

Reverend Arthur Pannell 1870 – 1946

Vicar of St Andrew's Bulmer 1899 - 1942



Reverend Pannell was born Arthur Pidgeon and changed his name by deed poll to Arthur Pidgeon Pannell, adding his mother's maiden name.

Arthur was born on 27 Oct 1870 in Collompton Devon, son of John and Anne Pidgeon. In 1881 his father was a master miller employing five men. Arthur Pannell studied at St John's College Oxford for an M.A. and later at Clare College Cambridge for his Bachelor of Divinity. In 1899 he became vicar of Bulmer and Belchamp,

On November 29th 1899, The Suffolk Free Press reported:
On Friday afternoon the 23rd inst the Rev A.P.Pannell was inducted in the above parish to the livings of Walter Belchamp cum Bulmer by the Rural Dean the Rev Evans, the considerable congregation joined heartily in the singing of hymns.

The 1901 census shows him living at the vicarage in Belchamp Walter with Clara Higgins, a domestic servant.

Kelly's directory 1902 states:

'...in 1891 the church was re-roofed and restored at a total cost of about £900.... The living is a vicarage consolidated with that of Belchamp Walter, net yearly value £310, with two acres of glebe, in the gift of Mrs Raymond, and held since 1899 by the Rev. Arthur Pidgeon Pannell BA of St John College Oxford.

In 1909 Rev Pannell wrote to the Belchamp Rural District Council stating he 'would be away from England for some time in consequence of ill health'. (Suffolk Free Press)

Hubert Younger recalled 'When Reverend Pannell was at The Old Vicarage he would send me to borrow a donkey cart from Mrs Blyth. I often had to collect pianola rolls from Sudbury Station. He used to play these at his house and at the school from time to time

By 1911 Rev Pannell was living in Bulmer at the vicarage. Living with him were a family- The Osmunds –Sarah Osmund was a servant and Charles Osmund a preacher with the Church Army.

In 1920 he wrote and had published 'Miracles which Happen': a study in suggestion and auto-suggestion, and particularly in their bearing on New Testament.

On June 20th 1920, The Haverhill Echo reported
A memorial to the fallen at Belchamp Walter was unveiled on Sunday after a short but impressive service. The Rev Pannell conducted the service with the memorial covered up with a Union Jack.

The church accounts for the 1920s give a picture of church life then. Expenditure included oil, candles, brasspaste, organblowing, grass cutting, Sunday School fires and the sextant's wages.

Rev Pannell, a bachelor is remembered with affection. Harry Winch, who lived on Church Meadow and who drove his car for some years, said he was a shy man who relied upon his chauffeur to keep his eyes and ears open and find out where there was need in Bulmer households between the wars. Occasionally, a 'Mrs Pannell' would play the organ at church. She was possibly a relative from Gestingthorpe.

Reverend Pannell retired from this post in 1942. The Belchamp Walter villagers presented him with treasury notes in appreciation of his services for forty two years.

He died 19th September 1946 in London, leaving over £6000.

On his headstone, here in these grounds, is written: *'To be with Christ which is far better - Philippians 1.23'*

Additional information from Liz Barrett and The Foxearth History Society, Mabel Ford's diary
Picture of St Andrew's taken in 1929 by Charles Hawksley