

EAST RAINTON

VICAR:

Rev. R. L. Welsh,
ry, West Rainton. Tel. Houghton-le-Spring 843263

CHURCHWARDENS:

Mr. N. C. Stewart,
Normanhurst, Grange View, East Rainton
Mrs. J. Weighill,
23 Fairburn Avenue, Houghton-le-Spring

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Hon. Secretary:

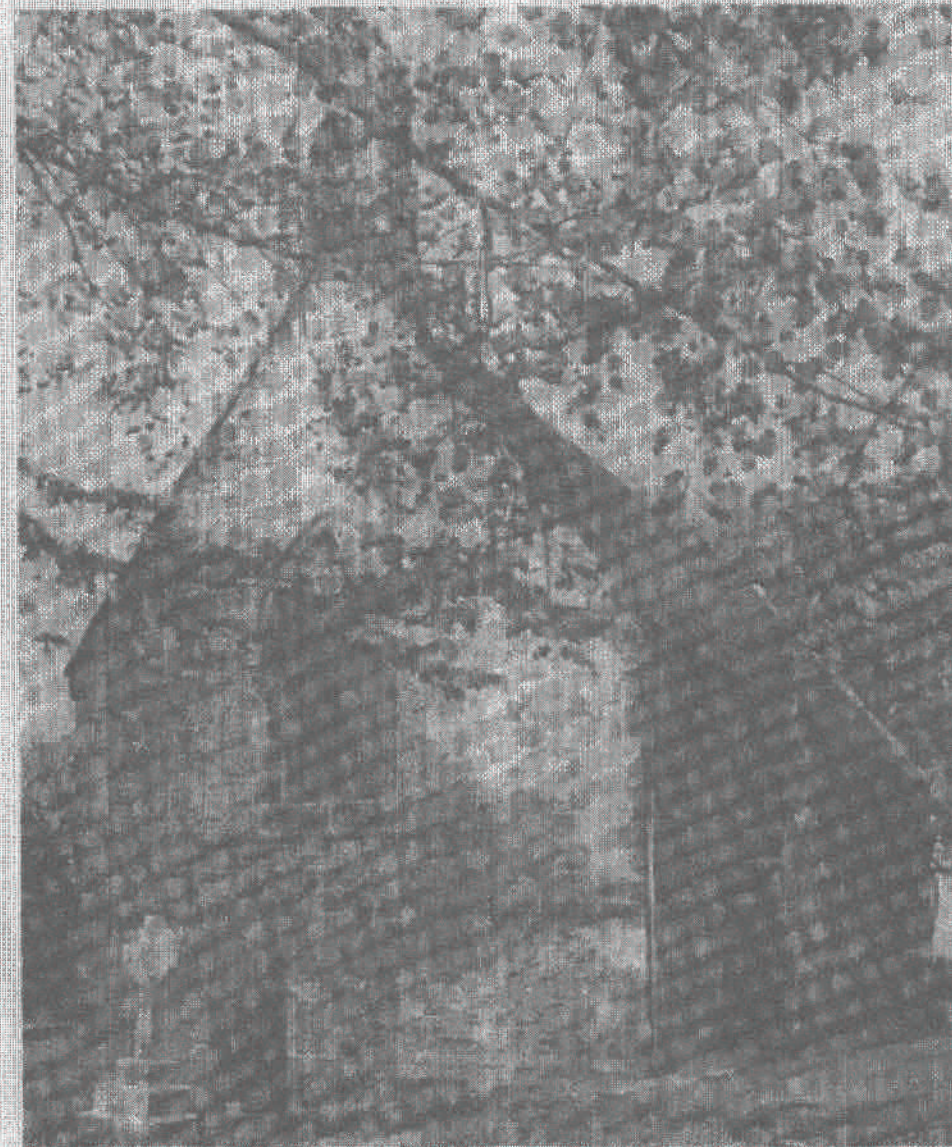
Mr. J. G. Wiseman,
'Camelot', 2 South Street, East Rainton

Hon. Treasurer:

Mr. J. S. Lockwood,
12 Hedgelea Road, East Rainton

Parish News Editor:

Mr. W. M. Morley,
'Muthaga', East Rainton



PARISH NEWS

HARVEST FESTIVAL 1985

Editorial

It is encouraging to learn that the Easter issue of Parish News was completely sold out yet unfortunate that some villagers were unable to obtain a copy.

Because of this modest success it is intended to continue with the present format for the current issue. East Rainton of yesteryear continues to be a popular topic and for this Harvest Festival edition we have moved forward the early part of the present century. Some readers will remember 1921 and many will have parents or relatives who lived through this immediate post-First World War period. Photographs of old buildings, some now demolished, always attract a great deal of interest and those which include previous inhabitants of East Rainton provide an added dimension. Readers possessing old photographs or prints particularly if they date prior to 1939, are requested to consider making them available to illustrate future issues of Parish News; great care will be taken of them and they will be returned immediately after use.

Unfortunately in our present medium of photocopied typescript - apart from the attractive cover which is professionally printed - it is difficult to reproduce photographs, especially if the originals are of poor quality. However, our last issue shows that it can be accomplished.

is raises an important subject which is dealt with elsewhere in the magazine. The present cost of producing Parish News is 34p. per copy which is greatly in excess of the selling price of 20p. per copy. Obviously the price needs to be increased for next year.

The Parochial Church Council will decide the cost of future issues but members will be pleased to hear readers' views on the matter. Should the magazine continue to be subsidised or should the cover cost be increased? They would like to know.

In our last two issues we have commented on a changing society whose wake is having its effects on community life; indeed we are all affected in some way. Inevitably there are physical changes in most villages in any decade but it is perhaps the social changes which are of even greater importance. Are we really concerned about the environmental changes which are taking place? Do we really care enough about the needs of the elderly, the handicapped, the housebound or even those who are 'just' lonely? We would welcome your comments on these important issues.

Finally we would like to express our thanks to Mr. Norman Suggett for writing a most penetrating and interesting article for this Harvest Festival issue.

HARVEST FESTIVAL

The twentieth century has been one of great changes. We have advanced from the horse age to one of immense scientific discoveries, improving the life style of everyone. In the early days a man was considered to be well-travelled if he had been to London but now it is quite commonplace to fly anywhere in the world. No longer is a girl satisfied with a honeymoon in Whitley Bay but sets her sights on the Costa Brava or other Mediterranean holiday area. The man in the moon is no longer a fable as space men have already walked on its surface.

The decoration of the Church for Harvest Festival, in some small way, reflects these changes.

For some years decoration centred on the corn harvest with sheaves of corn and a miniature corn stack taking pride of place. In the early part of this century, farm workers lived in 'tied cottages' with no running water or electric light and very primitive sanitation. A man was hired on Hiring Day and the farmer allowed him the use of a waggon and horses to move his 'bits and pieces'. He worked long hours for small wages but was allowed a supply of milk and potatoes. Every job was done by horses; a man ploughed an acre a day driving two or three horses. Some farmers insisted that men should start at 6 a.m. even if it meant yoking at that time and sheeting the horses until light enough to start work.

In the evening, when darkness prevented further activity, the ploughman 'homeward plods his weary way' but not that

day was complete - he still had his horses to feed and
ter and bed up for the night.

tility of the soil was improved by manure, carted from
the farmyard and spread by hand.

ymaking was a long tedious business, entirely controlled
the weather. Grass was dried, raked up with a horse
made into pikes which could be pulled on to bogeys
r transport to the stackyard. Hundreds of tons were
rted to the pits where huge stacks were built to provide
od for the ponies.

rn was cut by the self-binder after the field was 'opened
t' by scythe. Two or three horses dragged the binder round
d round the field leaving the sheaves on the ground. These
d to be stooked, by hand, to dry and later carted to the
ackyard where stacks were erected and thatched. There it
ayed until the steam thresher came to separate grain from
raw.

ring World War I many horses were taken for the army and
ny died on foreign soil. Those remaining were expected to do
l the work even though they were often fed on chopped straw.

the Spring, Irishmen came here to thin turnips, by the acre.
ey slept in the barn and worked from dawn till dark doing
o rows at once - one a pull stroke, the other a push. Irish
ore cattle were imported and sold in markets, such as
teshead, where they were bought to be fattened for beef.

lk was sold at the farmhouse door and customers brought their
m jug or can. Potatoes were picked by hand and schools had

a week's holiday in October so that children could help.

As a result of the growth of engineering knowledge and
experience gained in two world wars more and more of
the farmer's work is now done by machines. The tractor has
put an end to the drudgery of the farm horses, the milking
machine has improved the lot of the dairyman, corn is cut
by the combined harvester dried in the drier and can be off
the farm in a few hours. Fields are constantly increased
in size by pulling out hedges that made fields small enough
for horses to work. There is now no need for lighting lamps
to tend the animals in the evening as most farm buildings
are equipped with electric light. The ploughman no longer
trudges along behind his horses but sits in the cab of his
costly tractor, often listening to music on his radio.

Crop yields have been vastly improved by the discoveries of
science and pesticides have removed many of the farmer's
worries. Selective breeding has greatly improved farm stock
so much that the production of milk and other commodities
may have to be controlled.

In the early years of Harvest Festival decoration an
important place was given to a large lump of coal and the
paraphernalia of the miner; his lamp, his pick and shovel.
The miner often lived in a Colliery House, usually one of
a long row or street built near the pit so that workers
could hear the buzzer marking the change of shift. Work
went on continuously with shifts of eight hours - ponies
worked twelve hours. Extraction of coal followed the old

tradition of bord and wall, leaving pillars of coal to support the roof. These pillars were removed when workings reached the boundary of the colliery royalty. The coal hewer used a pick to dig out a deep cut in the face to allow the subsequent charge of powder freedom to work. Holes were drilled by a hand machine ready for firing. As a result of numerous accidents men had been refused permission to fire their own shots and were compelled to wait for the Deputy or Shotfirer who carried the detonators in a locked tin, on his person, in addition to his battery and key. Imagine the scene as the two of them squatted in a safe place and after the warning "There's fire!" the key is turned and the coal is blasted from the face. The hewer then filled the coal into tubs which were taken away by the putter and his pony. Tubs were taken into a landing or station and coupled together to form a set or train, hauled to the shaft where they were loaded into the cage and lifted to the surface.

Steam was all-important; the winder, hauling engines pumps and fan all depended on the functioning of the boilers. During the century all this changed as use of electricity became more common. The old safety lamps were retained solely for gas testing and canaries still feature in the equipment of mines rescue teams. Due to the expanding use of electricity and improvements of armoured cables the modern pit shows vast changes. A longwall face of, perhaps, a quarter of a mile in length is cut by a coal cutting machine and drilled by powerful electrically-driven machines. In

some cases, a huge machine like a bacon cutter "The Plough" cuts straight along the face tearing off the coal and turning it on to a conveyor, which in some pits is the first in a series carrying the coal to the surface up a drift.

Timbering, formerly the job of the coal hewer, has now been replaced by steel supports which can be moved forward as the face advanced. Ponies are no longer used and rails on sleepers no longer provide the only way to move coal.

Pitmen, living a life of danger, have always had a love of religion as evidenced by the number of Churches and Chapels in mining areas. The annual Miners' Gala at Durham had as its climax the Cathedral Service where many Colliery Bands playing the hymns and the banners of all the County Lodges made a colourful background.

There were many trains from all areas and the story goes that one miner puffed on to Durham Station and asked "When's the next train to Waterhouses?" "It's just gone," was the reply, "but there'll be another in twenty minutes!" "Oh that's alright then. It won't take me long to wait twenty minutes!"

Another miner, from Ashington, decided to travel on a bike calling in every pub on the way. When he reached Pity Me he lay down in a field to rest. When he awoke he could hear Church bells and realised that he'd overslept and that the Gala was over for another year.

Miners worked hard and played hard. Every pub had a quoits team and competitions were fierce. Some of their amusements



The original "Folds" now replaced by modern bungalows



Do you remember these properties? Where are
or were they and what has replaced them?

were not for the squeamish: live rabbit coursing with whippets was common and cock fighting took place in quiet spots.

The early clubs, apart from the feeling of camaraderie, were rather primitive with sawdust on the floor and spittoons strategically placed for tobacco chewers.

The modern working men's club is palatial in comparison!

The miner's colliery house has now been superseded by modern dwellings and many workers are now proud owners of their own homes.

In former years a boy leaving school hoped to be employed at the same pit as his father. He got his badge of coal-dusted eyes in the first month and rarely lost it. Few people could understand why miners never washed their backs and one Raintonian who joined the Coldstream Guards told a hilarious tale of his fellow soldiers' remarks when he went on bath parade for the first time. Nowadays, with Pit Head Baths, the miner can travel home from work looking as spruce as anyone else.

Gone are the days when the good lady of the house, with husband and sons coming in at all hours to use the tin bath in front of the fire, had to make sure of hot water supplies from the set pot and be ready to produce an appetising meal at any hour. She was very house-proud, keeping the house scrupulously clean making her own mats for the floor and using all her table scraps to feed pig and poultry.

Hence the saying "A fool chases his neighbour's hens from his backyard but a wise man fixes up a snug place for them to lay in!"

N. SUGGETT

BAPTISMS

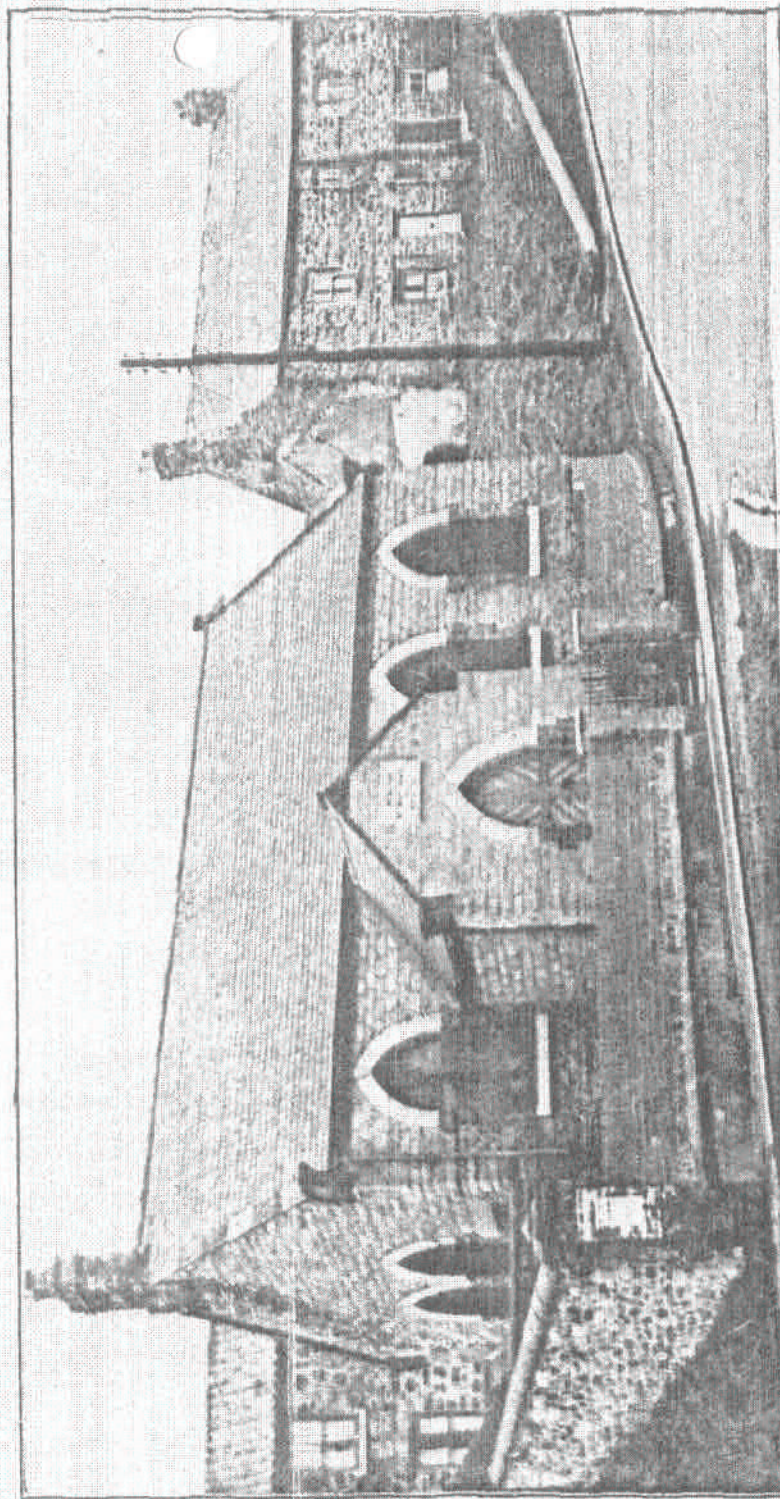
- 31st March STEPHENSON, Richard, 19 Hedgelea Road.
- 12th May SNOWDON, Anthony, 22 Meadow Street.
- SMITH, Clive Philip, 3 Meadow Street.
(Reception after baptism in Dryburn Hospital)
- METCALFE, Stephanie Marie, 15 School Road.

WEDDINGS

- 16th March BEST, Jacqueline of 8 Quarry House Gardens
and NICOLSON, Peter Steven.
- 20th April WALKER, Diane of 8 Meadow Street
and THOMPSON, Kevin

FUNERALS

- 15th April CARR, Rosina Amelia of 17 Quarry House
Gardens. Aged 81 years
- 16th May BROWN, Arthur of 35 Quarry House Gardens.
Aged 86 years. (At Sunderland Crematorium).
- 4th July POWNEY, Thomas of 29 Lloyd Avenue.
Aged 76 years.



The Wesleyan Chapel photographed about 1960. It was originally erected in 1823 but was enlarged and rebuilt in stone in 1889 at a cost of £400. John Wesley is reputed to have preached at Rainton in 1747.

SCHOOL NEWS

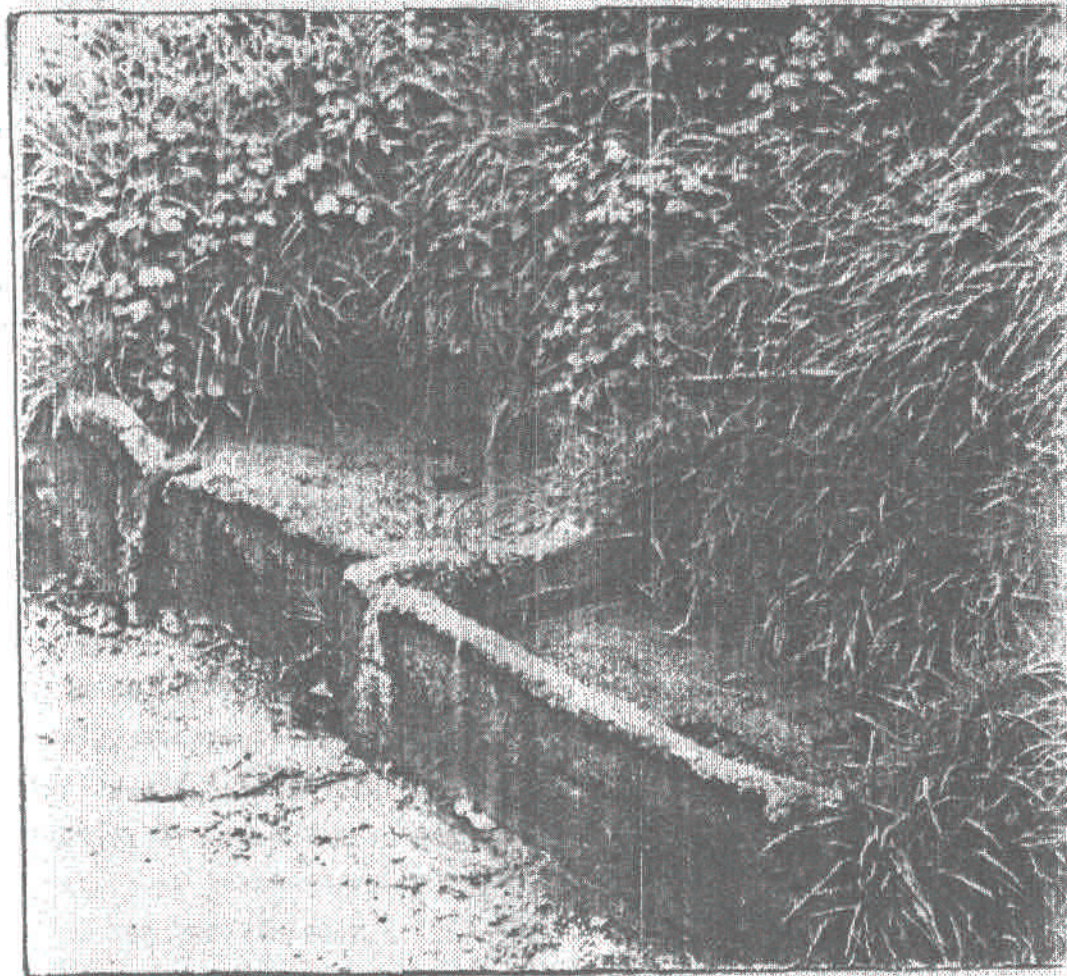
East Rainton Primary School has always been fortunate in the support it has received from parents and others in and around the village, who have the interests of the school at heart. Once again such friends and supporters of the school have responded magnificently: the recent 'sponsored spell' raised over £600 and has enabled the school to purchase an electronic keyboard and a video-cassette recorder. Both items are very desirable as classroom aids.

The keyboard, being a very portable piece of equipment, means that music need no longer be tied to a particular period in the hall when the piano is available. It is also a valuable teaching aid in its own right.

The video will enable us to record programmes to store and use as required and not only when they are transmitted. Suitable programmes broadcast out of school hours may also be recorded if they have some bearing on a topic in the school curriculum. All this makes for much more flexible working and will be helpful to us as teachers. But such 'essential luxury' items would be unobtainable were it not for the generosity of parents and friends who responded so favourably to our appeal. We are very grateful.

At the time of writing it is almost the end of another school year. Our fourth year children will be moving on to a new school. Our prayers and best wishes go with them particularly to those who may find the move to a larger school rather daunting.

J. WISEMAN
Deputy Head



The Old Well or 'troughs' on Rainton Bank

It has been suggested that Bernard Gilpin, the 'Apostle of the North', decided to water his horse at this well, on his journey to London to face trial accused of heresy by the Roman Catholic Bishop Bonner. Allegedly he broke his leg on dismounting and during his convalescence Queen Mary died and his trial was cancelled.

Although there are no authentic records showing how or where his leg was broken the story is worth repeating.

The Vicar's Letter

Dear Friends,

As I write this letter to you in July, I must thank you most sincerely for your help and support in making our Summer Fayre a very successful day. There was a good friendly spirit in the hall, with everyone seeming to enjoy it - and what a good number of you were there, despite the fact that we were clashing with the Miners' Gala and the Durham County Show. So a big "Thank You" for your loyalty to St. Cuthbert's and helping to raise very nearly £200. Now I know it's early, but would you book Saturday 23rd November 1985 - that will be the Christmas Fayre! And there will be the added attraction of the Grand Christmas Draw with tickets available at the end of September or early October. With a bit of effort, plenty of goodies to sell and some money saved up to spend at it, we ought to hit £500 - vital income for our church to do its work in the parish.

When this issue comes to you I hope that you will have been able to enjoy some relaxation and a well-deserved holiday - the last eighteen months have been rather rough on all sections of the community, but

especially so for those who live in this traditionally mining area. Let us who endeavour to follow Jesus, try to bring his understanding and wisdom to the healing of the bitterness and divisions within families and communities. Reconciliation is at the heart of the Gospel and ought to be at the heart of our family and community living.

As a body of Christian People, there are a number of issues that will call for our prayer and thoughtful decisions during the coming months - important issues which will affect our futures and particularly our children's and grandchildren's. They are (1) the re-marriage of divorcees, (2) the ordination of women priests, (3) modern doctrinal disputes and (4) experiments with human embryos. These are very real and must be faced. None are easy or straight-forward, nor can the church or individuals give a glib answer based on prejudice or preconceived opinions. It will mean accumulating as much knowledge about these issues as possible and going over all the pros and cons, weighing up the deep moral principles as well as the common sense practicalities. God has given us in this generation the responsibility of taking the first tentative steps in the shaping of life and the moral attitudes of the twenty-first century.

Your friend and Vicar

R.L. Welsh

EAST RAINTON IN 1921

We now turn to a period only three years after the ending of the First World War. Historically there have been great social changes after major wars and the 1914-18 War was no exception.

Women who had not previously been enfranchised were given the vote as a result of the 1918 Reform Act. In addition the balance of population had been changed as over three quarter million men had been killed during the war.

The 'Economist' described 1921 as 'one of the worst years of depression since the industrial revolution'. Coal mines, still the major industry in East Rainton, had been taken over by the government during the war years, but were handed back to their original owners on 31st March 1921.

However, as a result of general economic depression, the mine owners reduced wages and returned to a system of district rates which gave scant reward to miners working at the inferior pits. The owners refused the miners' demand for a 'national pool' to equalise wages and on 1st April began a blackout. This was followed by a strike which lasted until 1st July when the coal miners returned to work on worse terms than before. Coal miners and their families in East Rainton, as in many other coal mining communities, were experiencing difficult times. The post-war promise of 'a country fit for heroes to live in' seemed somewhat of a mockery!

However, village life continued. The Rev. Walter Egerton, who had been appointed to the parish in 1909, continued

to minister to his parishioners, Miss Margaret Walker continued to perform her duties as village postmistress and 'Landy' Day continued to manage the Hazard Colliery on behalf of the Lambton and Hetton Collieries Ltd.

The church school, built in 1868, by the church authorities, was by now controlled by the Durham County Council as a result of provisions contained in the Education Act of 1902. James Tilley was the Head Teacher whose long service was to extend to the headship of the present school built by the Durham County Education Committee in 1933.

Farmers in the village included John Bailey, George Hardy, Humphrey Hutchinson, Thomas Hutchinson and John Walker and the village shopkeepers were Miss Mary Fox, Mrs. Daisy Robinson and Miss Margaret Walker who was the postmistress.

The village blacksmith was Mr. Oliver John William, joiner Mr. Joseph Bailey and the cycle repairer Mr. Jones.

Records show that the number of public houses had by then been reduced to two, the Travellers Rest where Mr. G. Bowes presided and the Village Tavern where Mr. Sidney Maughan was mine host.

At this time East Rainton was included in the local government area of the Houghton-le-Spring Rural District Council whose clerk was Walter Plews, treasurer James Woods, highways surveyor, Ben Richardson and sanitary inspector William Morley.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Honorary Treasurer of the Parochial Church Council is now Mrs. Joan Weighill of 23 Fairburn Avenue, Houghton-le-Spring and not Mr. Lockwood as printed on the back cover of this magazine. Mrs. Weighill is also responsible for the distribution of magazines and requests for additional copies should be made to her.

SUMMER FAYRE

Mrs. Joan Weighill, Treasurer of the Parochial Church Council is pleased to announce proceeds approaching £200 from the Summer Fayre held on 13th July. Grateful thanks are extended to all who assisted and donated.

MINI - MAXIMS :

'Look for the sun rather than search for the clouds'

'There are in reality no little things, only little minds'

'To listen well is better than to talk badly'

'A church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for Saints'

'It is easy to be an angel when nobody ruffles
your feathers'