



Sedgley's

Diamond 60

*Sixty years, sixty people,
sixty stories about village life
since 1952.*

My Licensing at All Saints'

by The Revd Stephen Buckley

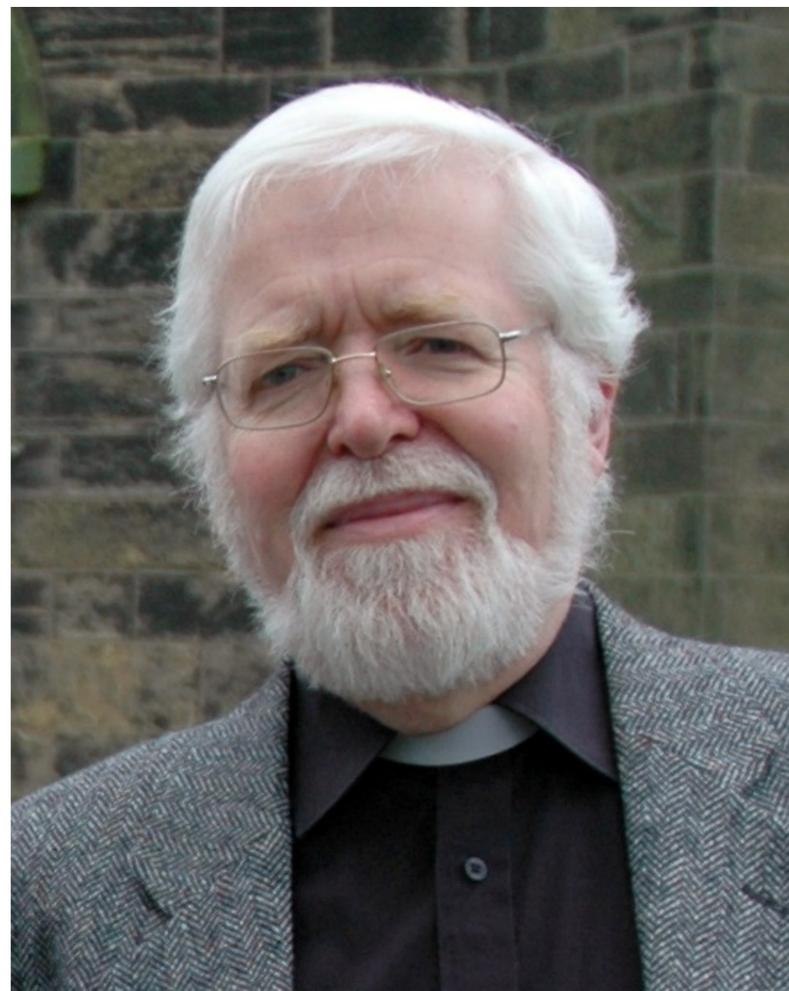
After the last incumbent, The Revd Peter Ashby left in 1999, there was an 'interregnum' of about a year; I was invited to apply for the vacancy.

A panel consisting of the Bishop of Dudley, The Rt Revd Dr Rupert Hoare, two representatives from the parish, the churchwardens at All Saints' and the Archdeacon interviewed me for the position of 'Team Rector and Vicar of All Saints'. Two other people were interviewed; I was the successful candidate.

I remember the day of my licensing in February 2000 was very cold. I'd been a vicar in Halesowen for 12 years and a coach load of my former parishioners came over to offer me moral support. The Bishop of Worcester, The Rt Revd Dr Peter Selby conducted the Licensing, which was attended by local councillors, police, teachers and other Sedgley churches.

I wore a cassock and surplice (known as choir dress) and my preaching scarf (tippet). The Archdeacon placed me at the stall (the designated place where the vicar sits in the choir). I then went to the back of the church and rang the bell. The tradition is that the number of times you ring the bell will be how many years you'll stay. It's a funny bell and difficult to ring so I probably managed about three rings – I've been here twelve years now, so I appear to have disproved that particular superstition!

After that they took me to the front door of the church and placed my hand on the key. It's a funny mixture of the spiritual and the legal. Because we are the established church and I am an Anglican vicar, I had to swear formal oaths to obey the Queen and the Bishop. I liken it to an arranged marriage - you arrive and then you have to get used to living together!



The Revd Stephen Buckley was licensed as Team Rector and Vicar of All Saints' in February 2000