

Great Wakering's Coronation Clock

Unveiling Ceremony Yesterday

The Completion of a Long effort

Letter from King George V

There was quite an air of excitement abroad in the village of Great Wakering on Wednesday afternoon, when what has been called the "Coronation Clock" was unveiled and dedicated "to the glory of God and to beautify his sanctuary". The event marked the termination of a long continued effort to celebrate the Coronation of King George V, and was also the finishing off, as it were, of a considerable scheme of renovation which was found necessary to carry out on the tower of the church. Mr W H Fry has been the energetic hon secretary of the fund, and it is largely due to his work, aided by that of the Vicar, the Rev H Serjeant, and a number of leading residents in the village, that enough money was collected so that the clock could be formally given over to the church. It has two copper dials, one of which faces the village street; the other one looks south, and the gilt letters on the black face are visible a long distance. At present it strikes the hours, although there is a hope that at some future date enough may be collected for providing it with chimes for the quarter and half hours.

The clock itself has cost about 60 pounds and the fixing another 10 pounds, and practically all of the money has been collected. The clock was supplied by Messrs H Waites and Reed of Clerkenwell, Mr E King, of Shoeburyness. taking an active part in this portion of the proceedings. On the south side of the tower there is a tablet with the words: "The clock in this tower was erected by the inhabitants and Landowners of Great Wakering to commemorate Coronation of King George V, 22nd June 1911. Horace Serjeant (Vicar) Chairman. William H Fry. Hon Secretary".

The churchyard was crowded with people by a quarter to three when the dedication service commenced, a festive air being imparted to the proceedings by a number of streamers of flags attached to the tower of the church and at various places in the street. The dedication service was performed by the Bishop of Barking, who was accompanied by the Rev T O Reay (Rural Dean), The Rev H Serjeant (Vicar of Great Wakering), the Rev J N Philpott (Rector of Southchurch) Mr E A Wedd JP and Miss Wedd, Mr A U Kemsley, Messrs G Bailey and E C Lay (Church Wardens), Mr W H Fry (Hon Secretary of the Committee), and all members of that body.

The proceedings opened with the surplices choir singing two verse of the National Anthem after which the Vicar made a short speech relative to the occasion. They would, he said remember that on June 22nd 1911, almost twenty one months ago, King George V was crowned. Various festivities were held in which both young and old

took part, but it was felt by members of the Committee that the event should be celebrated in some more lasting manner. After a great deal of discussion and consideration, it was decided the best thing to do would be to provide a clock and put it up in the tower of the Parish Church. The result of the long series of activities had been that they were there on that occasion to unveil and dedicate the clock. Some amount of delay had been caused by the fact that when it was proposed to put up the clock in the church, the tower was not in a fit state to receive it. Since then they had spent 150 pounds on the restoration of the tower, and when it had been completed, they put in the clock. For the present the clock would strike the hours, but it would be possible to add for the striking the quarter and half-hours, though he was afraid it would be a long before that came about, as it would cost about 50 pounds more. He hoped, that now that the clock was put up, it would be greatly to the convenience of the inhabitants of the parish for many generations to come.

Mr Wedd added a few words, remarking that the people of Great Wakering were second to none in their loyalty to King George V, and was with especial pleasure they took part in the unveiling of a clock which was put up to celebrate the Coronation of their King. (Applause). They all knew that 75 pounds did not drop from the clouds, and coming on the heels of the restoration of the tower, it made it difficult to get the money together. But to the honour of the inhabitants of the village the collectors had but little difficulty in raising the requisite funds. Of course there were certain additional expenses

in connection with the putting up of the clock, and , therefore , they could not say they were absolutely clear from debt. He hoped, however, with such enthusiasm prevailing as he saw that afternoon, that would soon be completely clear of debt. The King had been acquainted with the event they were celebrating that afternoon, and a letter had been received from the King by Mr W H Fry (the Hon Secretary of the fund), as follows:-

BUCKINGHAMPALACE

March 11th 1913

Sir, - I am commanded by the King to thank you for your letter of the 10th in which you mention for His Majesty's information that a striking clock with two dials will be place in the Parish Church tower in commemoration of His Majesty's Coronation. I am further to assure you that His Majesty much appreciates the loyal sentiments and good wishes to which your letter, on behalf of the inhabitants of Great Wakering, gives expression.

CLIVE WIGRAM

A brief appeal for funds was made for funds by Mr A Green and the unveiling ceremony was performed by Miss Wedd, who declared in a loud and clear voice, "As a loyal tribute to our King, and commemorate his Coronation, I unveil this clock". Immediately the covering of the clock face was removed, the hour of three pealed out

in mellow ringing notes and everybody cheered heartily. The Bishop then dedicated the clock as follows: "We dedicate the clock to the glory of God and to beautify his sanctuary in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen. All things come of Thee, O Lord. and thine own we have given thee".

A move was then made to the interior of the church, where a service was held. The hymns and psalms were of a special character, the prayers being said by the Rev H Serjeant and the lesson being read by the Rev T O Reay and the Rev J N Philpott.

The Bishop preached from the text, "The Lord is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation". (Exodus 15,II). He said that he thought they had well chosen that Easter week for the dedication of the new clock. It would tell out the hours for years to come, so that the people who lived round about and within sound of its bell would mark, perhaps, with softened and more feelings, the passing of time. Despite all kinds of changes in the place, it would go on marking the progress of the days. It did ones heart good to see such a gathering as that, all animated with the one desire of praising God for his goodness. There were a number present, he felt sure, who could remember that church when it was in a far different state to what it was that day. He remembered coming down there many years ago and being saddened by the state of the churchyard, with the fences broken down, and things generally in a state of disrepair. They knew how from time to time, efforts had been made and self-sacrifice shown, so that the house of God had at last been put in the

condition in which they would desire to see it. The churches all over the land were silent witnesses of God's care and mercy to all people; through all the centuries they taught the message of God's pity and love. As the clock that they had dedicated marked the flight of time, it would be a reminder to those who passed by of the frailty and uncertainty of life on earth, so that they would be turned to devote their lives more and more to the eternal things of God.

The collection was devoted to necessary expenses connected with the placing of the clock in the tower, and to the fund for the restoration of the church tower, on which there is a debt of 5 pounds.