

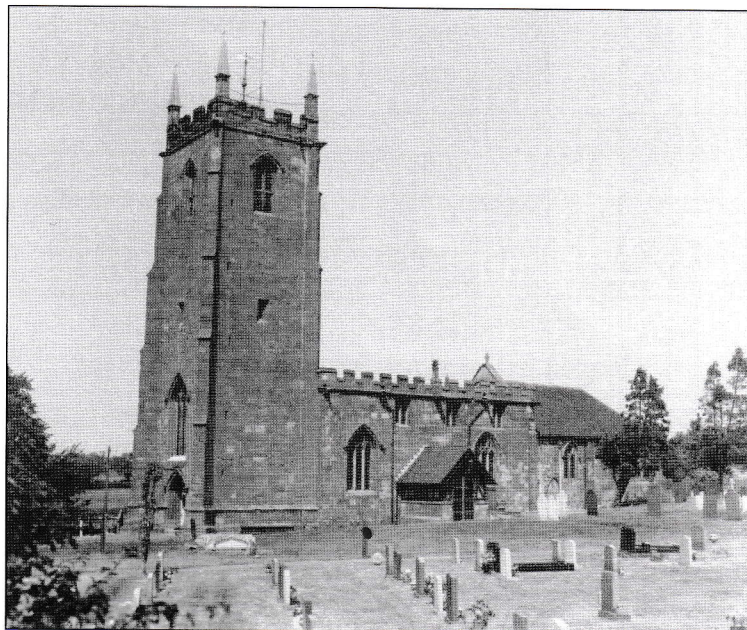
Church of St. Laurence Magazine

Parish including Birchley Heath, Ansley Common
Ansley Village, Church End

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Bridges Out, Walls Down, Roots Down
and in particular Roots Down Into The Love of God.

When my ministry was reviewed by your leaders - and this was done separately in Arley and Ansley- the same conclusion was made. We are doing our best to reach out to the communities we serve, and can be justifiably proud of all we are doing (though there is always room for improvement) but we are taking less time than we might to seek God's guidance and to pray together.

Yes, we have done right to improve our buildings. They were crying out for it! But as the work is now underway we need to concentrate on building ourselves as the Body of Christ. We need to put down our roots in the love of God.

When we started our building work we asked people's opinions. We hope you are pleased with what has happened. But now there are different questions to think about. What about the spiritual building? What about our life of prayer and service? How do we do? What could we do better? How might we build up our prayer life as individuals and as a Church?

And personally..

Would you appreciate help to pray? Would you value teaching about prayer? Or would you value praying with someone else?

Just as when we did our building work, we consulted not only church members but the community as a whole we would again be interested in everyone's views. Why? Because if we are to help and serve our very different villages we need most of all to be people of prayer.

Your thoughts and prayers would be greatly appreciated.

As you think remember in these troubled times to celebrate that wonderful truth:
Even in the storms of life we are still rooted secure in the love of God.

Peter

May, St. Laurence's Church – Services

Sunday 3 rd	Easter 4	10.30 a.m.	Morning Worship
		4.00 p.m.	Family Service in Village Church Hall
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 10 th	Easter 5	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 17 th	Rogation	10.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 24 th	After Ascension	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 31 st	Whit Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Special Family Service
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong

St John's Church Hall Ansley Common Services

Please note All Services will be held at the centre St. John's Close until the work on the hall has been completed

Sunday 3 rd	Easter 4	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 10 th	Easter 5	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 17 th	Rogation	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 24 th	After Ascension	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 31 st	Whit Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Songs of Praise

Other regular activities

Full details on the notice boards. No activities will be taking place in St. John's Hall until the refurbishment is complete.

From the Registers

With the Church not fit to be used the planned baptisms and any funerals for the last few weeks have been moved to St. Wilfred's Old Arley. Details next month.

Ascension Day Thursday 21st May

This very important day in the Christian calendar will be celebrated at Wesleyan Chapel in Old Arley at 7.30 p.m. It has been the tradition over many, many years to combine the parishes and denominations for this special service.

Plant Sale.

Planning is going ahead to hold this now annual event on the Friday 15th from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. and on Saturday 16th May from 10.00 a.m. to noon. There is always a good display of bedding and trailing plants as well as a good selection of perennials. There will also be tips given. Tea and coffee and biscuits will be available and there will be time for a chat.

Holy Week and Easter services.

This year the Holy week and Easter services were very different for the respective congregations. Firstly we held the Maundy Thursday Last Supper Service in the Village Church Hall. With the Church without any heating and extremely dusty the Good Friday vigil was held in the annexe as were the Easter Sunday services. As mentioned last month only Easter lilies were purchased to be put on the altar. The annexe looked festive for the Easter

services with flowers on the window sills, and although very different to our normal celebrations for Easter the three services were a true celebration of the resurrection of our Saviour.

'From tiny acorns mighty oaks do grow'.

The total paid into our Fabric Fund in March was £31.50 bringing the total to £135.50 all from small change collection. Thank you to everyone who contributed. The jars will be in Church for the rest of the year.

The Church Fabric

What a difference a month makes! Four weeks ago the church was being pulled to pieces with plaster coming off the walls in so many different places. At a special PCC meeting with revised the costs known for the work in hand, the members of the PCC decided to go ahead and re-plaster the north aisle. It was also decided to leave part of the brick work exposed for us and future generations to be able to appreciate the heritage and workmanship of the early 20th century. Now all the plastering has been completed in the nave and the pews are back in place. Work is now continuing in the north aisle, but it will, with God's help, be completed and the church cleaned in time for the wedding on 2nd May.

In making the decision to complete all the plaster work at this time it will mean that there are no funds available to redecorate the church. In fact there will be very little left in the fabric fund, and we must all sincerely hope and pray that there will be no unforeseen costs to be met from this fund.

St. John's Church Hall

It is pleasing to report that the project to refurbish the hall continues to progress and is on schedule. The weather has been favourable and at the time of writing the new roof on the existing hall is almost complete and we are pleased to say that there has only been one rotten piece of timber found and is in the course of being replaced. The new build part of the hall now has it's roof timbers in place and it is anticipated that by the time you read this the roof will be complete.

Women's World Day of Prayer,

This was the second time Ansley had held such a service. Held in the Annexe on Friday 6th March and with many taking part it was a service that taught us how people around the world can work together for the good of all especially through prayer.

Table Top Sale

This now annual event was probably the best attended so far and all 12 tables were used. A total of £100 was raised for hall funds and the stall run in aid of the church fabric fund raised a further £46.05.

Gaza

The congregation of St. John's raised £51 for the bishop's appeal for the people of the Anglican Hospital in Gaza and this sum has been forwarded to help with this work.

Mothering Sunday

Due to the state of the church it was decided to move the St. Laurence morning Mothering Sunday service to the Village Church Hall, to provide more space than would be available in

the annexe. There were a few pictures returned that had been coloured in by the children and these were placed on the altar for all to see. At this service, the one at the St. John's centre and the evening service in the annexe, posies were distributed to the congregations to give to their mothers, or to remember their mothers. Thank you to Marie and her assistants for making the lovely array of posies.

Finance

As already mentioned the fabric fund balance of £33,874 at the end of 2008 is now fully committed.

As is the balance in St. John's hall account, these are for the current refurbishment.

The reduced balance in the Village Church hall account of £1,878 reflects the expenditure to complete the refurbishment of that hall, however the hall is now being used most evenings and on many mornings and at the present time it's finances are on a sound footing.

The Church yard fund for 2008 shows expenditure of £5,515 and a surplus of £323

The position of the general account at the end of 2008 was a little better than it was earlier in the year. Overall there was a reduction in this account of £3610. One of the worrying items is the continued decline in the cash collections, this being particularly noticeable at weddings and some funerals. However this reduction in our funds cannot continue indefinitely and hard choices will have to be made if we are unable to raise the necessary funds to pay our way. Thank you to everyone who contributes to the church finances in any way, however small, as can be seen from the small change collection every penny counts.

The P.C.C. are also very grateful to Margaret Kimberley, who, along with her other commitments, has continued as our treasurer. Managing the church finances is a demanding task and everyone can be sure that Margaret can account for every penny and every item of expenditure is justified.

AGM

As our Annual General Meeting was postponed to 30th April there will be a full report in the June issue of the magazine.

Stressful Times Advice from the Arthur Rank Centre

Worried? Troubled? Stressed?

Rural Stress Helpline 0845 094 8286

Email: ruralstresshelpline@rase.org.uk

www.ruralstresshelpline.co.uk

Prayer Requests

If you would like someone or a particular situation remembered in prayer at our Sunday Services both at St. Laurence and St. John's please hand the slip below to a member of the Church Congregation or contact the Vicar on 024 7639 9070. Please remember the vicar would be pleased to visit anyone who is sick, but he does need to know, again please ring.

Please pray forwho is

May, 2009

As we say goodbye to April, it is very reluctantly as that month brought us the Daffodils, Tulips, Pussy Willow, Anemones, Cowslips, Primulas and all sorts of flowers to brighten up the garden which had seemed so bare in Winter. I never cease to be amazed at the way our garden is transformed in a few short weeks from bare earth and dead branches and leaves, to a picture of life and colour. The birds are busy building their nests and taking advantage of the bird bath to Spring clean themselves, but May will bring it's own treasures as many more jewels emerge, and we watch for the Bluebells to amaze us once more.

Have you noticed, when you are young the people in charge from parents, teachers, doctors, through to politicians seem quite old. I remember Churchill and Atlee, and even our local M.P. looked very, very, old. However, when I see and listen to people like the Foreign Secretary, and see him among the leaders of the world, who are probably no older, I feel the country is being run by youngsters. Of course this isn't true; the fact is they look young compared to my age.

It is like an ambition achieved to see the English Women's Cricket Team winning the World Cup. Up until I was 16 years old, every evening in the Spring and Summer I played cricket in the field near us with boys and girls. My elder brother even got me an old cricket bat and wickets. I loved it, and once even had to pay for a broken window out of my errand money when I hit the ball too far. It is amazing that if it had been the men's team who won the World Cup they would have been hailed by everyone, even probably having a procession through the streets on an open top bus, but they didn't so I say 'Well done the English Ladies!

I can remember my Dad saying at the end of World War 2, that we would be in debt to the U.S.A. for ever the amount of money they had lent us. Then recently I saw an article which explained his words. In 1945 the loan from U.S.A. was more than a billion pounds, which is more than 50 billion at today's prices. This was meant to be paid back in 50 annual instalments starting in 1950, but payments were deferred for 6 years because of economic or political crises. There was a fixed rate of interest of two per cent and the final instalment of just over £45million was made on the last day of 2008. Apparently the debt and its repayment was never a secret but successive governments never went out of their way to talk about it. Well, my Dad was partly right because it wasn't paid off in his lifetime.

The other day I was listening to someone say what they would do if they won millions on the Lottery. Then I found this quote in my 'Happiness Quotations'.

'In pursuit of happiness half the world is on the wrong scent. They think it consists of having and getting, and in being served by others. Happiness is really found in giving and in serving others'

Marie Cove.