

THE REVD DR MAURICE FROST

'The weather in London is wet and windy!' So the voice of the pilot on our approach to Heathrow. We were still above the cloud in deep blue skies, in brilliant sunshine, a glorious firmament that had stretched above me during my entire holiday in alpine regions. Inevitably, when returning to England through low cloud into wind and rain one shuts off the present and continues to dream of past days. That wonderful on top of the world feeling, as far as I was concerned, refused to give way to serious thoughts on an article to be written on yet another 'Great Deddingtonian'. The Revd Dr Maurice Frost, Vicar of Deddington from 1924 to 1962, certainly needs to be included in the ranks of memorable local personalities. He is, however, so well remembered by many present day parishioners that I hesitate to tell his story.

When, some months ago, I wrote a short history of the Church choir, Topper Davis and Arthur Lewis shared with me many delightful remembrances of this strict, vaguely eccentric hymnologist who, as shepherd of his rural flock, left such a lasting impression on his young choir boys. I urge them to let us all share their memories of a great man. It really does not take many bribes to set them off talking of 'times gone by'.

This I discovered when I met, by chance, George Hirons on a sunny Sunday morning in Daeda's Wood. He too remembers the Revd Frost with delight. Many times, he and ten young choristers travelled in the Vicar's small car to Clifton Church to sing Evensong. He still chuckles when recalling the occasion when the same small car, this time causing an obstruction on the parade ground of the Home Guard (outside the present day Co-op), was lifted by some men and deposited outside the Church. He has never forgotten misbehaving in choir during the sermon which Revd Frost interrupted to call the boys to order!

Ruth Johnson 2003