

Clerics' celebration . . . (from left) Paul, John, Christopher, Peter and Alaric. 34528014

Four brothers with almost 250 years service in the Church of England between them got together for a 70th birthday celebration yesterday.

The Rev Christopher Wansey, who is retired and lives at West Wickham, near Haverhill, celebrated reaching the biblical three-score years and 10 with his older brothers Paul, aged 74, John, 73, and Canon Peter, 72. His sister, Mary Rose, who is herself married to a clergyman, Canon Alaric Rose, was also there.

Religion has always run in the Wansey family. All the brothers were born in Japan, where their parents were missionaries. They came to England just before the First World War and were educated at Selwyn College and Westcott House, Cambridge.

Christopher returned to Japan and

spent four years there as a missionary until the outbreak of the second war. He retired from his parish at Roydon, Chelmsford, in 1975 and has lived at West Wickham ever since. During his retirement he has written an autobiographical book, "The Clockwork Church," and his birthday was celebrated yesterday with a service at West Wickham church, followed by a party in the evening.

Two of his brothers, Canon Paul Wansey, recently retired as Rector of Woodbridge in Suffolk, and Peter, presently vicar at High Coniscliffe, County Durham, were both wounded in North Africa in the second war and were awarded the Military Cross.

John, who is also retired, was until recently the Vicar of West Lavington, Essex, and now lives in Chichester. Christopher lives with his wife, Olive, at 6 High Street. They have one daughter and two granddaughters.