

CHAPTER 9.

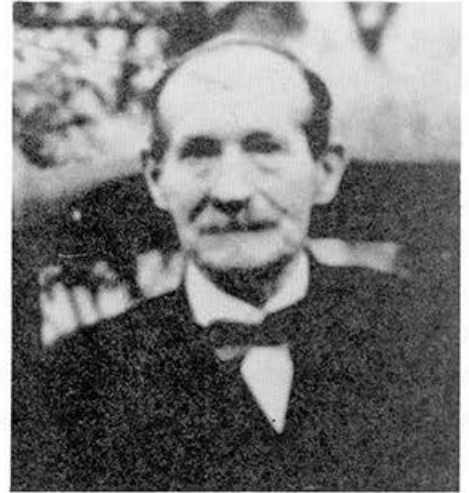
PEOPLE

For as long as there has been a church in Essington, there have been Essington people who have worked for it. Their numbers over the years run into hundreds. For their church they have brewed tea, made cakes, washed up, mowed grass, weeded flower beds, begged and bought, moved chairs and tables, cleaned up, polished floors, mended curtains, fixed lights, delivered magazines, sold raffle tickets, made kneelers, manned stalls - and probably grumbled a bit and laughed a lot.

For all these jobs, and more, these workers have "asked for no reward save that of knowing that we do Thy will". We take this opportunity to salute them and thank them for their efforts. It would be impossible to name them all even if such were desirable. Their reward and their memorial is the fact that the Church of St. John the Evangelist in Essington is alive and flourishing.

Yet, among these hundreds of unknown workers there are three who ought to be named if only for the length of their service in an official capacity. They are Mr.C.H.Moses, Mr.Charles Tudor and Mr. Don Pitchford.

Mr. Moses was Sales Manager at the local colliery, Holly Bank, and as such he was instrumental in bringing the railway to Holly Bank to move coal which hitherto had been transported solely by horse and cart. This was in 1892. He was a man of many parts. Apart from his work at the colliery he was also the Essington Scoutmaster at a time when the majority of Essington boys were scouts. He arranged for their activities throughout the year and organised the Annual Camp. He was also the Sunday School Superintendent and for a continuous thirty years, from 1906 to 1936, filled the office of churchwarden. In the ten years previous to the opening of the present church in 1933 he was chairman of the Building Committee and put in a tremendous amount of work in fund raising; and as the project neared completion he liaised with architect and builder to protect the interests of the parishioners.



Mr. C.H. Moses

In the Minute Books of Church Council Meetings there are references to his work both as warden and for some years as treasurer. His favourite saying was "One cannot do all, but many may." He died in January 1952 aged 85.

Another remarkable man was Mr. Charles Tudor who was Vicar's Warden from 1925 until his retirement in 1970 - a total of 45 years.

Those who may remember him will recall a rather big, rosy-cheeked jovial man who in summer time was invariably seen sporting a straw boater and wearing his butcher's apron.



Mr. C. Tudor.

The word that most readily springs to mind when thinking of Charles Tudor is "Gentleman" for he rarely became ruffled unless confronted by an injustice against friend or acquaintance; then, having done all in his power to put matters right no trace of ill-will or animosity remained against the offender. He always had a great regard for the worth of a human being, this being characterised most succinctly by the way he addressed a visiting Bishop or a tramp - both were addressed as "Sir".

His contribution to the life of the Church in Essington was immense. Yes, he was a faithful worshipper, he was an ardent supporter, he was a Churchwarden who served long and well; but his real worth as a Christian must inevitably remain secret, as secret as his acts of liberal giving of help and money to those greatly in need, without any thought of re-imburement or reward.

Charles Tudor reminded us of the injunction following the parable of the Good Samaritan when Jesus said "Go and do as he did" - Charles Tudor did exactly that.

His name is perpetuated in the village, for Tudor Court is named after him; this is very appropriate for Charles Tudor was indeed a 'courtly' man.

The third name, happily with us and still going strong is Mr. Don Pitchford, one of the dwindling band of those who were present both at the laying of the Foundation Stone - 1932 and at the consecration a year later.

Mr. Pitchford was appointed organist and choirmaster in July 1937 and, apart from the war years when he served in H.M. Forces has filled that office continuously from that date - a total of 55 years! Details of his work during that time appear elsewhere in this publication.



Mr. D. Pitchford

His remarkable record has not gone unnoticed or unappreciated for in 1962 he was presented with a camera to mark his 25 years service and in 1987 his 50th anniversary was celebrated with a party at which he

was presented with a wall clock. This was also celebrated with a visit from Lichfield Cathedral Choir, and Don was invited to play the organ at the Cathedral when several members of the congregation were privileged to be present.

It is not only as organist and choirmaster that Don Pitchford has involved himself at St. John's. For years he was a member of the Parochial Church Council and served as treasurer during the difficult years of the 1950's. He was also Foundation Manager of St. John's School and more recently served as Chairman of the Governors of that school.

Mr. Pitchford's commitment to St. John's must be quite unique. An ordinary member of the congregation can go missing for a Sunday or two without comment - but if the organist is missing everybody knows!

Apart from holidays and occasional illness, Don Pitchford has been there week in, week out, year in, year out for 55 years. This is a record of service and loyalty of which he himself is no doubt proud, and certainly one for which the people of St. John's are profoundly thankful.