

1907 and the "Long Garden Party" of the Edwardian era was at its elegant height. It was still a time of extremes and the gap between the rich and poor very wide, but reform was in the air with some improvement in living standards and education. It was a year of successes and disasters. An alarming number of ships went down, coal- mine accidents were in the news, and there was a bank panic in New York.

If that was not enough to be getting on with, Northants was dismissed for a mere 12 runs. It was a county to bowl against that year, as Colin Blythe discovered in an earlier match, taking 17 wickets for 48 runs. Other notable events include the opening of the first of Maria Montessori's schools for working class children in Rome, the first Boy Scout camp, the first vacuum cleaner and the introduction of the Lee Enfield Mark 3 to the British Army. Whether Faringdon fully appreciated these momentous events it is hard to judge. It is possible that the rise of the militant Suffragette movement was passed over with little comment and almost certain that Einstein's postulation of $E = mc^2$ aroused small interest in the Red Lion. The new Territorial and Reserve Forces Act gave the a new name and incentive to our Volunteers, even if the Anglo-Russian Convention could hardly have been seen at that point to lead to European war.

No, Faringdon continued as usual, suffering a very harsh winter and later a heat-wave in summer, while members of All Saints' could be stirred to action by the Vicar writing in the "new look" magazine and appealing for an improved attendance for which extra services were being planned. Special Saints' Day services at 12 Noon were to start for "the many people who are at leisure in the mornings", and a Mothers' Union was being formed at Faringdon. There were rewards, too, in the form of a special entertainment presented by General Dixon and Mrs. Noel-Clarke. A bleak New Year had its compensations.

In February, parents were asked to "let their children learn to see the dangers of strong drink and be kept from coming under its power". The Band of Hope was back in business. Further delights were available for the young in the Winter Treat for the Sunday school with Mr. Cunard's lantern slides. Giving was in the air. The Cunards ensured that every poor person over 60 would receive a quarter of a pound of tea and two pounds of sugar, while at the Mothers' Meeting each member was given a "nice, useful present."

The parish was reminded of its Lenten duties in no uncertain manner. "Good Friday", advised Reverend Welldon, "is no day for pleasuring, but for solemn thought and quiet meditation" and all were told that attendance at Communion on Easter Day was obligatory. There were pats on the back as well. Little Coxwell had taken more than 40 copies of the magazine, comparing well with today, and the Day Schools in which "the Christian Religion is definitely taught and nothing is left to chance", had a glowing report from the Diocesan Inspectors.

The Vicar apologised in May for his absence due to illness. A bout of flu had laid him low and he had lost his voice, a sad plight for him especially to be in, and his thoughts wandered melancholy tracks. "God has visited us in a very special way" he wrote in June. "No less than 30 burials have taken place in our churchyard since the beginning of October". He required folk to send for the Vicar more quickly when ill and not rely on his finding out, sometimes too late. The mood was not to last, thankfully, and a warning was given of a collection for the Day Schools whose secular inspection was as favourable as the religious. The singing was not as tuneful as it should have been, though.

July saw the Vicar rebounding in tremendous form. "This is generally understood to be a season of some slackness in Church life". Not if he could help it, it wasn't! "The man who spends his Sunday enjoying a quiet home life is far more fit for work on Monday than the man who employs the Sunday in pleasure-taking and excursionising". If you don't believe that, then read Isaiah lviii 13 and 14. Not so other days, thankfully. The Annual Treat, on a Thursday, took place in Faringdon House Park, with an "excellent tea under a large tree in the garden", a military band and "balloons ascending majestically into the air". The Girls' Friendly Society went to Buscot Park for an afternoon of clock golf and croquet, and the Mothers' Meeting had an outing to Oxford, visiting Christ Church and enjoying a river trip to Iffley.

So there we will leave them for a time, enjoying one of the hottest summers for many years, unmoved by and probably ignorant of the genocide in German South West Africa, though possibly delighted that their favourite author, Rudyard Kipling had received the Nobel Prize for Literature.

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