*Was this Article written for the Church 100 year Celebration booklet?*

**SOME CHURCH PEOPLE**

The Chapel, later the Church, of Holy Trinity was built in 1835 to meet the needs of the growing population of the village, the Davies brothers, Warburton, of Woodgate, and Francis John, of Danehurst, would have been among the first worshippers there, they had their own galleries and seats for their staff. One of the choir boys in the old church was Alban Gasson who is mentioned later.

The Danehurst Estate was purchased by Herbert C. Hardy in 1875 and as we have read the present building was erected by his widow in his memory.

In November 1945 the Parish Magazine included a few notes on my father, Albert Lucas, who had died in the previous month. The Rev. Cornish noted that Albert remembered seeing the Church of Holy Trinity burning on his way to school, he was also organ blower at the service of Dedication of the new All Saints Church in 1892.

Danehurst was purchased by G.D. Haslam following the death of Mr Harold Messel in 1920, both Harold and his wife, Leanora, who died in in 1918, are both buried beneath a large table tomb in the Cemetery, the village hall was built as a memorial to her and also to the men lost in the 1914-18 war.

Mr. Haslam, a churchwarden from 1929 to 1945, was very much involved with church affairs, the family attending Morning Service every Sunday. Mr Haslam, his wife, Florence, and his sister in law, Miss Leupold, were all over six feet tall, an imposing trio who, with Charles, the only son, by tradition occupied the front pew facing the lectern. However when they arrived on October 29th 1939 it was to find that the Colonel and Offices of the London Irish Rifles attending their first Church Parade at Danehill sitting in the family pew, this caused concern to some and a little amusement to others. Following the death of Mr Haslam in 1947 and his wife a few months later the Danehurst influence declined.

Viscount Cecil of Chelwood was a very regular worshipper at All Saints Church, often reading a lesson in measured statesmanlike voice. Lord Robert, as he then was, and Lady Cecil built "Gale" on Ashdown Forest in 1900 where they lived for the next fifty eight years, celebrating their diamond wedding in the parish. Viscount Cecil, a tall, distinguished figure and his Lady, quite small and very deaf, travelled to church in the large, old fashioned, black hire car from the Ashdown Garage, he often wearing a black cloak over a formal morning suit.

Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins Turner built their house which they named "Shotover" (now Church Hill House ) in the garden of an earlier house next to the church. The house was designed with a large central hall which they hoped could be used for local community events, during the war years the house was often used for gatherings connected with the war effort, emergency supplies were stored there, to be used in the event of the threatened invasion. In 1941 Mr Hawkins Turner provided "blackout" curtains for the church, this generous gift meant that evensong could be resumed during the winter months of the war years.

Those of us who grew up in the parish will remember the tall, slightly stooping, white bearded Mr Horace Chatfield who was a church warden from 1918 to 1940. Mr Chatfield's family were also involved with the church, his wife, son George and daughter, Grace all played the organ at various times. Mrs Chatfield and Grace helped with the Sunday School. Mr George Chatfield gave the Parish Historical Society our earliest photograph of Danehill's first church.

Two entries in the Parish Magazines record the burials of a couple who served the parish church for most of their lives, in March 1949 Mr Alban Gasson was buried, he was born in Danehill, attended the village school under Mr Beech, was a choirboy in the old Holy Trinity Church choir and was a verger at All Saints from 1929 to 1946.

Mrs Elizabeth Gasson died two years later, her mother had been employed by a previous vicar, Mr Walter Summers, at the vicarage in the 1880's. For many years, until 1940, Mrs Gasson was the church cleaner, her daughter, Mrs Thora Cobby, recalls the spring cleaning: "father carried water from North Northlands pond, which was heated by a "Primus" stove in the porch, and mother, helped by the family, scrubbed the stone floor on their hands and knees". Alban Gasson also filled and trimmed the lamps in the church, paraffin was stored in a little shed.

How many of us remember Mr Chatfield or Mr Gasson turning down the lamps during the sermon to conserve paraffin and adjusting the flame when a lamp smoked ?

Mrs Alice Manklow took over the church cleaning in 1940 which she continued to do until her death in 1984, Alice also acted as verger for many years attending most services, weddings and funerals in the church.

Miss Emily Tatham came to live in the parish in 1921 sharing "Mynys Garth" (now Woodlands) with Miss Nevins, later building "Beeches" a little further along church lane, her initials "E.T. can be seen on the brickwork. Miss Tatham, (very few people would have addressed her as Emily) was a talented musician and singer also a devoted church go-er, leading both the church choir and the local Choral Society - her powerful voice and perfect diction in contrast to most of the choristers. The crib figures were given by Miss Tatham in 1953, the processional cross is in her memory, she died in 1955, those of us who knew her remember her as a rather awesome person who could also be kindly with a great sense of humour.

Mr William Bird was the schoolmaster of Danehill School from 1919 to 1948, he was a church warden from 1941 until his retirement in 1948, both he and Mrs Bird sang in the church choir.

The school was closely linked with the church at this time, all pupils and teachers marching to the church from the school on Armistice Day and Ascension Day for special services. The vicar made regular visits to the school to help with the "scripture" lessons early in the school day.

Mr and Mrs. Bird worked tirelessly for the local community, he was Honorary Secretary to the Memorial Hall Committee, helped with the sports clubs was leader of the Boy Scouts; Mrs Bird helping with Wolf Cubs, Girl Guides, the Women's Institute and the Country Dance Club.

This short article can only mention a few of the many people who, in the first hundred years in the life of our comparatively modern church, have worshipped, made a first public appearance at baptism, perhaps sang in the choir, were married, and said farewell to loved ones at funerals there.