Newbold Church Gets Its Spire



A scheme that started many years ago reached its culmination at Newbold Verdon last night when the Bishop of Leicester dedicated the new tower of the Parish Church.

The fund to provide the church with a tower began way back during the incumbency of the late Canon J. H. Jacques, between 1911 and 1917. During this time a sum of £800 was raised, and the scheme was later revived by the Rev J. D. Bolton.

Shortly after the end of the second world war the effort was again stepped up and a considerable sum was raised. It was during the incumbency of the Rev R. N. B. Hunt and the present rector, the Rev John Morris, that the fund really began to be finalised.

The completed tower has cost somewhere in the region of £6,000.

Last night's service was attended by representatives from most of the surrounding parishes, including Barlestone, Nailstone, Kirkby Mallory and Market Bosworth.

The rector conducted the service and among the clergy present was the Rev R. B. Hunt, formerly of Newbold Verdon, and now living at Aswardby in Lincolnshire. Mr J. Legg, son of a former rector, was also present, as was the Rural Dean and the contractors and architects of the scheme.

Lessons during the service were read by Mr J. C. Selkirk.

The spire is built of cedar wood shingles with Delta rust-proof metal joinings.

As our pictures shows the church is a very lovely building.



The Rev J. Morris.

His Towering Ambition

ONE of Leicestershire's oddest landmarks is the tower of St. James' church, Newbold Verdon . . . . . simply because no tower exists.

For fifty years villagers have been collecting money to build one, and at last they are in sight of their goal. "Another year should do it," grinned the new Rector, the Rev. Reginald Hunt, as he pored over plans in his study this week.

Nobody knows how the church lost its tower. The present squat brick structure, resting on the old tower base and rising barely above roof level dates back far beyond living memory.

It was there when the Rev. William Cole rebuilt the rest of the church of granite blocks in Victorian gothic style in the 1890s. He could not raise enough money to replace it and the tower rebuilding fund was started there and then.

Smaller Tower Planned

For years the fund languished. Then it was revived by the last Rector, the Rev. Julius Bolton, and when Mr. Hunt accepted the living in February this year there was £3,370 in the bank. Last Saturday a garden fete brought the total above £3,500.

Mr. Bolton envisaged a tower with a chamber for eight bells. It would have cost £7,000, and meant a further long wait for the money to be collected. Mr. Hunt, a forthright energetic 37, could wait no longer. He commissioned plans for a smaller tower, with a three-bell chamber, so the job could be done with the money in hand.

The new tower will be 56 feet high (the present brickwork is 32 feet) built of brick with a facing of granite chips in a style to harmonise with the rest of the building.

Challenging Prospect

Says Mr. Hunt: "It's remarkable that we should have to pay around £4,000 for the new tower, when the rest of the church was put up for £2,900. But I am determined to have one. I believe that in a few years this parish will be one of the biggest areas of population in this part of Leicestershire, because it is free from mining subsidence. It is a challenging prospect for me."

Another of the mysteries of St. James' church is the origin of its valuable silver altar pieces, said to be worth £1,500. They are kept in the bank and brought out for festivals.

The collection includes an alms dish, which is known to have been bequeathed by Nathaniel Lord Crew, Bishop of Durham, who had a summer residence at Newbold; two chalices and patens, two wine tankards, a wine cruet and a siborium.







St. James', Newbold Verdon—the church without a tower. At what date the ugly brick structure was added to the old tower base is unknown. The rest of the church was rebuilt in the 1890's. Left, the fine collection of silver plate which is the treasure of St. James' Church. The origin of only one piece—the alms dish—is known. Right, Mr. Hunt examines the plans for his new church tower. He has been ordained five years. Before that he served in the Royal Army Pay Corps, and was stationed in Leicester.

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