**BUCKINGHAM ADVERTISER AND FREE PRESS**

**SATURDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 1892**

**The Feast at Twyford.**

For some years past the ancient parish feast—the “big feast,” it is called—has been kept in a quiet, unostentatious way; and, as visiting and home-coming on such occasions are the order of the day, a happy thought struck some of the labouring parishioners to commemorate the event with little more *eclat* than usual, and it was commendable, especially as having originated amongst the villagers themselves. Wet and gloomy weather had been prevalent, and the day decided upon was somewhat later than the actual date of the festival, but this proved to be more lucky than otherwise, as the air was drier and the greensward more presentable for dancing. It was at the Red Lion Inn where the festivity and sports were held, and great credit is due to the host and hostess, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hill, for the excellent spread and orderly manner which prevailed. Their efforts to please were appreciated, and carried out without a hitch. A band was engaged from Preston Bissett for the occasion, in a close belonging to the inn; and well-known fiddler, George Stuchberry—familiarly called “Dingey” —enlivened the dancers in the parlour. About 60 partook of tea under cover, and village children purchased pretty toys, nuts, sweets, and buns from the stalls. As the dusk became observable, and the harvesters returned from their work, the merriment increased; and those good old English games, dancing-on-the green and kiss-in-the-ring, were joined in with vigour. Friends trooped in from the neighbouring villages, and joviality and good humour beamed on the faces of every one till the clock in the old Church tower struck 10. All went merry as a marriage bell, without the jar of one cross or drunken word; and it is more than probable that the old village feast next year will be revived on a larger scale by the respected host and hostess of the Red Lion.

It is often asked what was the origin —what was the first idea of commencing a village feast at Twyford. It will perhaps startle many to hear that the festival dates 1,300 years ago, and that the Church at Twyford was built at least 600 years previous to our time of living. It was dedicated to God, in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and in perpetual honour of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin—hence the feast, which, little or much, has been without a break honoured in cottages and never forgotten in the village for the long time of 600 consecutive years. This feast is only religiously acknowledged now within the Churches of the Roman Catholics; and mostly those who kept up the ancient anniversary at Twyford through the dim mist of centuries had lost sight of its meaning and significance. Before the Reformation of that tyrant and licentious king, Henry VIII., there were annual holidays in no less than thirty parishes in Buckinghamshire, the church of which is still dedicated to this feast. King Henry Vlll—through his wickedness and the point of the sword—compelled those who then lived in our villages and towns to give up the old Catholic Faith they loved so much. That is why the villagers of Twyford and hundreds of other parishes cannot remember being told about their feast, and why the origin of it has been lost sight of. The feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin has lately been commemorated from one end of the world to the other in all nations and languages by the Roman Catholics, rich and poor, with great rejoicing and solemnity. It only shows that the little village of Twyford, and in fact all England of our forefathers’ time, kept the great feast with universal gladness. In those old days the close of the feast day all the inhabitants were accustomed to hie to the Parish Church and sing before the Altar the glorious *Te Deum*, as is still sung on Sundays in every Parish Church of the land. Those outside the communion of the Roman Catholics are apt to think that too much honour and love is given to the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of Our Saviour; but after all is it not true that those in the Church of England and other churches honour her far too little? —she who was the Very Mother of God. she who nursed Him on her knee with a more divine love than any mother can give to her sweet little darling babe. In *Hymns Ancient & Modern* favourite hymn (450) begins ;

“Shall we not love thee, Mother dear, Whom Jesus loves so well?”

And again, in hymn 622, is sung

“Virgin-born, we bow before Thee, Blessed be the womb that bore Thee.”

This shows that Mary, the Queen of Saints, is still loved and beseeched in the Church of England; and free education amongst the masses will be the means in after years of strengthening the love to a perfection little dreamt of at the present moment. – G.W.B.

**BUCKINGHAM ADVERTISE AND FREE PRESS**

**Saturday 5 November 1887**

**Re-opening of Twyford Parish Church after Partial Restoration.**

This ancient and interesting church was re-opened on Thursday, November 3rd, after partial restoration, effected at a cost of £1,400, of which about £1,232 has been already subscribed. The work, which was entrusted to Messrs Cooper & Co., of Aylesbury, according to plans prepared by John Oldrid Scott, Esq., 41, Spring Gardens, S.W., has been thoroughly and substantially completed, and reflects great credit on the firm. The tower has been entirely re-built, and brought back to its original design. In the course of this work the old disfiguring gallery was removed, and the side arches of the tower opened into the aisles, the western part of which have been for many years built off from the interior of the church. The handsome arch in the east wall of the tower, and the beautiful west window and doorway are thus disclosed—the effect of which improvement is most beautiful and striking. The nave roof—a beautiful specimen of an early 14th century high roof, the design being exceedingly elegant and graceful—has been most thoroughly repaired, and an entirely new roof given the north aisle. The lead roof of the nave has been removed and tiles substituted. The piers supporting the arches of the northern arcade have been re-built from the foundations, and a new floor has been laid on the north side of the nave, consisting of York stone pavement in the aisles and transept, and wood blocks for the floor of the seats. The piers and arches of the south arcade have been scraped and freed from the disfigurements of numerous coats of paint and whitewash, also the exceedingly beautiful stone corbels which support the roof of the nave. The chancel arch and the wall above it has been reconstructed, and the roof, which is comparatively modern, the design being vastly inferior to the nave roof, has been similarly repaired. The floor of the sanctuary has been much improved by the laying tiles and the construction of altar steps. The old chancel stalls have been completed, and the remains of a very ancient rood screen have been disclosed; the upper part, however, has been ruthlessly sawn off by some wretched goths of a bygone age. The few pews which the church contained have been removed, and the ancient nave benches completed by the addition of one new one each side - the space in the north and south aisles being filled up with chairs. The west end of the north aisle has also been screened off to form a vestry. In clearing away the floor of the pews at the east end of the south aisle some few days since there was discovered buried beneath the floor a mutilated effigy of a crusader. In Sheehan's “History of Buckinghamshire" there is an allusion to such an effigy, hut it has not been seen in the memory of anyone living till the present discovery. It has been dug out and laid near the old altar tomb of Thomas Giffard in the south aisle. Although every lover of ancient architecture, as well as every parishioner, must hail the completion of the present portion of the work with feelings of thankfulness and satisfaction, yet it is matter of unfeigned regret that the work must now cease for want of funds. It is well known that the Vicar, the Rev. H. C. Collier, will not rest until the whole of the sacred building has been restored to somewhat, at least, its former stateliness and stability ; yet the getting together in a poor parish of such a sum of money as is still required work requiring great patience and unfailing energy, not to mention some considerable amount of self-sacrifice. We hope, however, that the money will soon be found for the restoration of the south aisle.

**Re-Opening Services.**

The day commenced with celebration of the Holy Communion at 8 a.m. Before Matins, a party of change ringers arrived from Oxford, and, under the direction of the Rev. Robinson, rang the first peal heard from the steeple for nearly five years. In spite of very heavy storm of wind and rain the church was well filled, and at 11-30 the choir, robed for the first time in cassocks and surplices, and followed by a considerable number of surpliced clergy, proceeded to their places in the chancel, singing “Lift the strain of high thanksgiving.” The service was plain, and was taken by the Vicar, the Rev. H. C. Collier, to the third Collect, and was concluded by the Rev. H. A. D. Hamilton. Special Psalms, xxiv and cxxxii, were chanted with precision, and with an utter absence of that slovenliness which often characterises this part of the choral office, in fact, the singing generally was good, for the reason, expressed by one in the congregation not ill qualified to judge, “the choir had not attempted too much, but what it had done was done carefully and well.” The First Lesson was read by the Rev. E. M. Holmes, the Rural Dean, and the Second Lesson the Rev. Dr. Merry, the Rector of Lincoln College. In the absence of the Bishop, who was prevented by illness from attending, a very able sermon was preached by the Venerable Archdeacon Randall, from the text “To me to live is Christ.” During the collection the hymn “To the name of our salvation” was sung, and after the Benediction, hymn 215 was sung a recessional. Among the clergy were the Ven. Archdeacon Randall, Rev. E. M. Holmes (Rural Dean), Rev. Dr. Merry (Rector of Lincoln College), Rev. Mackwood Stevens, Rev. H. A. D. Hamilton, Rev. J. Harvey Smith, Rev. A. G. Bene, Rev. F, G. Kiddle. Rev. T. H. Gregory, Rev. R. Holt, Rev. Robinson, Rev. T. Myree, Rev. J. H. Moore, Rev. R. H. Piggott, Rev. E. Jameson, Rev. Chadwick, Rev. S. Saulez, and the Vicar, the Rev. H. C. Collier. There was a large number of visitors in the congregation, prominently among whom we noticed the Hon. Egerton and Mrs. Hubbard, T. Ridgway, Esq., (Buckingham). John Oldrid Scott, the architect, and Messrs. Cannon Webster, the builders.

At one o’clock about 80 ladies and gentlemen sat down in the schoolroom to a capital luncheon, provided Mr. Shepherd, of the Red Lion Hotel, Bicester. After grace bad been said Mr. Collier proposed the toast of “The Church and Queen," and also “The Health of the Lord Bishop,” coupling with it the name of the Archdeacon, who, in responding, alluded to the great interest which the Bishop had taken in the work the restoration this church, and of the great disappointment it was him to be unable to be present with them on that day. —The Hon. Egerton Hubbard, M.P., then rising amid cheers, proposed “The health of the Vicar, the Rev. Henry Campbell Collier,” to whose indomitable energy and undaunted pluck was due, the commencement in the face of what seemed almost insuperable difficulties, and the carrying on to completion that part of the work of restoration which they had met to rejoice in. He hoped that the debt of £2OO upon the present work would soon be cleared off. The health the Vicar was drunk amid cheers.—The Rev. E. M. Holmes, in humorous speech, then proposed “The Visitors,” who had come out in such inclement weather, mentioning the names of Mr. and Mrs. Merry, Mr. J. O. Scott, Mr. Robinson and his party of ringers, and Mr. and Mrs. Ridgway, all of whom responded.—Mr. Scott proposed "The health of the builders, Messrs. Cannon & Webster,” and complimented them upon the very able and excellent manner in which the work had been performed. This brought the toast list to close. During the afternoon a great many people visited the church and examined the various objects of interest which it contains.

At evensong an earnest and practical sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Merry, from the first two verses of 84th Psalm. After a vivid word picture of the circumstances, under which the Psalm was written, and the great difference between the Jews, who bad only then one Temple at Jerusalem, and ourselves who have churches dotted all over the land, he warned his hearers not to neglect the blessings and the means of grace which they possessed, and drew an analogy between the restoration of the material fabric, and the great work of restoration which those means of grace should accomplish in the heart.

The collections for the day amounted to £4O.

Numerous gifts have also been received for the church, including memorial oak lectern and mat, Holy Bible and Prayer Brook, brass altar cross and candlesticks, alms dish altar linen, communicants kneelers, church flag with rope and mast for the tower cassocks and surplices for the choir, &c. WE omitted mention of a new American chancel organ, upon which unfortunately there remains a debt of £24. Altogether the inhabitants of Twyford are happy in the possession of a grand old church, in which the work of restoration – to use the works of Dr Merry – has been an honest work in every sense of the word, and in which no fad of an imaginature architect had been interposed to mar the great work of eight centuries ago.