effort must be made, there is very little time left."* Perhaps this helps to explain the suggestion that *"the Sewing Meetings to be asked to assist in repairing the Church Gates"*, - with wool or strong thread we wonder!

By 1953 the quota was to be raised by 40%, and there appears on this occasion to have been no comment!

MISSIONARY GIVING

Throughout the records constant reference is made to requests for help from various societies.

August 8 1922 *"a letter received from the Northumberland and Durham Deaf and Dumb Society, but the feeling of the meeting was that we had as much on hand as we could manage at present."*

2 September 1924 - *"appeals from various societies were left on the table."*

But worse was to come! 8 March 1933, *"a letter was read out from the Bishop calling attention to the very small amount of money given by Earsdon Parish to Missionary work."* By 1946 parishioners were encouraged to support overseas missions, and in 1961 £35 per annum was given to Missionary work representing 11% of the quota. In 1958 there is mention of £20.0.0. gifted to Children's Society; £3.3s.0d. for work for Lepers, and £1.1s.0d. for Deaf and Dumb.

In February 1963 there was a request to PCC to take part in Christian Aid Week, and by 1972 the Coast Group of Churches decided that 5% of each church's income should be given to its Missionary project. The current figure is 3-5% - so we are still struggling to get it right!

PATTERN OF WORSHIP

28 November 1926 - 1st Sunday in Advent.

This is the first entry in the Parish Register. It reads:

8.00 am Holy Communion
10.30 am Sung Eucharist
6.30 pm Evensong

On Christmas Day 1926

8.00 am	Holy Communion	85 communicants
10.30 am	Sung Eucharist	21 communicants

On Easter Day 1927

8.00 am	Holy Communion	80 communicants
10.30 am	Sung Eucharist	35 communicants

Certainly early risers! But these numbers had fallen by 1936 to around 10 communicants at 8.00 am and 30 at 11 am.

From 19 June 1943 the pattern changes to:

8.00 am Holy Communion
9.30 am Sung Eucharist
11.00 am Matins
2.45 pm Sunday School
6.00 pm Evensong

During the next twenty years there was a strong desire to have Matins at least once a month, but on 6 October 1974, the 10.00 am Eucharist replaced both of the previous morning services.

The first reference to midnight Christmas Eucharist is in 1944, when 51 people received Communion.

In 1954 christenings were to be held during the service instead of a Sunday afternoon whilst in 1957 there is a note that "each person to be confirmed is to have a sponsor."

The road to change has not always been a smooth one! In April 1965 we read that "though agreement was reached to join in the Collect for Purity and the Prayer for Humble Access - the Epistle could not be in the modern form"!

3 February 1975. The new time of 10.00 am for Sunday Eucharist has resulted in a larger congregation with more communicants -

but a *"lengthier service has met with criticism"*. On this same date the proposal to invite a layman to administer the chalice was deferred *"owing to opposition"*. It was not until 1 October 1979 that the chalice was administered by a layman.

More than 30 years ago on 21 April 1952, one member wished to know *"why so many new hymns were being sung each Sunday, at some services they were all new"!*.

CARE FOR THE BUILDING

A central theme runs throughout the Minutes of efforts made to maintain the fabric of the building and to improve the comfort of those worshipping there.

A meeting on April 24 1848 resolved that the entrance to the church *"is in a very filthy state"*. There appears to be a simple remedy! *"The Churchwardens to wait upon the Duke's Commissioners to ask for a few yards of ground so as to build a wall to separate the manure from the entrance"!*.

In 1926 Earsdon RUDC proposed to erect a public convenience near the entrance to the church gates. After two refusals by the PCC permission was finally given in March 1930 for the convenience to be *"erected on a desired site"*. The land which is now the car park was leased to Earsdon RUDC for 99 years at a rent of one shilling per year for the erection of this convenience. The building which resulted was demolished in the 1970's, and the land was further cleared in 1985.

Keeping a healthy temperature within the building has been a lengthy battle.

November 2 1857 a meeting was called for the purpose of warming the church, but nothing was done!

In 1958 we read *"could anything be done to improve the heating?"* - there was a great deal of discussion - (much hot air perhaps?) but nothing was decided.

We are still discussing and trying in 1987!

On Sunday, October 17 1861, the Revd. James Snape, Headmaster of The Royal Grammar School, Newcastle upon Tyne, preached in Earsdon Church when a *"sum of five pounds was collected in aid of the church Cleaning fund."*

The first mention of installing electric light in church was made on December 10 1930, but in 1931 the matter was shelved *"after hearing the cost."*

In 1935 it was estimated that tower repairs would cost £1,000 but in 1971 the PCC was still raising money for tower repairs - this time by a sponsored churchyard cleanup.

In 1965 the Vicar bemoaned the lack of space at the back of the church: christenings were rather crowded and there was a suggestion that the removal of some pews was a possibility. Thirty years on, and we still consider this a possibility!

The above surely goes to show the love and pride that people have for their church and that decisions must not be taken lightly.

THE PEOPLE

Whilst we have given a little insight into the general care and maintenance of the building by far the greatest emphasis is placed on the parishioners themselves and the social life that developed as the family grew.

1925. 300 tickets (at a cost of 1s.3d.) were sold for the Parish tea.

In June 1929 we have the first mention of the Garden Party with tea on the lawn, hat trimming competition, art gallery, find the penny, hidden treasure, baby show, country dancing, bran tubs and sports AND a fortune teller in a tent.

In 1932, reference is made to the Annual Dance, when refreshments were *"to be begged by ladies on the Council and the Sewing Party"*, but Mr. Mather *"would get the ham as usual."*

Surprisingly, there is no apparent mention of Centenary Celebrations in 1937 - only a small remark at the end of the Minutes of 13 October 1937 to the effect that £12.7s.7d. was raised at the Centenary Service.

1943 saw the formation of a branch of the Mothers' Union. This branch remained active with a good attendance for many years. Likewise in the 1960's there was a flourishing Men's Society enjoying social functions and giving practical help with maintenance.

In 1955 there is mention of a monthly social event and regular coffee mornings, whilst dances in the Eccles Hall were always well attended.

YOUNG PEOPLE

As early as 7 July 1925 there is a reference to the Sunday School Treat by bus to Jesmond Dene. Sunday School continued to flourish and there was an active Scout Group using the Eccles Hall, but even so in 1943 the Vicar commented that he *"would like to see more youth work carried out."* Attempts in 1964 to form a Young People's Club had failed *"through lack of leadership"* even though a membership of 40 was mentioned in the previous year.

Surprisingly, then, we find that in 1966 there were between 70 and 80 children in Sunday School divided into age groups. These numbers dwindled to around 20 in 1974 and the Sunday School was closed in December 1975. Now it is re-opened with plenty of assistants, but numbers remain small.

During the war years *"a small present was sent to each of our Church boys serving in His Majesty's forces."* Twenty three parcels were sent off.

There was no lack of young people attending dances in the Hall during the 50's and 60's. At one point residents in West View complained *"about the behaviour of young people returning from dances in the Eccles Hall."* The matter was referred to the sergeant of police. No mention is made of his action but we do know that two young men thought to be responsible for breaking a wash basin in the Hall were summoned before a PCC meeting, which *"reprimanded and dismissed them."*!

ECCLES HALL

The Hall has been the meeting place for a variety of village social events. In 1925 a small committee was formed to manage the Hall which was available for hire for weddings, whist drives, dances, concerts, and in 1955 Northern Gas held a two day cookery demonstration school there.

Although the Hall was taken over by the military during the war years it was soon back into use by the village again. In 1952 there were dances on May 10 and May 17 to *"finish the season"*, and in 1957 a fashion show was held in the Hall.

- 11.5.65 Resolution that St. Mark's, Shiremoor, be made
 a new parish.
- 18.3.74 Resolution passed that St. Alban's and St.
 John's withdraw from the Deanery of Bedlington
 and join with Tynemouth.
- 19.1.75 First reference to Week of Prayer for Christian
 Unity.

WHERE DO WE STAND?

"These are days of changing values and soaring prices". That is a comment made in the Minutes of the PCC in 1953 that could equally as well be made in the present day Minutes. How do we attempt to meet the challenge? We continue to worship as a family; to attempt to maintain the fabric of the building, we have our Coffee Mornings, Garden Party, Sunday School, Choir, we organise our social events and we attempt to look wider and care for those beyond our parish.

Many of the issues mentioned remain to be resolved inviting us to wonder if in 50 years, let alone another 100 years, we will still worry about our young people, whether the ghastly scourge of unemployment will be gone for ever, whether war on want will be needed any more, and whether apartheid will be only a mention in the history books. For all of these issues and more we continue to strive and pray for a gratifying solution.

POSTSCRIPT

POSTSCRIPT

"*All is flux*", a Greek philosopher wrote some 2500 years ago, and an Earsdonian of the mid-19th century might well agree on returning to these parts at the end of the 20th century. Some of the farm lands remain, but many have now been taken over by housing developments. The coal mines have long since closed, and what a previous incumbent described as a poor parish is now at least an average and in pockets an affluent one.

While much of the property in the village and in Wellfield speaks of a settled community, the same cannot be said elsewhere in the parish - and even in the larger established areas there seems to be a fair turnover of population. The erosion of village life, marked by the closure of the post office, the Phoenix pub, the changing facade of the houses on Front Street and the withdrawal of all non-agricultural industry has been in progress for a generation now and is, of course, a phenomenon well charted in other parts of Britain. Not all is loss, however: the conversion of the old school into a Community Centre has provided local people with a valuable asset, and the arrival of new comers from a variety of backgrounds enlivens and enriches the flavour of local life.

Not surprisingly, the church also has seen changes as it has adapted its style and worship to "*proclaim afresh in each generation the faith revealed in the holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds*" (from the "*Ordination of a Bishop*" - Alternative Service Book). The Alternative Service Book 1980 is used for most services, although the Book of Common Prayer of 1662 is still used for Evensong. Women play a full part in the church's liturgical, pastoral and executive functions, and all decisions are made and policies implemented by clergy and lay representatives, working together. Continuity with the past is also a feature of church life: at St. Alban's in organisational terms it is expressed in the Choir and the Entertainments Committee, which are the only church organisations to have enjoyed an unbroken history over the past 60 years or so; they are now supplemented by Pastoral and

Liturgical, Restoration and Hall Committees and by sundry groups convened to explore the Church's faith and mission - all indications of the church's intent to manage carefully its resources and attend to its mission and the need of the Community it serves.

In recent years the church council has had to spend quite a proportion of its time and energy seeking money for the urgent repairs to the stonework and roof of St. Alban's. At the time of writing some £36,000 has been raised, and the last phase of the restoration work has commenced. Many gifts and grants, small and large, have been welcomed warmly, and we hope that the completion of the work will release the church's energies and finances for effective mission both in the parish and beyond.

A priority in such mission has to be its work with children and young people - not because they are the church of tomorrow but because they are an integral part of the church of today. The re-opening of the Sunday School and the welcoming of new Servers have been two recent expressions of this concern. Much remains to be done St. Alban's, as all churches, is also caught up in the ferments on the nature of Christian belief, mission and worship. While resolutions to the various conflicts which have arisen recently are not easy to come by, maybe the disputes themselves ensure that we do pay God some lively attention.

The constant battle to find money and the disputes about the directions in which the Church at large and St. Alban's in particular are going may seem an unpromising launching pad for mission. However, unpromising starts are not unknown in these parts: the monks from Tynemouth Priory who established the first church in Earsdon are thought to have been among the more wayward and rebellious members of the monastic community in St. Alban's city sent here for penal and remedial reasons: some 8 to 9 hundred years on we continue the tradition they, for all their faults, were able to found. And, who would have thought that a priest being hunted by soldiers would lead to the conversion and martyrdom of a pagan whose name is honoured not just on the site of his execution but also on a hill some 270 miles to the north?

The Venerable Bede concludes his chapter on Alban with these words: *"St. Alban suffered on the 22nd day of June near the city of Verulamium. Here, when the peace of Christian times was restored, a beautiful church worthy of his martyrdom was built"*. The editor of this booklet expresses the hope that we too will build, in the words of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, *"something beautiful for God"* so that generations to come may continue to wonder as they wander in these parts and this phase of their history.

APPENDIX 1

TUDOR GLASS

We are indebted to Professor Evetts of Newcastle University for the following notes which have been taken from his book on St. Alban's Church Glass published in 1961.

The two lancet windows of the nave of Earsdon Church measuring 13 ft. 6½ ins high and 2 ft 9 in wide, have since 1874 contained heraldic stained glass dating from the 16th century which conforms in all details to that formerly at Hampton Court Palace. The glass comprises the full armorials of Henry VII and Henry VIII, the shields of arms, garter, crown, and motto being the same for each king, but made distinctive for Henry VII by the supporters which are a dragon on the right side and a greyhound on the left; and for Henry VIII by a lion on the right side and a dragon on the left.

The glass was given to the Church by the 12th Lord Hastings in 1874. It was purchased by the 10th Lord Hastings at the Polytechnic, London, and was designed originally for window openings measuring approximately 4 ft 8 in high and 1 ft 6 in wide, with pointed heads of simple arched form. A possible position for the Earsdon glass was the lower storey of the femerell or Louvre of the Great Hall which was destroyed about two centuries ago.

The glass is clearly the work of a most accomplished artist in his medium, and all the evidence points to Galyon Hone who held the position of King's glazier at the material time and to whom many references are made in the Hampton Court accounts for stained glass of this kind.

The method by which the impaled roses (each side of the Crown) of Lancaster and York were produced is both unexpected and interesting. Instead of making two semicircles, one bearing half a Lancaster rose and the other half a York rose, whole roses of the respective houses were painted and fired, and afterwards cut vertically into two halves.

The portcullis and rose badges at the very top would come from side lights at each side of the centre light holding the main armorial and crown.

APPENDIX 2

APPENDIX 2

RECOLLECTIONS of the FEARFUL COLLIERY ACCIDENT at Hartley Pit, Northumberland 1862

At eleven o'clock in the forenoon of Thursday, January 16th, the most terrible calamity that ever visited any coal-mine in this country occurred at the Hartley New Pit, a large colliery situated near Seaton Delaval, in the county of Northumberland. The immediate cause of the accident was the breaking of an enormous beam of cast-iron used for pumping water out of the pit. One half of this beam which projected from the engine-house, over the mouth of the shaft, snapped from the centre and fell into the pit. The fall of such a mass of metal, 21 tons in weight, down such a place, necessarily produced results of the most fearful description. The circular shaft was divided across the middle by a heavy timber partition called a brattice and, the beam striking it, crushed it down before it as if it had been a piece of cardboard. In its fall it also tore away from the side of the shaft the stone with which it was lined, and these, mingling with the wood-work of the brattice, became an impenetrable mass of rubbish, completely blocking all means of exit from the pit. Unhappily, the falling mass came in contact with the cage, containing eight of the miners who had been working all night, and who were ascending to the surface. In an instant the heavy metal cage was crushed and its occupants thrown down the shaft along with the mass of falling debris.

The accident had occurred at the most unfortunate time possible, as the day workmen were all in the pit ready to commence work, and those belonging to the night shift were preparing to leave - 204 men and boys being in the pit at the time in the lowest seam, 420 feet below the surface. The workmen found, on going down, that the only chance of extricating the unfortunate men,

was by clearing the shaft of the obstruction which blocked it up. The first thing to be done was to drag up the huge cage, which was still hanging in the shaft, covered by a mass of lumber. A little more labour brought the workers down to the men who had been riding up in the cage. It was found that three of them still lived, and they were with great difficulty rescued. News of the calamity having spread, workmen from various collieries in Northumberland and Durham were soon on the spot, anxious to aid the endeavours which were being made to reach the sufferers.

At four o'clock on the morning of the following Tuesday, a heavy fall took place in the pit, followed by a rush of deadly gas up the shaft, compelling the rescuers to give up their task for a time. On the recommencement of operations on the morning of Thursday, when the fatal seam was reached, not a living one was found. At one place about 150 bodies were found lying together; some had died with a smile upon their faces, and looked as if they had only fallen asleep, while others were frowning as if in terror. They had rudely chalked on pieces of wood, or written with pencils and scraps of paper, to the effect that a prayer-meeting has been held, or an exhortation given, showing that the horrors of an awful death had been lightened by the only consolation man could have.

But perhaps the most heart-rending spectacle of all, was the arrival of the bodies as they were brought up. Coffins had been laid at a distance, and these were piled in dismal rows; one by one the bodies were hoisted up; then rolled up in a shroud, a man called out the name, which was recorded in a book, while another chalked it upon the lid of the coffin; the coffin was then placed upon a smallrolley, and pushed along the wooden bridge, connecting one portion of the pit with the other when the name inscribed upon the coffin was again called out, each one being thus identified and claimed by some one among the crowd of agonised lookers-on, and conveyed to their dwelling. An old man - one of the carpenters engaged in bringing the coffins to the ground - knelt down by the side of one of the bodies, that of a strong, fine looking young man, as it lay stretched upon the ground; with all the intense, deep seated earnestness of a father's love, he gently

stroked the beard, and patted the hands of his son, for such the corpse had been. Some of the bodies were as fresh as when they left God's blessed light never to return to it.

One after another they were thus dragged forth from the pit below. At length the weary work was accomplished, and the whole of the bodies were brought to the surface. A mass meeting was then held on the ground, at which a letter from the Queen was read out which was as follows -

"Osborne, Jan. 23rd.

The Queen, in the midst of her own overwhelming grief, has taken the deepest interest in the dreadful accident at Hartley, and up to the last had hoped that, at least a considerable number of the poor people might have been recovered. The appalling news since received has affected the Queen very much. Her Majesty commands me to say that her tenderest sympathy is with the poor widows and mothers, and that her own misery only makes her feel the more for them. Her Majesty hopes that everything will be done as far as possible, to alleviate the distress, and Her Majesty will feel a sad satisfaction in assisting in such measures. Pray let me know what is doing.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

C.B. PHIPPS."

After the Queen's letter was read in the meeting devotional exercises were engaged in, several clergymen belonging to the neighbourhood taking part in them. The sound of many voices swelled out upon the air, singing an impressive hymn.

Arrangements were then made for the general funeral. Sunday at half past one o'clock was the time fixed; but long before that hour a dense crowd had collected. A cart was standing at almost every door, surrounded by a few men decently attired in mourning principally relatives and friends of the deceased, to pay the last sad tribute of respect to their memory. Many of the men had been connected with the Primitive Methodist body, and in the houses of these a short service was going on,

consisting simply of prayers, and the singing of the well-known hymn, commencing -

"Thee we adore, Eternal name."

At last, in one house after another, the sound of singing ceased, and another work began. Amid the loud cries of agonised women the coffins with their occupants, were placed upon the rude hearses. Some of the carts had only one coffin; others had as many as seven. Thus laden, one after the other of the carts, attended by its especial mourners, moved slowly away from the spot, till looking down the road leading to Earsdon, where the bodies were to be interred, a mingled crowd of spectators, mourners and carts covered with white sheets, was all that could be seen. Bearing away the lifeless forms of those who had been the strength of a whole village and leaving only a company of aged men, weak women and helpless children. Graves of various sizes had been prepared. A few were only sufficient for a single coffin; many held two, three, four and twelve; and one huge trench had been made to contain as many as thirty three. In these the bodies were deposited; the beautiful service for the burial of the dead was read; formed the last sad phase in this truly appalling tragedy. Long may it be ere we shall again be called on to record details such as these, or to witness scenes so sickening and heart-rending."