



# Rev John E S Hackworth

## 99 Kedleston Road

John Hackforth moved to Derby in early 1915 to take up the post of Assistant Priest at St Michael's Church (King Street, Derby). He came with his wife, Annie, and two sons Frederick (12) and Geoffrey (6).



In December 1914 Rev Hackforth advertised for a house prior to moving to Derby to take up a post at St Michael's Church

He worked with Rev. Harry Rolfe who had already done a great deal to engage his congregation in the war effort: organising support for the men who enlisted (letters and parcels were regularly sent to those serving abroad) and fundraising for the Red Cross, the Sherwood Foresters POW Committee and the Belgium Relief Committee. They served a parish that was one of the most deprived in Derby, with areas of dense, poor-quality housing. The church made a conscious effort to attract everyone regardless of social or economic status – newcomers to the town working for the railways were made to feel especially welcome. In addition to his role as curate Hackforth also acted as Chaplain to the prison, located just off Friar Gate.

Almost immediately John Hackforth showed himself to be a man who spoke his mind, writing to the Derby Daily Telegraph criticising the idea of a cross-religious prayer group about the war effort, likening

it to a "Babel of tongues". This led to a furious exchange of letters to the paper from those opposing his views, regarded by many as intolerant. Only a month earlier in the parish magazine of July 1915 he had questioned the truth of the "Angels of Mons" a common belief circulating that a group of angels had appeared to members of the British army fighting in the Battle of Mons in August 1914, protecting them while signalling that God was on their side.

In April 1917 John joined the war effort as an Army Chaplain and for the remainder of the war he was based at Normanton Barracks and the prison which was being used as a military detention centre. In April 1918 he wrote a detailed account of the role of an Army Chaplain and lamented the religious knowledge of the troops he came across, blaming the Church of England for its failure to teach religious education

In May 1919 after being demobilised, he left St Michael's to become vicar at St Mary's Chaddesden, a post he held until 1933. Over the years he had been forced to take breaks due to ill-health and he moved south to Eastbourne for the milder climate. His wife Annie stayed in Derby – she lived with her son at 27 White Street from 1933, later moving to Allestree. She died suddenly in 1946 and a matter of months later John remarried to Hilda E Wright, who was from Derby and 23 years his junior. John died in Eastbourne in 1965.





## Rev John E S Hackworth St Michael's Church

Support for the war effort at St Michael's church took many forms and these extracts from the church newsletters of the time give a flavour of community involvement. Supporting men who had joined the armed forces was an important role for the clergy and congregation: by May 1915 fifty members of the church had joined the armed forces and conscription was to leave the Sunday School and Scout troop seriously depleted of leaders, while members of the choir, Men's Institute and football team also left for the front. Writing letters, sending parcels, raising money, arranging family support and remembering men in prayers became part of church life.

**RECREATION FOR SOLDIERS.**—At the request of the Colonel and Chaplain the Vicar and Churchwardens have agreed to allow the soldiers attached to the 3/5 South Staffs. Regiment to use our Schoolroom for recreation in the Evening from 5.30—9.30 p.m. The opening will be on Tuesday, Feb. 8th, at 7 p.m., when there will be a social Gathering. We shall be glad to hear from members of the congregation willing to assist in this good work of providing healthy recreation for the men staying in Derby.

Church buildings were made available to troops stationed in the town and the space to write letters home, read books, relax and enjoy "homemade" refreshments was welcomed.

### The Boy Scouts.

Our boys have been busy, during the greater part of last month, in rendering assistance at the Soldiers' Welcome held in the Church House, where their services have been greatly appreciated. As the Spring will very soon be with us, when the real work of this movement will begin, the present is an opportune time for recruiting and the Acting-Scoutmaster (Mr. G. James Gleeson) would be glad to hear of any boy desiring to join the troop. The meetings are held every Thursday at 7 p.m.

The Wolf Cubs are making gradual but satisfactory progress. We were surprised, but nevertheless much pleased, to receive a visit from our Assistant-Scoutmaster (Pte. H. Coulson), home on leave from the "front."

Scout troops played an active part in the war effort, carrying messages for the military and helping at military hospitals. They also collected newspapers for recycling and conkers from which Cordite could be extracted for munitions. For more information on the role of Scouts and Guides see the information sheet "Local Children in World War One".

### Khaki Prisoners of War Fund.

16th June, 1916.

Canon H. R. Rolfe,  
St. Michael's Vicarage,  
Derby.

Dear Sir,

I enclose formal receipt for the amount of £3 14s. od., being a collection from the children of St. Michael's Sunday School, who have so generously given up their prizes for our poor men who are imprisoned in Germany.

I am very grateful indeed to you, and the children for their kind help.

Yours truly,  
G. E. RAINE,  
Hon. Secretary.

It was regular practice during the war that prizes were replaced by donations to the Red Cross or similar charities. We're not sure how willingly the children gave up their prizes although most prizes at the time consisted of an "improving" book.

**NEW YEAR'S PARCELS** have been sent to about 50 of our lads at the front. The parcels were supplied by Mr. Hodgkinson at a cost of 5/- each, and contained all sorts of things which would be acceptable to those in the trenches and on the sea. The Vicar has received over £12 from 100 subscribers, so that the cost of sending the parcels will be covered, we only hope that they will all reach their destination.

Every year parcels were sent to the men at the front. Food items were also collected to send to prisoners of war held in Germany. Mr Hodgkinson ran a grocer's shop on the Marketplace and later the family lived in the north part of Parkfields House.



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