

ST JOHN'S, REDHILL AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The following are extracts from the diary of Rev WAR Ball, then Vicar of St John's, and from the Surrey Mirror.

Part 2: 1939

From the Diary of Rev Ball – 1939

Sunday September 3rd 1939

During the morning service the following statement of the Prime Minister (Neville Chamberlain) was handed to the vicar and was read to the congregation. (Broadcast at 11.15am and read in church at 11.30).

We are at war with Germany

I am speaking to you from the Cabinet Room of 10 Downing Street. This morning a final note was handed to the German government stating that unless they withdrew their troops from Poland by 11am this morning a state of war would exist between our countries. I now have to tell you the German government have not recalled their troops – and we are at war with Germany. (He then added he was sure we as a country had done our uttermost to secure peace – but now that war has come, we could as a people be relied upon to keep our courage and serve our great heritage to our uttermost).

About 11.45 the air raid warning was sounded and many left the church at once. At this service teachers and children from Forest Hill were present having been evacuated.

5.45 Evensong was changed to this earlier hour and many attended bringing their gas masks for the first time.

Monday September 4th

Daily intercessions at midday were started. First war wedding with bridegroom and best man in khaki; gas masks and helmets (steel) were also carried.

Saturday September 9th

The Rev H. H. Anderson left to act as chaplain to HM Forces (in the Anti-Aircraft Unit at Bentley in Hampshire).

Wednesday September 13th

Teachers and children from St Mary's School, Addington (Surrey) using choir vestry and children's corner for assembly and lessons from 9am – 10.30am, daily.

Sunday October 1st

Number on our intercession role – 12.

Wednesday October 4th

The Women's Guild, under Mrs Arnott, decided to close down for the period of the war and merge with the Busy Bees and the Meadvale Women's Fellowship.

Sunday October 8th

Harvest Festival services well attended. Collections over £24 for East Surrey Hospital. Evening service now changed to earlier hour of 3pm for autumn and winter months.

Tuesday October 10th

Work commenced on the new electric lighting of sanctuary, chancel and organ finished.

Tuesday October 31st

R.H. Heath, Vicar's Warden, joins up as a Lieutenant in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

Wednesday November 1st

The number on our intercession role, "On Active Service" – 43.

Wednesday November 22nd

CMS sale held in Woodlands Road Hall. Result £75. This result was helped by a sale of vegetables on November 23rd in Hooley Hall by the Bees.

Friday December 1st

The number on our intercession roll, "On Active Service" is 60.

December 24th and 25th

Owing to black out regulations no mid-night could be held at St John's Church but this service was held at Hooley Mission Church by the vicar and there were 79 communicants.

Sunday December 31st

On this day the Rev H. H. Anderson resigns his curacy at St John's Church.
