

## Geoffrey L Tiarks (1909-1987)

A review of newspapers in the Museum archives  
by Graham Davies & Fred Humphrey, November 2019

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Graham Davies's transcription from Pulman's Weekly News, June 6, 1961



### Lyme Losing Vicar

The Rev Geoffrey L Tiarks, vicar of Lyme Regis for the past seven years, is leaving in October to become Archdeacon of the Isle of Wight. He announced this to his Parochial Church Council on Thursday evening and to his parishioners in the parish magazine on Friday.

Mr Tiarks, aged 51, was educated at Marlborough College and at St John's College, Cambridge, and went to Westcott House, Cambridge, for his theological training. He was ordained in 1932 at Southwark Cathedral. He worked at Southwark Cathedral and at Guy's Hospital for the first years of his ministry.

He entered the Royal Navy in 1934, went to the Mediterranean in the flagship of the First Cruiser Squadron, HMS London, and was there for 2½ years. Much of his time in the Navy was spent on boys' training. His first job was in 1937 at the Royal Hospital School, where he was assistant chaplain.

### War Service

Early in 1939 he was sent to HMS Repulse, which was to have taken the King and Queen to Canada, an arrangement cancelled at the last minute. The Repulse stayed in full commission, and in the first year of the war was in the North Atlantic.

Mr Tiarks then went back into boys' training to HMS St George, where he was senior chaplain. Four thousand boys were in training there, all the base training establishments being merged into one and evacuated to the Isle of Man.

He next went as chaplain to the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, at that time evacuated to Eaton Hall, Cheshire. From there he joined the Vanguard, which was doing her first commission as a new battleship to take the King and Queen to South Africa. Out there, he was asked to go as one of the chaplains of a public school in the Cape called the Diocesan College.

### South Africa

The war had just ended, and he decided, instead of staying in the Navy, to take his wife and family to South Africa and tackle this job which he did in 1948. He had not been there for more than two years when the Archbishop of Capetown persuaded him to go to a large suburban parish near Capetown, Rondebosch, where he had his first parish, St Paul's.

### Lyme Regis

Wishing to return to England, to have his son educated in this country, he wrote to the Bishop of Salisbury, whom he had known for some time, asking to be considered for an appointment in his diocese. The Bishop offered him his present parish, and he came to Lyme Regis early in 1954.

Mr Tiarks is a member of the Council of Marlborough College, where his son Robert, aged 15, is a student. For the past four or five years he has been Dorset County chaplain of the Army Cadet Force. He is officiating chaplain at the RAF Marine Craft Unit at Lyme Regis, and is on the list of the Officers' Reserve of the Navy.

## Vicar's Message

In the Parish Magazine the Vicar states: "It is with very mixed feelings that I have to tell you that my wife and I are leaving the parish in October. The Bishop of Portsmouth has asked me to go on his staff as Archdeacon of Isle of Wight, and the Bishop of Salisbury has agreed that I should go. As you know, or can guess, it is very difficult for us to leave Lyme. It is a wonderful parish to serve, and one could not hope for a more fulfilling or happy parish to work in.

Over the past few years I have come more and more to realise two things: first, that as far as I am concerned there seemed no point in exchanging one parish for another, and for this reason it has not been difficult to refuse offers of work in other parishes.

But, secondly, I have been brought to realise that one has no right to refuse to consider accepting a wider responsibility just because one is very happy and contented where one is. I don't think I could stay on as vicar of Lyme Regis with a clear conscience if I knew I was only able to do so because I had been unwilling to accept a bigger responsibility just for the sake of my own comfort and that of my family. The Bishop of Salisbury, who has been most helpful and kind during the difficult weeks since Easter when we have had to make our decision, agrees that it is right for us to go."

The Vicar continues: "We must all pray very much that the right man will be found to come here as the new vicar in October. The Bishop knows the sort of man who would find his rightful place here and I know that he is doing all he can to choose someone whose approach to a parish like this would be in sympathy with its traditions, and who would carry on the work that has been done here for so many years. I ask your prayers for him and for the grace and guidance of the Holy Spirit for us all in the months that lie ahead. Unless any unforeseen circumstance crops up, we hope to be here until after the Patronal Festival and the following Sunday, which is October 1<sup>st</sup>.

I hope that there will not be a long interregnum and that my successor will be able to come soon after we leave, but with Mr Rowcroft (assistant priest) looking after the parish, assisted by the very able retired clergy living in the parish, I do not think we need worry unduly about the interregnum. It only remains to find the right man for the job."

Referring to the work which lies ahead of him, the vicar states: "The Archdeacon of the Isle of Wight lives in the island and has a house near Ryde. He is responsible to the Bishop of Portsmouth for the care of about 55 parishes in the island divided into two Deaneries. He has no parish himself, and as the Isle of Wight is a very self-contained community he represents, under the Bishop, the Church in rather a particular way and has to play a considerable part in the civic life of the island."



Newspaper cutting, October 1<sup>st</sup> 1961

Caption to photograph:

The Rev and Mrs G L Tiarks will say their final farewells on Sunday after 7 years at Lyme Regis.

In this picture is captured the spirit which inspired the comments that the vicar has found in his wife a constant source of help and encouragement.

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Fred Humphrey's summary from newspaper article, late September, 1961

## **Farewell gifts at Lyme Regis**

Parishioners' tributes to Vicar

A cheque for £363 from his parishioners were presented to the Rev G L Tiarks, vicar of Lyme Regis, and Mrs Tiarks, at a gathering in the Church Hall on Sunday. Mr Tiarks is leaving to become Archdeacon of the Isle of Wight, and will officiate at the Parish Church next Sunday for the last time.

He [Tiarks] said: 'we have spent about £4000 on repairing the fabric & lighting of the church, including refinishing the hassocks. But still much to be done.

'But the greater part of money has come from Church Dues Fund, and since this was started in 1954 it has raised £8500. All this from you.'

He paid tribute to his wife for her encouragement, wisdom and energy.

He thanked his assistants: Ken Rowcroft (assistant priest), Cuthbert Powell and John Rattenbury (churchwardens) and Philip Ridgewell (Church Secretary).

Rev Tiarks is being succeeded by Rev J.H. A. Charles from All Hallows, Twickenham.

The presentation was made by Mr. P.E. H. Gilbert, member of the Church Council.

Mr. C.W. Powell presided. Mr Julian Shaw, on behalf of the choir, presented a long-playing tape for his recorder.

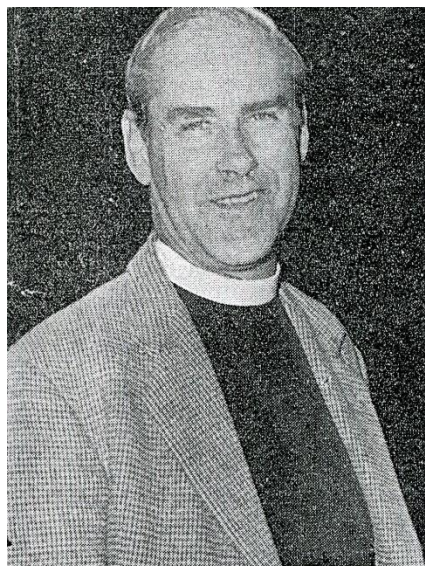
Mrs Tiarks was presented with a Rose Bowl by Mrs F. Cook on behalf of Womens' Fellowship, and a tea set and tray by Mrs E.J. Hallett, on behalf of the Mothers' Union.

The Vicar said it was almost 8 years since his predecessor Canon Cox said goodbye, after 26 years incumbency. He continued 'In these years we have been together you have raised by your own unselfish giving over £10,000. About £750 on the sea wall and churchyard protection; we re-roofed the whole of the church (our share being £940), £480 on the church hall; £650 on repairing and decorating the Peek Chapel, and putting in electric night storage heating, and £700 on the School House. The organ was completely stripped down, overhauled and renovated at cost of £500; we built a new classroom which cost £2000, and although we didn't have to find the capital sum, we are repaying the Diocese by an annual premium spread over many years.'

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Fred Humphrey's summary from newspaper cutting, Lyme Regis News, 1969

## **The Ven. G L Tiarks becomes Bishop**



The Ven. G. L. Tiarks, the former Lyme Vicar, who has been promoted to Bishop.

Lyme's former vicar, the Ven. Geoffrey Tiarks has been promoted to Bishop, to be consecrated at Westminster Abbey on 25th January, at 10.45 a.m. [Bishop consecrations are always held on Saint's Days - 25th January is the feast of the conversion of St. Paul] He is to become Bishop of Maidstone, in the Diocese of Canterbury, as well as Senior Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury. In an interview with Lyme Regis News, he said it would be a dual role, with him residing in Lambeth Palace from Monday to Friday each week, where he would help with the administration of the Southern Province. For the remainder of each week, he would be Suffragan Bishop of Maidstone. Since leaving Lyme, Ven. Tiarks was Archdeacon of Isle of Wight, then Archdeacon of Portsmouth.

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