

RE-BUILT ORGAN DEDICATED AT TADLEY

MANY present and past members of St. Mary's Church, Tadley, travelled long distances to attend the dedication of the new church organ on Saturday by the Bishop of Basingstoke, the Rt. Rev. Michael Manktelow, followed by a recital by Timothy Rishton.

The Bishop made a presentation to Mr. Philip Wells on behalf of the parish for designing and building the organ with voluntary helpers over the past six years, of a gold pocket watch and chain. The total cost of the installation has been about £3,000 and the organ will be insured for around £34,000. A separate organ fund was launched in 1974 and proceeds from jumble sales, whist drives, a Christmas bazaar and summer fairs etc., together with donations have enabled the organ to be paid for before it was finished — an example of parish enthusiasm for the project.

The Church of St. Mary in North Tadley began with the formation of the Conventional District in 1957 and the licensing of the first priest-in-charge. In 1959/60 the present church was built on the site of a wooden hut which had served in a temporary capacity. Parish status was granted in 1973. Until 1978 an American reed organ was used, first in the hut and subsequently in the new church building.

The pipe organ dedicated on Saturday was acquired from the redundant Chapel of St. Mary Abbots Hospital, Kensington in 1973. The instrument was built in 1875 by Henry Jones of London, whose sons carried on the business until 1920 when it was taken over by another firm. During the reconstruction a number of interesting points have come to light about this instrument, which proved its origin.

An inspection of the instrument in 1973 revealed that it was in need of major attention. Indeed in 1972 the organ tuner at the time, a Mr. F. Anderson (of Bishop and Sons) commented: "Sir, I have done all that is possible with the organ in its present state. It is in a deplorable condition and should be rebuilt."

With the thought in mind that a pipe organ should be



The rebuilt organ at St. Mary's Church, Tadley was dedicated on Saturday. The Vicar, the Rev. Jack Talbot is pictured with Mr. Timothy Rishton (left) who gave a recital and the church organist Philip Wells (centre).

ment was the most promising seen. It was carefully dismantled by church members in the last week of August 1973 and transported to Tadley in a large removal van for subsequent storage. Redesigning of the instrument was necessary for St. Mary's to the extent that it is not unrecognisable in sight and sound. Reconstruction, with restoration where necessary, continued until August 1976 when, following a temporary rearrangement of the chancel furnishings, the installation of the lower part of the framework was begun in the church.

The work of assembly continued in subsequent months until part of the instrument was heard for the first time in an outgoing voluntary when the Rev. Michael Simcock (first priest-in-charge) visited the parish in June 1977. The latter part of the year saw the completion of the

vice at Christmas 1977. In 1978 the old American organ was sold to Holland and the chancel furnishings returned to their original positions. The past year has seen the construction and finishing of the casework and console surround together with the decorative screen.

The organ recital by Timothy Rishton of Reading University included works by Dietrich Buxtehude, Johann Sebastian Bach, Felix Mendelssohn and Sigfrid Karg-Elert.

The celebrations continued on Sunday with the Service of family Eucharist, the preacher was the Rev. Graham Smith vicar of St. Anne, Wandsworth, a friend of the vicar, the Rev. Jack Talbot, since they served in the RAF and went to India together in 1946. They have kept in touch ever since. Following the

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