

Hymns Ancient & Modern and Henry Williams Baker A Herefordshire Vicar and his Hymn Book

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Edited by Leominster History Study Group for Leominster Historical Society

THIS is the story of the well known hymn book *Hymns Ancient & Modern*, and of the vicar of Monkland, Henry Baker, through whose energy and enterprise the hymn book was compiled, edited, published and marketed in 1861. Since then there have been many editions and it has sold in many millions of copies.

Chapters from three eminent professors open the book. Professor John Harper introduces the context in which Baker worked, and provides a useful consideration of the nature and function of hymns and their place in English worship, both before and after the Reformation. Professor Richard Watson deals with Baker's choice of words, and Professor Jeremy Dibble writes of his choice of tunes, noting the influence on Baker of German hymnody.

Anthony Malpas considers the business side of the publication of *Hymns A&M* and Ann Malpas deals with Baker's wider work at Monkland and in the diocese of Hereford. Tim Bridges, Michael Fisher and Jim Berrow provide brief and illuminating chapters on the Monkland work of G E Street, who restored the church; Hardman and Co, who made the glass; and the organ builders, J W Walker.

Two interesting chapters of a particularly Hereford theme close the book: one by Tim Bridges on local Victorian churches, and the other by Ann Malpas on the Herefordshire Choral Union. With a Foreword and Afterword by Michael Taviner, the Dean of Hereford. — *Church Times*



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