

CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS, LIVERPOOL
1257-1957

The earliest reference to a "chapell" at the Pierhead is in a document for which the latest possible date seems to be 1257, and the parish church of Liverpool was, therefore, able to celebrate what it was possible to regard as its 700th birthday in the same year as the city celebrated its 750th. Several special services were held: on the feast of the Epiphany, gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, betokening, among other things, thanksgiving and rededication, were offered at the Communion by members of the congregation; at a civic service on St. Luke's Day, the fifth anniversary of the consecration of the newly-restored church, Canon Bryan Green preached; on St. Nicholas' Day all those clergy still living who had formerly served the church were invited to a Sung Eucharist; on All Souls' Day, at a special service of Requiem, all those were remembered who had belonged to the church through its 700 years; and on the last Sunday in the year the bishop preached at The Communion and at Evensong and was presented with a cheque finally clearing the entire debt incurred by rebuilding after the war.

On St. Nicholas' Eve, Benjamin Britten's *St. Nicholas Cantata* was excellently performed, among other items in a most ambitious and successful programme of music. The choir, augmented by a semi-chorus of ladies and supported by a string orchestra, piano, organ and percussion, and by William Herbert as soloist, was conducted by the organist and choir-master.

A handbook was published at the beginning of the year. It contains fourteen photographs with comment, three line drawings, a map and three articles about the life of the church today, its history, and the building and ornaments. "Haro", the distinguished illustrator, designed the bold and humorous cover in red, black and white, and the articles were written by members of the church. In recounting the history an attempt was made to describe not only what had happened through changing years to the architecture and antiques but also to the congregation, how it had altered its character, size, mode of worship, relationship to the town and to its ministers.

An exhibition in the refectory had the same emphasis. It was open for ten days and received attention in the daily press, notably in the *Manchester Guardian*. Fifteen screens presented pictorially a variety of themes, periods and points in the

church's history. The first, for example, carried much-enlarged photographs of the charter making first mention of the "chapell" and of the charter granted by King John to the city. Another depicted the growth of St. Peter's in Church Street, and another the work of the church in administering the poor law. A fourth illustrated the changing exterior of the buildings and a fifth showed how the interior had altered with different emphases in theology and changing forms of worship. Two screens demonstrated how, in the eighteenth century, church after church was built to serve the rapidly expanding population of Liverpool, St. George's, for example, St. Paul's and St. John's, Haymarket, and how in the last sixty years the process has been reversed so that twelve parishes have been incorporated into that of Our Lady and St. Nicholas, their churches existing no longer because there is no longer anyone to use them.

It was altogether fitting that the rector of Liverpool, Canon Robert Nelson, who had conceived this imaginative and diverse programme, in celebration of the church's 700th birthday, and covering the whole of 1957, should have been consecrated bishop of Middleton at the beginning of 1958.

R. T. DAVIES

THE 650TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS THE MARTYR, UP HOLLAND

In 1957, Up Holland parish celebrated an anniversary of its parish church. Like the small boy whose birthday was next Tuesday ("I'll be 6½"), Up Holland observes the half-century in memory of the foundation of her Church. In 1307, the then lord of the manor, Sir Robert de Holland, endowed a small chapelry which was to be served by two priests. The foundation changed somewhat over the years, and Up Holland Church has been successively a college of canons, a Benedictine priory, a chapel of ease, and a parish church.

The anniversary celebrations, both religious and secular, have been spread out over the whole of the year, beginning with a parish party for some two hundred church workers and members of the congregation in January. During June, there were two events of importance, and these constituted the highlight of the year's activity. The customary "Walking Day" procession of witness has always been a feature of church life