

CHARLTON KINGS
LOCAL HISTORY
SOCIETY



BULLETIN 14

CHARLTON KINGS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Chairman

M. J. Greet
102 Beeches Road
Charlton Kings
Tel: Cheltenham 525474

Editor

Mrs. M. Paget
Crab End
Brevel Terrace
Tel: Cheltenham 34762

Hon. Secretary

Mrs. S. Fletcher
31 Ravensgate Road
Charlton Kings
Tel: Cheltenham 522931

Hon. Treasurer

E. L. Armitage
9 Morlands Drive
Charlton Kings
Tel: Cheltenham 527533

Copies of this Bulletin are available from E. Armitage or from Charlton Kings Library.

Past Issues - Bulletins 6 and 7, price £1.45;
Bulletins 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, price £1.50

Copyright and Responsibility

Unless otherwise specified, copyright of articles or photographs remains with the author or photographer; copyright of original documents remains with the owner, or with the relevant Record Office.

The Society does not hold itself responsible for statements in papers, but invites additions and corrections which will be printed as articles or in Notes and Comments.

Membership of this Society

Membership forms are available from officers. Annual subscription 75p or £1 for a couple.

Meetings are held monthly from September to May in the Stanton Room at Charlton Kings Library.

The Bulletin is published twice a year.

Printed by - Top Flight, 93 St. George's Place, Cheltenham, Glos.

CONTENTS

Pages

Cover Picture - The Church, drawn by Ken Venus
after Rowe c.1840

1.	The Medieval Church	M.Paget	1
	(1) The Foundation		
	(2) The Chantry		
	diagramatic elevations by	K.Venus	7
	(3) The Tower		
	(4) The late medieval church		
	(5) The church in the 16-17th centuries		
	print of the church in 1823		
2.	Mean Stipends, A Wandering Minister, and a Company of Scabnells - the church 1609-1624	H.Middleton	12
3.	Sir Baptist Hicks, Jesus College Oxford, and the Living	M.Paget	17
4.	The Royal Arms in Charlton Kings Church Arms drawn by Ken Venus	J.C.Soulsby	21
5.	Church Fabric and Furnishings 1700-1875 two sketches by J.Powell 1824	M.Paget	24
6.	The Churchyard and its Wall	J.Paget	27
	(1) the old churchyard		
	(2) churchyard extension		
	(3) the churchyard wall		
7.	A Tragedy in the Churchyard 1855	Simon Fletcher	32
8.	Restoration and After	M.Paget	32
	Photograph of the church c.1890 from John Williams' album		
	sketch of interior by Ken Venus		

Papers on other aspects of our church and its life have had to be held over till Bulletin 16 (Autumn 1986).

We hope then to cover the bells, ancient tombstones, the vestry hall (now the parish centre), the mission rooms, changes in church services, and the various church organisations; and to give a more complete list of incumbents.

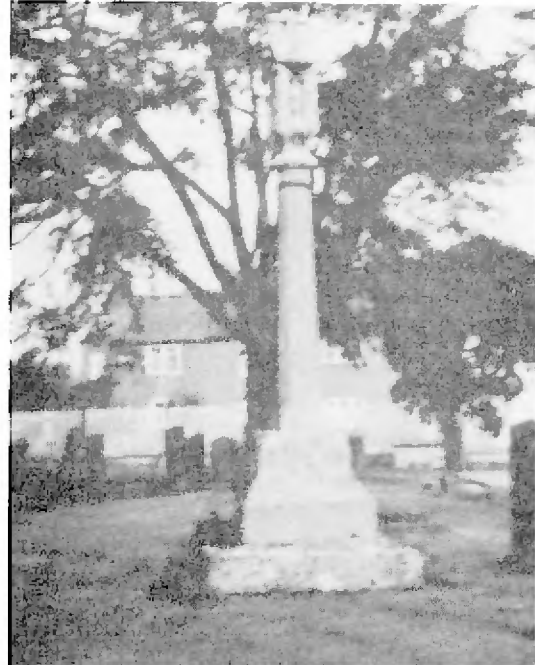
1. THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH (1)

(1) THE FOUNDATION

St. Mary's started as a chapel of ease to Cheltenham parish church, the ancient minster church for the whole of the Hundred. The consecration of this chapel c.1190 is described in the Cartulary of Cirencester Abbey (a house of Augustinian Canons to which the rectory of Cheltenham belonged) as having been performed by Bishop William of Hereford in the presence and at the request of Abbot Richard. Presumably this event took place during one of the frequent vacancies in the see of Worcester about that period (see M.J. Greet, Bulletin 8 pp 55-6).

The site was almost certainly given by Walter of Ashley, whose grant of £10 worth of the manor of Cheltenham had recently been confirmed by Henry II. Walter's share included a strip from Hollow Lane (Horsefair Street) down Church Street to the Herne brook; and the site for the chapel and its burial ground north of the church would have been part of this arable. (See M.J. Greet in Bulletin 9 p 32). To give Charlton a chapel would enhance Walter's local prestige, and would be convenient for him or his heirs should a manor house be built on the site he had reserved at East End (See Bulletin 13 pp 9-11); he probably contributed towards the cost of church building. While the king was sole lord of Cheltenham and its Hundred, and the development of Charlton was restricted to a few farmsteads, there had been no reason for any chapel here; but the 12th century saw an extension of cultivation and for the first time there was a local lord to give a site and enough people to maintain a church, for the nave is always the responsibility of the congregation.

St. Mary's had right of burial from the start because the land was available and a new burial ground did not in any way curtail the fees due to the mother house. Our present churchyard cross is 15th century, but it probably replaced one erected even before the church was built, to show that this was land given to God. Some churchyard crosses were used in the 15th century as preaching stations, but ours would be very inconvenient for standing on, and is unlikely to have been intended for this purpose. A parish priest was expected to give his people a short exhortation in the course of the service and to instruct the children afterwards. How far these expectations were fulfilled we can't tell.



The original church consisted of a nave without aisles; short transepts; chancel; and, presumably, a small bell tower on the crossing. As in most ancient churches, you went down two or three steps into the church (2), and the doors swung clear of the "strawings" which covered the floor, the only mitigation for the cold of winter. The nave was 14ft shorter than it is now, and the late 12th century west doorway (which survived till 1877) is shown in Rowe's sketch of the church (see cover). This was in Walter of Ashley's taste perhaps - by c.1190 he was an elderly man. The two-light windows with

plate tracery heads (if original) were in the very latest style. One shows in the print on this page. None remains now, but a bit of the last to survive was built into the north transept wall during the 1885 reconstruction.



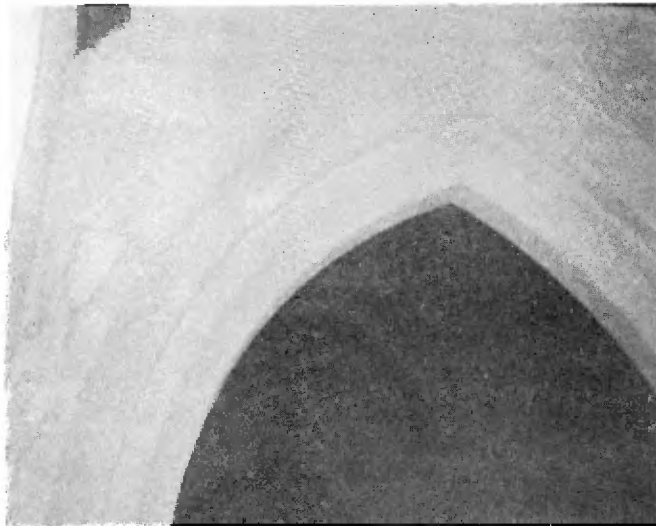
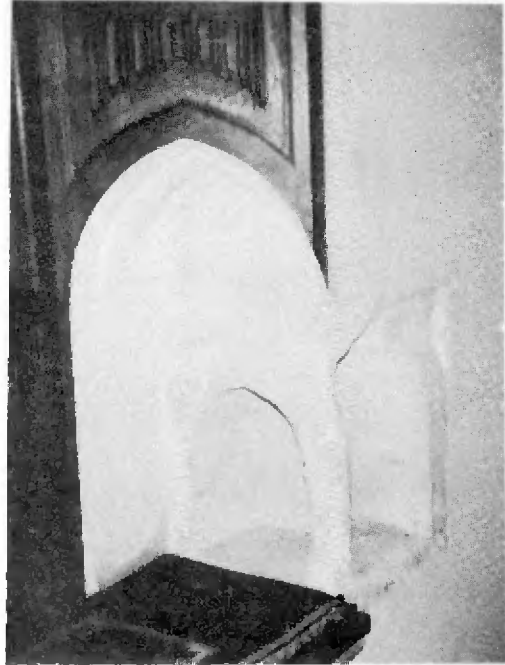
Two early 19th century prints of the church show the north side before the addition of the north aisle in 1822-4. Both prints indicate that there was a window fairly high up towards the east end of the north wall, from which light would be thrown on to a rood; and another window at floor level near the west end of that wall. This was the normal position for a north door into the churchyard, exactly opposite the south door. By the 19th century, these north doorways had usually been blocked to keep out the draught; if not blocked, the door was converted into a window, and this is what seems to have happened at St. Mary's. (I am grateful to Bishop Robert for a copy of this print.)



The original chancel was exactly the same size as now. It had a 2-light east window and a small window in the south wall.

When the chancel was rebuilt in 1878, the old piscina was found concealed under the plaster; and the architect Middleton agreed to retain it "in a suitable position", not in its original place. Hence its present situation is no evidence for a shorter chancel at one time. (See the Parish Magazine for July 1878) (3)

But the chancel roof was certainly lower; only just higher than the tower arch. The marks of the original roof still show.

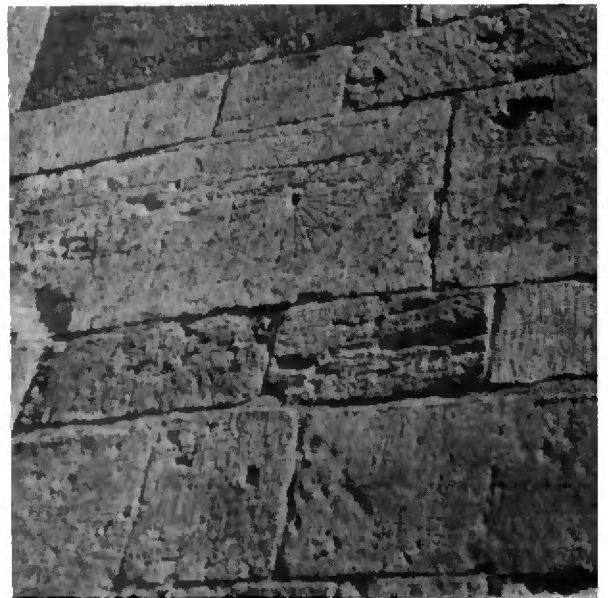


We assume a central tower because if a tower had been added for the first time in the 14-15th century, it would have been put in the then fashionable position at the west end.

The font as we have it is tub-shaped, with the bowl cut into an octagon and decorated with curvilinear tracery. It may (like a not dissimilar font at Wells) be the original 12th century plain tub recut in the late 14th century.



A mass dial (now built into the south wall near the westernmost buttress) may go back to c.1190. Charlton was to have a service every Sunday, on festivals, and on 3 weekdays, the priest serving St. Marys probably alternating with services 3 days a week at Arle chapel. The dial indicated the time of service, which happened when the shadow cast by the centre peg coincided with a pegged hole on the semicircle. Hours and half hours are marked.

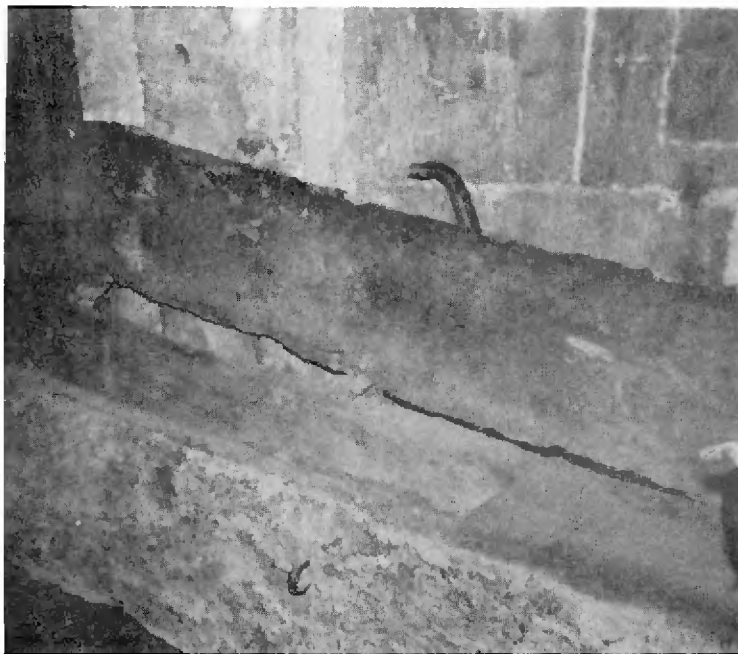




Photograph by Ken Venus

There is a blocked east window in the north transept. It seems to have been a two-light opening and so possibly part of the original church; it was blocked when the vestry was added 1822-4 (The small blocked doorway was the 19th century vestry door blocked 1901).

A further relic of our original church is the offerings chest (now in St. David's chapel). All churches were ordered to provide one to receive contributions towards the Third Crusade led by Richard Coeur-de-Lion. Ours is a solid tree trunk with a lid sliced off and a small cavity hollowed out for the money dropped through a slit. Iron bands and locks protected the contents, and the weight of the chest is such that it would have needed several men to carry it away.



Cheltenham (including Charlton Kings) had been given in 1133 by Henry I as part of the endowment of his re-founded house of Augustinian Canons at Cirencester. Usually when a parish was turned over to a religious house, a vicar was put in to do the duty and allowed to have a third of the glebe and most of the lesser tithe. But in the case of a house of Canons such as Cirencester, duty was taken by three or four men sent over from the mother house to do a stint here - they lived together and were spoken of as a "Chapter" (see M.J. Greet, Bulletin 12 p 43). When Charlton was founded c.1190 it was served by priests from Cheltenham and consequently had no vicarage and no glebe. Almost the whole income from both churches was paid straight to Cirencester. There was a six-bay tithe barn in Moorend Street (somewhere near Park Cottages) where sheaves (the 10th sheaf taken from the field before any part of the harvest had been carried) were stored till they could be threshed and the grain taken to Cirencester or sold (GRO DB55 M 14 p 36-7, M 15 pp 321-2, 434-5). The Canons were responsible for repairs to the chancels of both churches; but besides that had by 1539 become responsible for the elements, the bell ropes, and the "strawings", all usually bought by the congregation.

Mrs Hart in her History of Cheltenham (pp 47, 52) wondered whether the Canons (who in 1378 were clearly residing in the town) had not begun to appoint salaried chaplains by the 16th century. But there is no evidence for this in bishop's registers; there were least 2 priests functioning here, and the £9.16.0 reserved by the abbey for local expenses would not have covered more than repairs and necessaries, even at a period when chaplains were paid £10 or less a year. So we must presume that the Canons were still serving Cheltenham and Charlton in 1539 when the abbey was dissolved. It looks as though the sacraments were always available at St. Mary's (except during the lengthy interdict in the reign of John); but that we had little pastoral care except from the chantry priest.

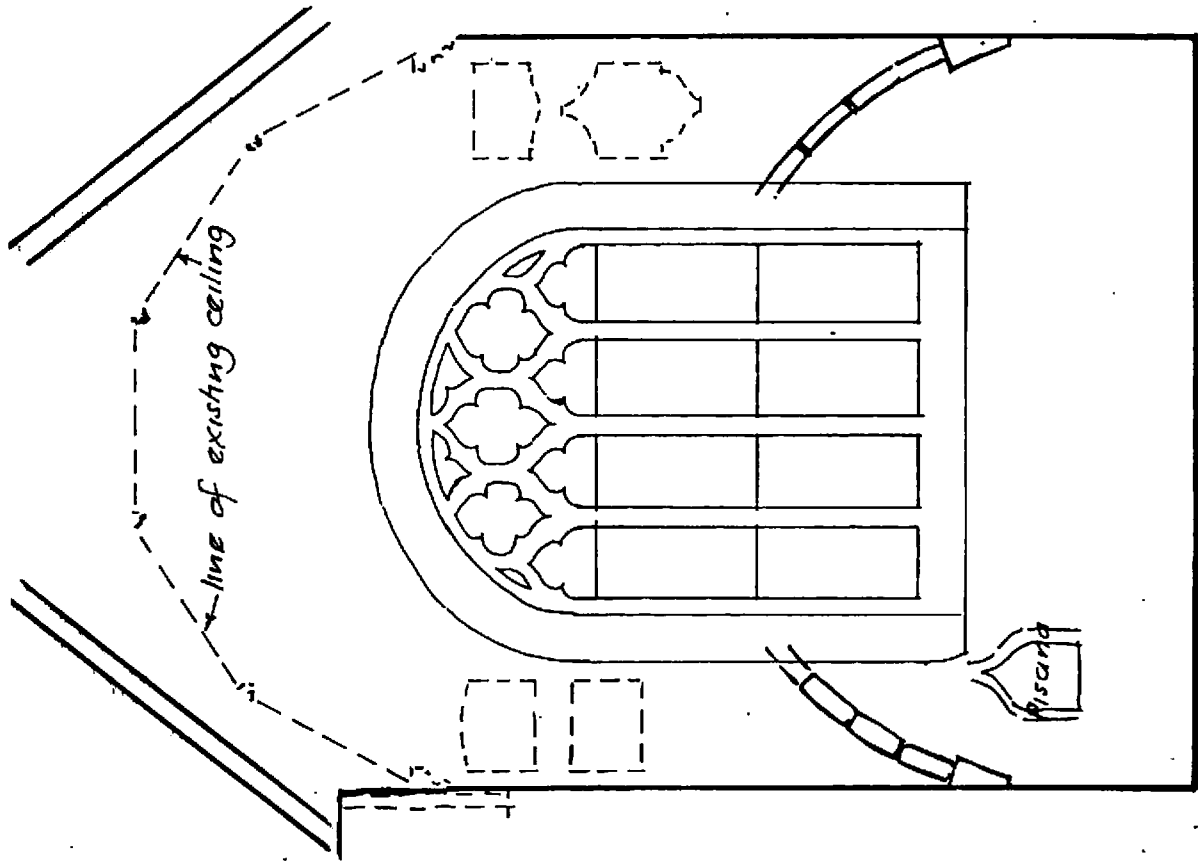
(2) THE CHANTRY

The first alteration to St. Mary's was the adaption of the south transept as a chantry chapel. The absence of documentation in the patent rolls and the meagre endowment (worth 19s 4d in 1548, from which sum 9s 4d was being paid to the Grevills) suggest a date before the end of the 13th century. The ogee-arched piscina, with 4 holes to allow rinsings from the chalice to run into the wall, would fit a date of c.1290 (at a later period, it became customary for the priest to drink the rinsings, not pour them away).

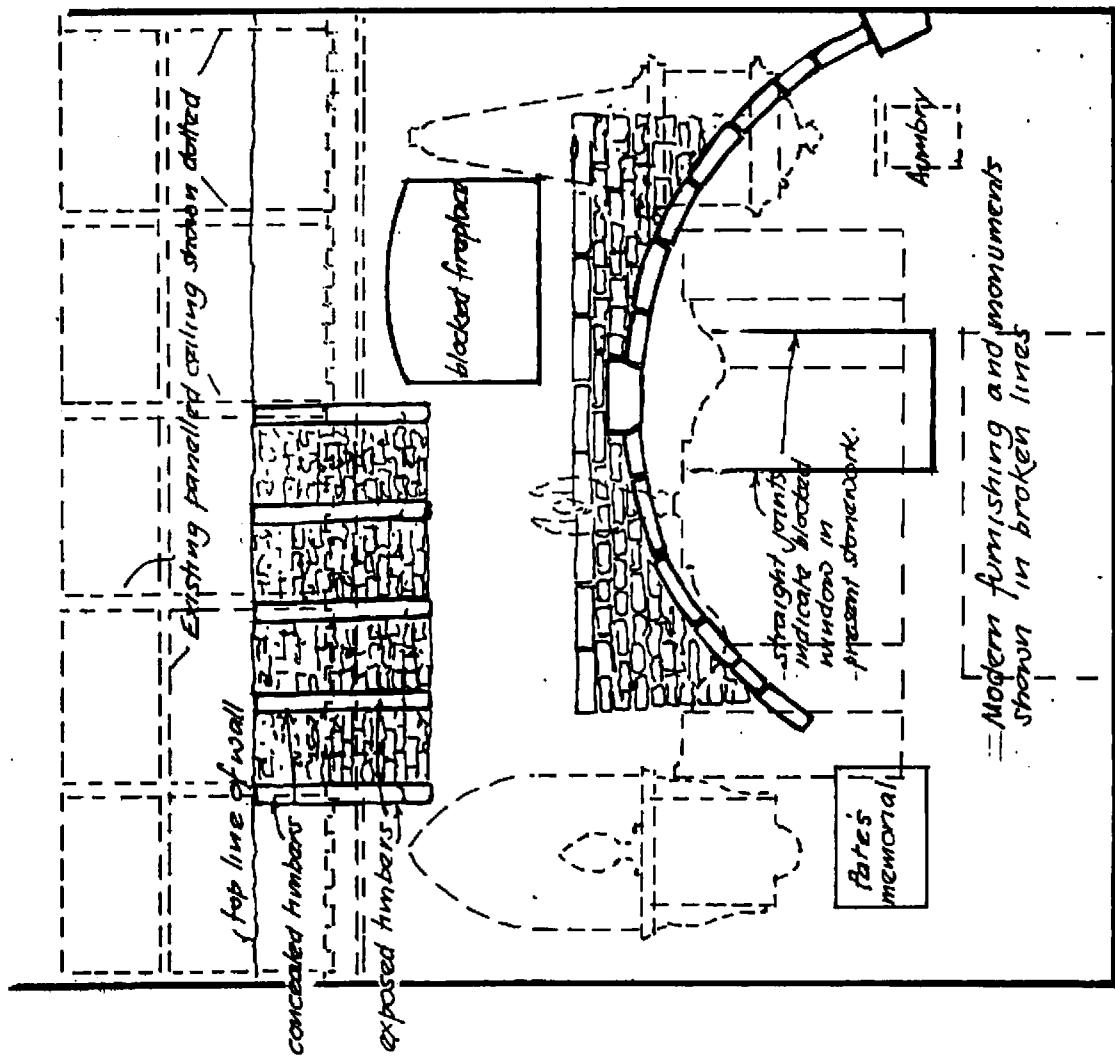


The mark of vaulting on the east, south, and west walls of the south transept indicates that there was a chamber above where the chantry priest could lodge; the staircase up to it must have been between the tower piers and a lost north wall on which the vaulting rested on its fourth side. The lower three-quarters of the chantry walls were built in stone, the upper quarter was timber-framing, a not unusual feature of 13-14th century building.

The chantry altar seems to have been lit by east and south windows, and the room above by a small south window; there was a fireplace in the east wall of the chamber (windows later blocked and fireplace blocked).



South Wall
 SAINT DAVID'S CHAPEL



East Wall
 SAINT DAVID'S CHAPEL

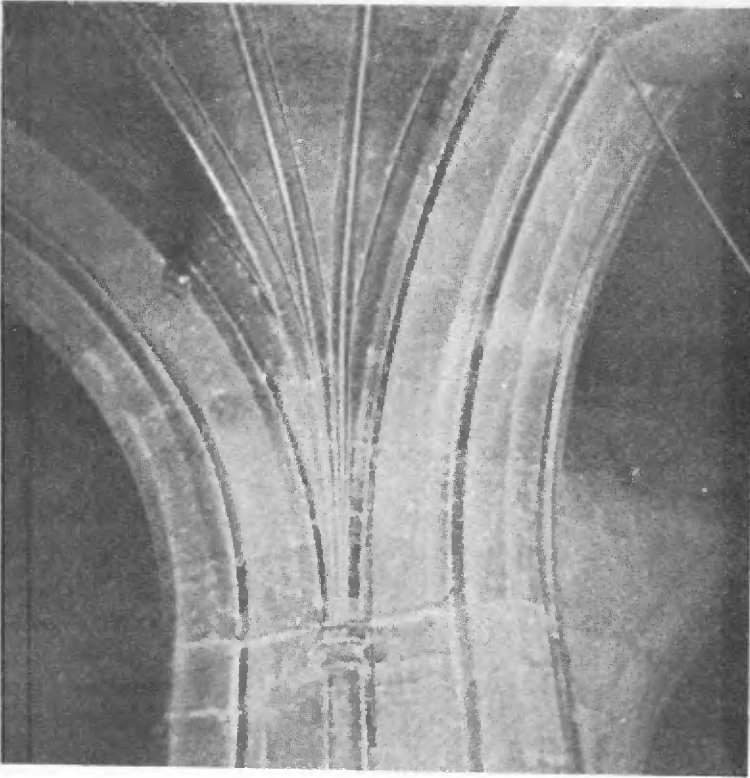
The chantry was dedicated to Our Lady, just as the main altar was. The present roof timbers of the south transept are medieval, quarter turned at some time when they had become worn; there may always have been stone tiles ("lead and bells excepted" when the chantry was suppressed in 1548 is a stock phrase and need not imply it had either).



(3) THE TOWER

The present tower and probably the south aisle date from c.1390-1400. Ashley manor had just passed into the ownership of William Grevill the wealthy wool merchant, and he (like his predecessor Walter) wanted to impress the parish with his importance. We seem to have had a burst of prosperity about that time - the 15th century depression had not yet struck. The new aisle involved piercing the south wall of the nave for pillars. All we know about them is that they were very stumpy, and this supports a date of c.1390 rather than c.1490 when slender lofty pillars were the fashion. The ogee openings in the tower favour the earlier date too, but the tower is so plain that precise dating is difficult. The chancel arch and the arch into the nave are without capitals, the moulding flows up in a continuous curve; and we must remember that originally these arches were a good 4 feet taller than they are now. (The old photograph on p48 shows the arch before the rood was added). This type of arch without capitals is seen in some Oxfordshire churches of the late 13th century, and we may have copied them. The sharply pointed arch was partly dictated by the space available, but also suggests the earlier date.

As all the old prints emphasise, the tower was absurdly large for the nave and chancel, but we wanted a big tower in order to have a ring of bells. The quadripartite tierceron vaulting leads up to the bell-opening by which the bells could be raised from the floor of the church, through the ringing chamber, up to their station in the bell chamber above. A will of 1537 (WRO 1537/254) leaves money for the repair of the bells, showing that St. Mary's had had them for a considerable time (See M.J. Greet, Bulletin 4 p. 8).



Entrance to
ringing chamber



Whatever the date of the south aisle, the parish economised by using again the three old windows with their two-light openings. New windows of c.1390 would have been 4 light and would have had more elaborate tracery.

(4) THE LATE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

Four lights are mentioned in wills of 1537-1546 (see M.J. Greet, Bulletin 4 pp 7-12). These were the high altar or sacrament light, Our Lady's light, the rood light, and the herse lights.

The sacrament was reserved, either on or above the high altar, perhaps in a hanging pyx. The Lady light (distinct from the high altar light) was in the chantry. There is no trace of a rood stair or screen on the present tower, and the fashion for such screens did not come in till the mid 15th century. So if our tower were built c.1390, then our rood was probably a crucifix hung in front of the chancel arch, with a hanging or standing light below it. (This would not incommode the parishioners; they would not have gone to the high altar to communicate more than once or twice a year). Herse lights were placed round the herse while a corpse was being waked. It was customary for a burial service to be in three parts, vespers of the dead overnight, dirige or dirge at matins very early, requiem mass and committal in the morning.

Besides the money left in wills for lights at or after a funeral, there was half an acre of land in Naunton field just within the bounds of Charlton, given for maintenance of a taper in the church. In 1548 this land was held at will by Thomas Dowdswell, subject to payment of 6d a year to the church. It would once have sufficed to buy a paschal candle.

The last chantry priest, Sir William Hall, and probably his predecessors too, had been accustomed to assist the priest in charge, the curate, because the population had grown. There were said to be 300 houseling people (ie communicants) in Charlton and 600 in Cheltenham (see M.J. Greet, Bulletin 5 pp 10-11). This is not a very clear guide to total population because medieval bishops rarely visited their dioceses and children over 8 may have been allowed to receive communion without waiting for confirmation. However, it seems clear that our chantry priest baptised, administered the last rites, and buried parishioners whenever it was inconvenient for a priest from Cheltenham to do it; though references in wills show that a "curate" (ie the man with cure of souls) was often present to witness a will, usually made in anticipation of approaching death (see M.J. Greet, Bulletin 4 p 15). Officially all fees were paid to Cirencester until 1539; after that burial fees presumably to the fermours. But it is not improbable that the chantry priest received the occasional honorarium which Hall did not feel obliged to mention in 1548. He became curate himself then and served Charlton till c.1553. For him, £10 a year secure was a great advance on 10s 0d a year plus the occasional gift. As far as qualifications went, he was as well trained as most priests even if he could not repeat the commandments in English (see M.J. Greet, Bulletin 5 pp 10-11).

The chantry endowment, a messuage and 11½ acres of land, was bought up by a group of parishioners and held in trust for the benefit of the poor (see the 1617 survey of Cheltenham manor, GRO D 855 M 7). Like all property which had passed through the Court of Augmentations, Old Church House was held of the manor of East Greenwich, by fealty only. It was a very fine timber-framed building, as we can see from a sketch (page 25) done in July 1824, only three years before the house was pulled down at a cost to the parish of £20.12.10. All through the Middle Ages, Gloucestershire had been part of the diocese of Worcester; and Charlton wills of the early 16th century frequently leave small sums to the Mother Church at Worcester. But one of Henry VIII's innovations was the creation of the new diocese of Gloucester - the first bishop was consecrated in September 1541 - and henceforward it was the bishop of Gloucester whose interest had to be sought.

(5) THE CHURCH IN THE 16-17th CENTURY

When Cirencester was dissolved in 1539, all its property came into the hands of the king, including whatever lodging the Canons had had in Cheltenham. He and his successors granted various leases of the rectory and advowson, only stipulating that the lessees or fermours should find two chaplains and two deacons, paying what stipends they thought fit, and provide necessaries for communion, bell-ropes, and strawings. As no definite figure for the stipend was set, the lessees naturally appointed men willing to accept the lowest amount on which a cleric could live, considering that no vicarage of any sort was provided in either parish. Such clerics would not be graduates of a University and only graduates were allowed to preach. So Cheltenham and Charlton had to listen Sunday by Sunday to homilies from the authorised Books of Homilies issued in 1547 and 1571. There were 12 in the first book and 21 in the second; the congregations got heartily sick of them all. (For 1571 titles, see the 39 Articles in BCP).

Clerical marriage was permitted under Elizabeth, but no incumbent on £10-15 a year without a dwelling could afford a wife and family unless he had private means.

By 1560 St. Marys had lost its pyx, its rood, its lights, and any wall paintings it may have had on its plastered walls. There cannot have been a Doom over the chancel arch - the space is far too small - but there could have been a Christopher over the north doorway. We were not wealthy in the 15th century and are unlikely to have had much stained glass. In place of the wall paintings, all churches were ordered to provide boards with the Creed and Ten Commandments written up large for the benefit of a more literate congregation. A bible in English must have been bought in 1538 and successive English prayerbooks.

Medieval chalices were very small because only the priest communicated in both kinds. Under Elizabeth we had to provide ourselves with a communion cup, large enough for all Easter communicants - the old chalice was probably handed over to the silversmith as part of the price.

We don't know what the parishioners thought about having the Bible and services in English - reactions were probably mixed. But we did want proper sermons, and this may have prompted bequests in 1611 and 1612 for buying a decent pulpit cloth or cushion (GRO Wills 1611/6 and 1612/8). We certainly had no leanings towards puritanism in 1624 (when the bishop and Sir Baptist Hicks wanted to foist a puritanically-minded minister on us) - dancing to a drum in time of service, holding church ales on Sundays, and putting up a "somerpole" at Whitsuntide were much more in our line.

Medieval churches were not as a rule provided with pews; people took their own stools, or walked about, or used stone ledges by the walls, or knelt at will during service, except when the sacring bell rang to warn everyone to kneel. Individual seats were introduced gradually and then a formal pewing of the church in the 17th century to ensure a fair allocation of sittings. At St. Mary's, pews were allotted to all the ancient messuages in the parish c.1630 (see Bulletin 13 p 21), and there were some free seats in a west gallery.

There were bequests towards the reparation of the church in wills of c.1630, and in 1630 St. Mary's got 2 new (or recast) bells. (See Parish Magazine May 1885). If the Pates memorial in the south transept is in its original position, as it appears to be, then the vaulting of the upper chamber must have been removed before 1647. Perhaps the stones were used to repair the walls and cover up the timber framing on the outside; windows and fireplace

will have been blocked at the same time. The discovery of the vaulting marks came as a great surprise in 1877 when the plaster was removed; this rules out a major alteration in 1822 or in 1800 (when the big window was put in), for the churchwarden C.H. Gael remembered both. (See his letter in the Cheltenham Examiner 22 May 1878 and the Parish Magazine January 1878)

M. Paget

- (1) I am grateful to Dr J. Bettey and Mr M. Aston of Bristol Extra-Mural Department for their visit to St Mary's and suggestions about its architectural history.
- (2) Information about the pre-1876 church and its restoration was given to me in 1920 by William James Turner of Elm Cottage, who died in January 1924 aged 80.
- (3) We owe our set of Parish Magazines to the generosity of Miss Emma Buckle who gave them to the Vicar in 1932.



CHARLTON KINGS, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

The church in the 16th-18th centuries

Print from the Gentlemans' Magazine 1823 (C.J. Smith fecit)

2. MEAN STIPENDS, A WANDERING MINISTER, AND A COMPANY OF SCABNELLS.
The church in Charlton Kings, 1609-1624

In a Cheltenham Manor Court book (1) John Stubbe (steward of the Manor of Cheltenham) tells the story of the long-drawn-out struggle in the early years of the 16th century by the churchwardens and parishioners of Cheltenham and Charlton Kings to obtain the quality of minister to which they were entitled

and to ensure payment of adequate stipends to these ministers.

He starts the story on 27 February 1597/8, when Queen Elizabeth granted the interest in the Rectory of Cheltenham and the annexed Chapel of Charlton to Sir Francis Bacon (later Lord Verulam and Viscount St. Albans) for a 40-year term at an annual rent of £75-13-4, payable to the Queen (This was a pretty good bargain since it appears that the value of the properties was about £600 p.a. more than the rent).

The terms of the grant included a provision that Sir Francis should maintain at his own expense 'two fit and able and sufficient chaplains and two deacons to celebrate divine service in the said church and chapel . . .', and provide at his own cost 'bread, wine and other necessaries for celebration of divine service. . . . and also bell ropes and strawings necessary to be used in the said church and chapel'. It is interesting to note that in later discussion of these provisions it emerges that 'two fit, able and sufficient chaplains' is interpreted as meaning two ministers with M.A.s from Oxford or Cambridge.

When there were still many years of the lease to run, Sir Francis conveyed 'the said term and interest in and to the said Rectory and chapel. . . by good and lawful conveyances and assurances in the law. . . . to Tymothy Cartwright Daniel Fowler, Anselm Fowler, William Bayly and Henry Bayly', who held the property in trust for Thomas Higgs, John Higgs, Robert Higgs and Elizabeth Badgehott (or Badger) their mother. This family of Higgs had the sole use and benefit (i.e. the £600 p.a.), except afterwards for certain tithes which had been let for £60 p.a. to Anthony Partridge and his wife Alice. Alice Partridge turns out to have a Higgs connection, since she was formerly the wife of Robert Higgs, who died early in the story.

On the death of Queen Elizabeth ultimate ownership of the Rectory and Chapel of course descended to James I, and he granted the reversion of the property to Francis Morrice and Francis Phillips and their heirs --- in other words, after the 40 years lease had expired in 1637, they would take over. But they, by proper conveyance, passed on the reversion to Sir Baptist Hicks.

So now we have a chain of interested-- and disinterested-- parties: the Monarch, the Cartwrights Fowlers and Baylys, the Higgs family, and Sir Baptist Hicks. And if, quite apart from any obscurity which the passages of time draws over the matter of who actually appoints the ministers, the crucial clause about paying the ministers gets accidentally omitted in some of the legal dealings, one can see that the stage is set for a really long argument in which the inhabitants of Cheltenham and Charlton Kings are likely to suffer.

Such was the case. As early as 1609 there are strong complaints to the effect that (in the words of a later petition) '...the said cures of the said church and chaple were and had byn very insufficiently served, and were and had byn supplied wth ministers and deacons of small learning and not of such sufficiency as by the gracious meaning and intencon of the said late Queen deceased in her Highnes said ltres patents was ment and intended, and that the ocasion therof grewe by reason of the meane stipends allowed the said ministers and deacons', by the Higgs family. This is the theme (the deprivation of the two parishes, together having 2000 communicants) that was to dominate the next 15 years or so, and be the subject of many petitions and lawsuits.

These complaints were made in about 1609 to the Bishop of Gloucester, Dr. Parry. Dr. Parry went to Cheltenham to persuade Mrs. Badger to give the preaching ministers sufficient stipends in accordance with the covenants, but he 'could not wyne her either by fayre meanes or threates'. He therefore petitioned the Lord Treasurer, rehearsing the terms of the covenant and pointing out that Mrs.

Badger was only paying £10 p.a. each to two reading curates, and 26s 8d p.a. each to two lay deacons; this was inadequate for two parishes amounting to at least 2000 communicants. At some stage the Bishop agreed that £20 p.a. was acceptable for the stipends for the time being, until Mrs. Badger had discharged some debts. She appears to have promised to increase the amount to £40. Then the Bishop was transferred to Worcester, and the Lord Treasurer died; the parsonages were sold to contractors and the covenants were omitted, though two of the contractors said they would bind anyone buying the rectory to perform the covenants.

Sir Baptist Hicks then bought the reversion of the properties, and he got Mrs. Badger to agree to give the privy tithes towards payment of the said stipends-- but nothing came of it. The inhabitants of Cheltenham and Charlton Kings had to put up with this situation until in 1620 they could stand it no longer and made a petition to Sir Francis Bacon, now Lord Verulam and Lord Chancellor of England. He responded by taking Mrs. Badger to task for depriving the parishioners of their spiritual food by not paying for the two chaplains and two curates -- paying only £15 p.a. for two curates. He said, however, that he would not haul her to court if she would reform and pay £40 each for two chaplains and another £10 each for two deacons. Unfortunately, external events once again frustrated the affair -- 'the said Lord Chancellor was removed from office', (on a charge of corruption) and action on his letter ceased.

By now there was only one recourse - a petition to the King, and this was made on 17 February 1621/2. Alas! the King bounced the matter straight back to the Bishop of Gloucester (now Dr. Smythe), but Dr. Smythe was 'one to give very small stipends to his curates.....so we did not trouble him with that business'.

The next development was an arrangement for arbitration, by an influential friend of Mrs. Badger, Mr. Endimion Porter ('a great favourite of the Dukes'). He ruled that Mrs. Badger should pay £40 p.a. to the chaplains but when she appealed he reduced it to £20 for 5 years. Astonishingly, Mr. Thomas Packer, said to be acting for the parishioners, abated this by another £5. All this was in a covenant (1621/2) of which a crucial clause was that if any dispute on the terms should arise, it would be referred to the Lord Bishop of Lincoln, Keeper of the Great Seal of England and Lord Chancellor.

So much for the legal manoeuvres so far. What of the incumbents themselves all this time? John Stubbe only starts this aspect of the story just before the 1621/2 covenant was obtained. The then minister of Charlton Kings, Mr. Wells, departed and a Mr. Winsmore, 'a wandering minister, having wife and children' was sent to officiate at Charlton by Dr. Smythe. However, another man, Mr. Walker had already been preaching in Charlton Kings on the understanding that he would leave when the stipend was increased. Furthermore a Mr. Hugh Williams inveigled the Bishop into giving him a letter to officiate in Charlton Kings too! But Mr. Winsmore complained, Mr. Williams was dispatched --- and Mr. Walker settled in, though still promising to give way in due course. When he heard, however, that the stipend really was going to be increased, he felt he would rather like to stay and enjoy it. So he wrote to the Bishop ('he underhand informed the Bishoppe'), Sir Baptist Hicks and other influential people in the case in March 1621/2, alleging that the parishioners were out to deprive him of his livelihood without just cause, and asking for assistance 'in the better establishment of me heare', and for 'the augmentation of the means for better furnishing of my study'.

He got short shrift from Thomas Packer: if all the inhabitants are against him, perhaps it is his fault. 'The allowance is intended for a very worthy preacher and good scholar.....small hope that you can supply the place'. Mr. Walker

was advised to look for another post by next Michaelmas. But support was forthcoming from Sir Baptist Hicks, who stood wholly for Mr. Walker, so the two churchwardens and 85 parishioners (-all male!) petitioned the Bishop to provide 'some sufficient man instead of Mr. Walker to officiate the cure', since Mr. Walker was unfit for the job, 'defective in his place and duety, giving content to none, but dayly much disliked to all'. Actually the Bishop thought Mr. Walker not dishonest nor lacking in learning, though he 'could not justifie him in all respects', and if he had not agreed to go the Bishop would have been glad to let him stay. The Bishop suggested that a sum of money should be given to Mr. Walker on departure, say £40, to be raised as might be appropriate. But neither the Higgs family nor the parishioners would accept the charge, so Mr. Walker stayed put.

The parishioner's next recourse therefore was to the Lord Bishop of Lincoln, and a case was accordingly presented against the Higgs family and the Trustees (Timothy Cartwright, Daniel Fowler, et ceteri). Incidentally it refers to the stipends agreed in the covenant of 1621/2 as £55 p.a. to the two ministers (of whom one at least should be an Oxbridge M.A.) for 5 years, after that, £80 p.a. The trustees claimed to have no responsibility in the matter; the Higgs humbly entreated the court that buying the estate and term in the premises had got them so far into debt that it would take more than three years to discharge it, so they wanted to be spared the need for paying the full stipends. The court ordered all of them to show cause by June 1624 why they should not implement the covenant and no cause was shown as of 8 June 1624.

All this time Mr. Walker continued at Charlton 'with a full purpose and resolucon not to departe or give way to any other upon any condicon whatsoever, being supported by my Lo: Bishopp and Sir Baptist Hicks, but especially by the Fermers(i.e. the Higgs family) in regard that he contented himself with the olde stipendes'. Mr. Richard Brooke, B.D. of five years standing and senior fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, had been recommended for the post by Dr. Benefield and Mr. Anthony Clapton of Corpus Christi College, so the churchwardens and parishioners of Cheltenham and Charlton Kings again petitioned the Bishop of Lincoln (8 June 1624). This time the problem was the partitioning of the agreed £55 p.a. (to become £80 p.a. after five years) between Mr. William Panton, minister in Cheltenham for the last 30 years, and the new man in Charlton Kings, Richard Brooke, who was better qualified. The proposal was that Mr. Panton should receive £20 and Mr. Brooke the rest. A decree from the Bishop on 30 June directed that this should be done.

Now Mr. Walker, hearing that Mr. Brooke had been recommended to be minister in Charlton Kings wrote to Dr. Kettle, president of Trinity College on 5 July 1624: '.....Sir, I have for 4 yeeres space almost compleate, taken much paynes in preaching at Charleton Kings, being heare placed by the Lo: Bishop of Glouc and Sir Baptist Hicks where I have undergon much persecucon by such amongst us as have wthstood all gratious proceedings by my meanes and have set up foolish and prophane vanities, as namely a somerpole on Whitsonday, Churchalls* on the Lords daie, dancyng in tyme of prayer, a drum ratling about the church in tyme of exercises in the temple, patronizing of fornicacon without satisfaccon to the church, putting idlings to the temporall court. And wheras I endeavor still to supresse vice only in my sermons they are as maliciously bent against me...' He asks Dr. Kettle to persuade Mr. Brooke not to go ahead with supplanting him and ends his letter: 'So wishing that John Stubbe my neighbour were more wise towards God and less wise to the world with the remembrance of my duty, I humbly take my leave, leaving you to the protecccon of the Highest and resting ever your worships in the Lo: to be comended R. Walker'. But to no avail. Mr. Brooke was appointed and went to Gloucester to procure his licence for Charlton Kings on 17 July 1624. On the next Sunday Mr. Brooke appeared at Charlton Kings and ousted Mr. Walker. However, the arrangement was that Mr. Panton and Mr. Brooke

should preach on alternate Sundays at Cheltenham and Charlton Kings, and a few weeks later on the Sunday when Mr. Brooke was in Cheltenham, Mr. Walker got to church in Charlton Kings early before Mr. Panton - and took the service. At evensong there was a great argument when Mr. Brooke came - and Mr. Walker took the service again. The following Sunday the church door was kept locked until Mr. Brooke arrived, but Mr. Walker turned up with some of Mr. Higgs' men (? his 'heavies'?) and tried to push in before Mr. Brooke. But he was restrained and John Stubbe told him he would 'never more serve in this church unless he could recover it by the due course of law', and Mr. Walker never intruded again.

Soon after this, Mr. Panton died, and unwittingly introduced a whole new dimension into the matter. The irrepressible Mr. Walker asked Sir Baptist Hicks to get him the Cheltenham job, and a letter was sent to the Bishop of Gloucester with that end in view. However, the Bishop had already licensed a Mr. English to the job, and having done so, promptly died, before Sir Baptist's letter was delivered. Sir Baptist Hicks was clearly annoyed: 'the parishioners were threatened to be sued in the Chancery by Sir Baptist Hicks, and our chancellor told us he was like to be questioned for his office for licensing Mr. English'. Sir Baptist's claim - the new dimension - was that he alone had the right to nominate ministers to the two parishes, and this started a lot of consultations with learned counsel, on both sides, while Sir Baptist took the matter to the Archbishop of Canterbury in an attempt to have the Archbishop license Mr. Walker for Cheltenham. John Stubbe records the views of one counsel: 'It is noted that neither the King nor any of his predecessors before the sale nor Francis Morrice, Fra: Phillips nor Sir Baptist Hicks since the purchase did ever nominate any ministers to these churches, but only the Bishop of the Diocese: and since the sale the Bishop of the Diocese has nominated Mr. Eiston, Mr. Wells, Mr. Winsmore, Mr. Walker and Mr. Brooke to Charleton ...' The parishioners may have felt reassured, but Sir Baptist Hicks was not going to let the matter rest. However before we approach the denouement, we must pick up another thread which Mr. Panton's death left dangling.

When Mr. Panton at Cheltenham and Mr. Brooke at Charlton were the appointed ministers, the stipend had been unequally divided between them. With the appointment of Dr. English to Cheltenham, also a B.D. and a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, the churches then had two equally qualified ministers and it seemed reasonable to divide the stipends equally between them. But this was easier said than done, especially since at some time the parishioners had agreed to make up the stipend from £55 to the £80 which the Higgs ought to have been paying. It was necessary to obtain an order from the Bishop of Lincoln, and yet another petition was presented to him, on 28 January 1624/5. It rehearsed much of the history of the case with emphasis on the amount of the stipend and the way it had been divided in the past. The Bishop of Lincoln was cautious and wanted to be sure that the parishioners really accepted this idea of making up the stipends, so he noted re. the petition: 'Let all the inhabitants of the parishes see this petition and if they shall certifie under their hands that a decree shall passe by their consent, I will make an order to that effect'. So a certificate was prepared and signed on behalf of the ministers and parishioners by 'Jo: Lymerick, Ric Banaster, parishioners of Cheltenham; J. Stubbe, Sam. Deighton, parishioners of Charleton; Alex. Packer, one of the churchwardens of Charleton'. No doubt to make sure that the Bishop was assured of no protest from the ministers concerned, Tho: Packer added a note: 'May it please your Lp I know the preachers to be willing to have the stipend divided equally between them'. Whether the Bishop ignored this, or whether protocol required the full restatement of the case is not clear. But a second petition (not dated) is recorded, re-stating the case as in the earlier one, and adding that the petitioners have now 'procured a certificate from Mr. Packer of the parishes' conformity under his hand for the equall divicon of the said stipend....' The Bishop's annotation says 'Let an order be drawn to that effect, and this shall be your warrant. J.L.C.'

John Stubbe may be forgiven for recording a heartfelt comment: 'It will appeare by the peticons and certificate subscribed howe much adue we had to gett the said order to passe for the divicon of the ministers stipends'.

More ado was to come, however. The Higgs family, on the instigation of Sir Baptist Hicks, who wanted to test the claim that he alone could appoint ministers, absolutely refused to pay any stipends at all, and 'the more we (J. Stubbe and others) intreated Sir Baptist the more violent he was against us'. After various stormy episodes, the case was taken to the court of Chancery.

In connection with this suit, an interrogatory - a document outlining the case in the form of questions to be put to the Higgs brothers - was prepared though not actually used. It reveals a little more of the violence of the arguments that took place. For example: 'Did Toby Packer and Robt Packer gent two of the plts (plaintiffs) then churchwardens of Cheltenham and Lo: Packer John Packer and Sam. Deighton gent together with John Sturmy parishioners of Cheltenham aforesaid or any of them come to yor house upon Thursday 3 Feb last past, and show you the said writ of execucon of the said order under seale and read the same unto you and deliver unto you a copy thereof, and demand 6-17-6 due unto the said John English for one quarter of a yeere then past by vertue of the said decree and order. Did you thereupon say, that they were a company of scabnells (2) or scabnell fellowes or words to the lyke effect? Or what words of disgrace did you then use towards them also saye unto the said Lodowicke Packer that he came creeping in unto you lyke a body louse or words to the lyke effect? Or what words of disgrace did you then use towards them or any of them at such tyme as they came to serve you with the saide writte?'

It is a relief to report that Sir Baptist Hicks' claim to nominate ministers was on this occasion firmly dismissed, the Higgs family were ordered to pay the six months' stipends which they had withheld, and pay the legal charges incurred by the parishes in taking them to court. This time the Higgs really did pay up.

So, after 15 years or more of petitioning, arguing, suing - after 'much adue' as John Stubbe said - the inhabitants of Cheltenham and Charlton Kings got their properly qualified ministers, and the ministers finally received their due and proper stipends. What a contrast with life in the church today!

H. Middleton

- (1) G.R.O. D855 M68. I am indebted to Mrs. Mary Paget for drawing my attention to this story.
- (2) The word 'scabnell' does not appear in the Oxford English Dictionary. Can any reader enlighten me?

3. SIR BAPTIST HICKS, JESUS COLLEGE, OXFORD, AND THE LIVING

The long dispute over the stipends and the right to present to the two livings appeared to have been settled in 1624; but in fact this was not the end of the story. Sir Baptist Hicks in 1612 had bought both rectory and advowson from the crown; but his purchase could not become effective till the various leases already granted by the crown ran out. This would not happen till 1652. Meanwhile, in anticipation of the event, he came to an agreement in 1629 with Jesus College, Oxford, dividing responsibility for finding proper ministers between the College and his heirs. The scheme meant that never again could a man without a degree (and so unable to preach) be forced on either parish.

Sir Baptist Hicks (then Viscount Campden) gave the College the right to nominate three men whenever there was a vacancy at Cheltenham or Charlton - from those three names he or his heirs would select one. The vicars must be members of Jesus College, M.A.s of two year's standing at least; and were to hold the livings for six years only unless reappointed (which they sometimes were). The presentation was to be made void by marriage or by plurality (accepting another living), so we always had celibate ministers and did not have to share them. Only one of the vicars need reside. The college was given £80 p.a. as endowment, from which £40 was to be paid to each vicar. This in 1629 seemed an adequate stipend, even though there were no vicarages and no land on which to build any (1).

Thus from 1652 to the 19th century, Charlton was served by men from Jesus College. In 1800, however, the rectory and advowson of both Cheltenham and Charlton were sold by the descendants of Sir Baptist Hicks; and Charlton's rectory and right of patronage bought by John Whithorne. From him they went in 1816 to his daughter Elizabeth Lovesay. The Commissioners of Queen Anne's Bounty had augmented the living from £40 to £64 in 1814 when St. Mary's at long last became a separate parish (see Bulletin 4 p.22). But the Lovesays still had total control over the churchyard and the sale of vaults or common graves; they took all tithes, subject only to responsibility for repair of the chancel. The advowson they sold to the College in 1832, thus doing away with the complicated arrangement Sir Baptist Hicks had started. The six year limitation and the restriction to members of Jesus college and to celibate clergy disappeared. For the first time, Charlton in 1834 had a Vicar who intended to reside in the parish, and almost immediately married a local girl.

We don't know how 18th century vicars managed without a Vicarage - they may have commuted from Oxford. But by the early 19th century, bishops were beginning to frown on non-residents; Williams in 1817 and Watling in 1830 had to ask permission to reside in Cheltenham. One result of this was that Vicars had till 1834 played a negligible part in the life of the parish. One sermon a Sunday was all they were obliged to preach, though in 1816 the parishioners agreed to pay an extra £60 a year to have a sermon at Evensong (GRO P 76 IN 3/1). When the Revd. James Frederick Secretan Gabb came in 1834, he could afford to accept a living with such a small stipend because he had private means; and it was a shock to St. Mary's that he should assert himself vis-a-vis the parish clerk, and object to parishioners badger-baiting in the churchyard after Sunday service! The first Vicarage, Pear Tree Cottage (now Courland) in Brookway Lane was bought for him in 1836.



An attempt to raise the endowment in 1885 was frustrated because the Ecclesiastical Committee for Endowments would not make a grant unless the patronage were transferred to the bishop and the College demanded £300 for it; our population was 3950 and to qualify for a grant it had to be 4000! However, in 1886, Jesus College agreed to transfer the patronage to the bishop as a free

gift, provided £100 were raised to increase the endowment and this sum the vicar, W. J. Mayne, was willing to pay himself so that we should be eligible for a grant from other church Societies. He hoped that the Endowments Committee would then help towards purchase of a new vicarage (Parish Magazine July 1886) and in fact £500 was applied towards this end. The actual transfer of the advowson was not achieved till June 1888 (London Gazette 25 May and 10 July 1888, GRO P 76 IN/3/4).

Hodson in launching the 1899 Augmentation Appeal, explained the incumbent's income as £65.2.4 (including grants), about £40 in fees and about £50 in Easter Offerings, (these last of course being variable, and fees for burials likely to diminish as the churchyard became full Parish Magazine December 1899). Unfortunately, this fund had to compete with appeals for the organ and for mission rooms, as well as other missions (to which St. Mary's then contributed roughly double what it spent on church expenses); to the parish, the Augmentation scheme seemed less urgent. In January 1901 Hodson wrote "I regret the fact that as yet the laity do not as a body - though there are noble exceptions - see the need and privilege of contributing to the maintenance of the clergy for services rendered..." Still, about £500 was collected, which would bring in around £30. In 1908 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners refused to raise the stipend because with fees and Easter Offerings the vicar was getting just over £200! An opportunity to acquire the tithes from Hudson's trustees who had bought them up in the hope that they would be transferred to the living was missed in 1917 (Bridgman GRO P 76 M i 2/3).

But there were several welcome gifts during Neale's incumbency. Mr. and Mrs. Bagnall gave £100 in 1916 to mark their Golden Wedding; Ralph Walker left £100 to the Vicar which was used to increase the stipend; and Mrs. Jane Holmes's bequest of an annuity of £50 brought the total to nearly £200 in cash. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1924 added £21 a year and the £200 mark was topped! Then after Neale's death, the parish raised £1300 in his memory, £1135 to increase the living and the rest for the baptistry (GRO P 76 M i 2/3). It seems a pity this could not have been done sooner, to give him a little comfort in his lifetime (but he would probably have given most of the extra away!).

While Pear Tree Cottage was the Vicarage, Gabb used to walk to church up Brookway Lane and along the footpath behind Pound Cottage, which consequently acquired the name of Vicar's Alley.

Then when Holy Apostles was projected as a future parish, that first vicarage was sold for £544.8.7. Gabb owned property in Charlton and could live in his own house in Balcarras Lane. Dundas was forced to purchase Hearne Villa in Church Street - in 1882 he wrote to the Principal of Jesus College "I am at present residing in a small house which I was compelled to purchase myself, but which is not at all suited for the purpose and is moreover altogether too small for my family - I have now lived in this cottage of my own for seven years".

Moore rented a house - all we know about it is that when he left, his successor reported "the house



occupied by the late incumbent is now without an adequate supply of water, it having failed during his tenancy, and there is no prospect of this want being remedied". For a time Mayne had to live outside the parish, in Bellevue House, London Road. "This however I hope is only temporary, as I have taken two small houses conveniently situated, which are to be thrown into one and which will I hope serve as a makeshift (although somewhat inconvenient)". They were 1 and 2 Lyefield Villas.

A Vicarage Appeal had been launched by Dundas in 1882 and by 1889 the parish had the money to buy The Grange in Horsefair Street for £2240 plus costs. The house was large and had coach-house, stables, and over 3 acres of land, for it was assumed that any incumbent here would have private means or else would take pupils. (For a plan and description of The Grange, see Bulletins I pp 32-4 and 2 pp 22-4; we now know that until enfranchised it had been copyhold of the manor of Cheltenham). Hodson, with private means and a large family, found The Grange exactly suited to his needs.



The east side of The Grange, with Hodson and his family

But Neale had nothing to live on except his stipend and to him The Grange was a dreadful liability, even though it was let to Mrs. Heberden for about £60 a year. Dilapidations, for which he was responsible, swallowed up more than his Easter Offering every 5th year. Neale lived in a very modest way in Cirencester Road, and when Mrs. Heberden died, the parish was glad to sell its white elephant for a mere £1474. It was pulled down in 1933.

So when Hollis came in 1937, he had to live for a while in one of the small bungalows on Cirencester Road. Then The Wold was bought and was the Vicarage from 1938 to 1965. Finally a comparatively new house in Church Street was acquired and enlarged.



1938-1965



1965-

M. Paget

- (1) I am grateful to the Archivist of Jesus College, Dr. D. A. Rees, for letting me see the original deed and the correspondence relating to the living.

4. THE ROYAL ARMS IN CHARLTON KINGS CHURCH

- (1) The Arms displayed in the Baptistry

This shield bears the arms of William III. There is a note under it to show that it was originally placed in position in 1660, the year of the Restoration when Charles II was recalled 'From his travels' and placed on the throne. At this time the small, inner shield (technically an escutcheon) would not have been in position and the arms would have been those of the Stuart kings from James I to James II.

These arms show the three lions which have been the Royal Arms of England from the time of Richard I to the present day, quartered with the lilies of France - kings of England from Edward III to George III claimed to be kings of France. The lion rampart within its double tressure flory counter flory forms the Royal Arms of Scotland and has been part of our Royal Arms ever since James VI of Scotland became also James I of England. It was this same king who first claimed the Lordship of Ireland and added the harp to his arms to indicate this.



The Arms drawn by K. Venus

These would be the arms placed in the church by the church-wardens. In 1688 James II left the country and was replaced by his son-in-law and his daughter, William and Mary. There were two early versions of their arms but in the latter part of 1689 the Stuart arms were re-adopted with an escutcheon of Nassau (for William) on top. One can only guess that the then churchwardens breathed a sigh of relief that they had not been precipitate in ordering a whole new coat of arms to be painted, and had someone paint the new lion on its field strewn with small rectangles called billets over the original shield.

By 1744, when the note at the top of the display indicates further alterations, the shield should have been completely changed, except for the Irish harp. This has not been done but the cypher G2R, for George II, appears. It is interesting to speculate about the letter G in this. Originally it would have been C2R for Charles II. Had the churchwardens altered this to W, or W & M, when the escutcheon was painted on? Or had they left the C so that it was easy, and inexpensive, to add a few brush strokes in 1744 and turn C into G?

Apart from the shield and the initials of the various monarchs the painting would scarcely have had to be changed from 1600 to the present day. The Garter surrounds the shield, as it does the shield of every member of this order. On top of the shield is a royal helmet, facing out and with bars over the opening. Over this is the crest that has been used by Kings since Edward III. The lion has long been an England supporter, though its partner has varied; James I brought the unicorn from Scotland. The motto was first used by Richard I and was re-introduced by Edward III. With occasional departures (Elizabeth I and Anne used 'Semper eadem') this has been in use ever since.

(2) The Arms over the Chancel Arch

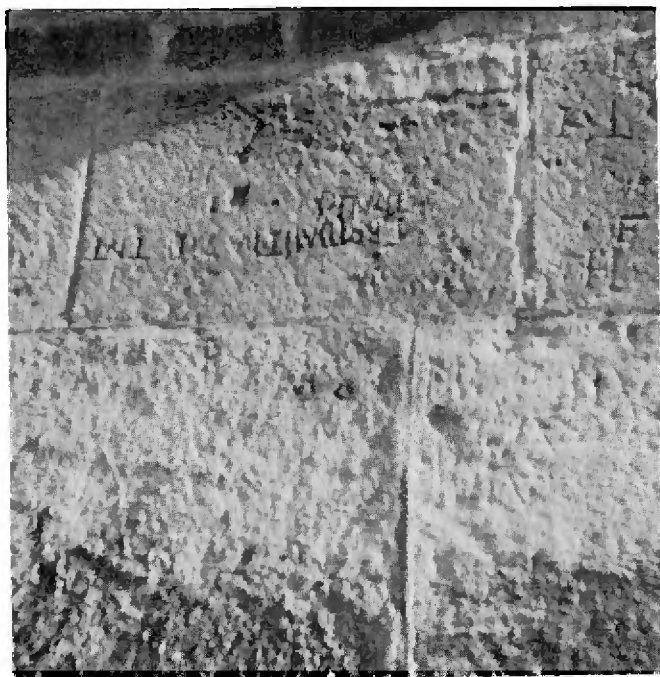
These arms are the ones in use from 1816 to 1837. The Arms of France had been omitted since 1801; the French had executed their last king so it appeared pointless (and dangerous?) to claim the throne of France. After the Union with Ireland it seemed best to give equal prominence to the arms of England, Scotland and Ireland, so they were given a quarter of the shield each; the last quarter was given, in accordance with heraldic custom, to the arms in the first quarter. Since the King was then also ruler of Hanover the arms of Hanover were shown on an escutcheon on top of the shield. These consist of the arms of Brunswick, Luneburg and Westphalia. The ruler of Hanover was an Elector of the Holy Roman Emperor and was also Arch-Treasurer of the Empire. This latter office is shown by a crown placed at the top of the escutcheon of Hanover.

When Victoria became Queen in 1837 she was excluded from the throne of Hanover on account of her sex. The arms of that state were removed and the Royal Arms assumed their present form.

Other features in the Achievement have not changed since the days of the achievement in the baptistry but the sculptor has allowed himself some artistic licence. The supporters are shown in a very relaxed posture with their lower parts out of sight. Although the lion which forms the crest is shown on a recent photograph, I was unable to see it when I visited the church. The garter is correctly shown with its motto but the royal motto is left out, perhaps a tactful measure as it probably originally referred to the King's claim to parts of France. The unicorn's horn, if it has one, is very hard to see. This horn was highly prized in ancient times as it was believed to be an antidote to all poisons. Any failure in this function at the present time may be because the unicorn's horns on display in museums etc. are in fact tusks of the narwhal.

5. CHURCH FABRIC AND FURNISHINGS 1700-1875

Anyone who examines the south porch will be struck by the number of initials cut on the stones, some the right way up, some not. The wall behind the porch is marked where a roof of slightly different curve abutted just above the present line. So it looks as though the porch has been rebuilt, using old materials, c.1700 - all dates before 1700 are upside down or turned sideways, while those after 1700 are the right way up. A line of text which could be 16th century reads (reversed) "FROM ALL THAT SIN THAT (US EN)THALLD---".



The next alteration was the enlargement of the south transept window (see p 26). Gael in a letter in the Cheltenham Examiner of 22 May 1878 says this was done in 1800. Did we now have an organ and Singers and needed more light? we certainly did have an organ about 1820 and a small mixed choir around that time. A south gallery with outside staircase was added to the nave in 1800 because our population was growing with Cheltenham's. Retired East India Company officials, ex-Naval officers, and Irish gentry found Charlton cheaper to live in than the town. The staircase shows in Rowe's sketch (see cover) and the sketch of 1824 and the mark of it is still on the wall. But one gallery was not enough. In 1817 there was a proposal to pull down the tower as "a great inconvenience in the Church" - this was carried in Vestry but probably defeated by bell-ringers and parish! Without the tower, the space it occupies and the transept could have been incorporated into the nave.

Heating had been put into the church before 1820. The print (page 2) of the north side without the aisle shows a boiler house and chimney against the transept, and there was probably another on the south side. By 1822, when the Gentleman's Magazine sketch was made, we had a tower clock. In 1822 the seating problem was urgent and John Humphris's plan for a new north aisle and north gallery was adopted. The Lay Impropiator was willing to give up part of the churchyard (which he controlled) in return for ownership of all pews in the new gallery - gallery seats were more prestigious than those in the body of the church. Bones dug up when the new aisle was built were reburied under the big yew tree. The ground floor of the new aisle was kept for 190 free sittings. This was a stipulation of the Society for enlarging churches when a grant of



£300 was made towards the cost. The whole church was repewed and rather upright pews to meet the requirements of the Society were put in; pews near the west door had higher backs because of the draught. The new windows had four lights and were extra deep to serve both gallery and floor, with pleasing heads outside. (Only one window survives and the lower part has been blocked to bring it into line with the 1877 windows). Two new 3-light windows were put at the west end of the church on either side of a new rose window, a copy of Cheltenham's. Work on these windows had been completed by July 1824, when the artist Powell visited Charlton.

Both sketches show Old Church House, shortly to be demolished; the second shows the south porch, the gallery staircase, and the south window of 1800. It was taken from the private road which then ran on the south side of the church and churchyard.

To help gallery accoustics and vision, the old south-aisle arches were raised.





Two painted glass windows had been donated to St. Mary's, one in 1817 by William Hunt Prinn, the other in 1819 by the incumbent the Revd. Robert Williams; and the parish itself paid for a third in 1824-5. The parish one (and probably the others too) came from Birmingham, from the workshop of the younger Eginton; it cost £111.3.9 plus 6s 6d carriage (GRO P 76 CW 2/17). The Egintons, father and sons, produced "transparencies on glass" rather than true stained glass, and copied dramatic pictures by Continental artists, using mainly yellows, light browns, and mauve. (see DNB). The younger Eginton had been appointed glass stainer to Princess Charlotte in 1816, so perhaps it was Colonel McLeod of Charlotteville (Cudnall), a devotee of the princess, who suggested employing the firm. Examples of such windows are now rare. Our "ornamental glass" is mentioned in the 1865 insurance policy but did not survive the 1877 restoration.

A list was made in October 1824 "of the owners of Pews in the Body of the Church of Charlton Kings" and nearly everybody paid £6 (some £7). Colonel Prowse was allowed two pews free "for a large Pew in the south side of the Church now made free sittings" and Mrs. Lovesey had a similar concession. Altogether £371 towards the work was raised by this means. A dispute arose about pews in the west gallery but Robert Mansell the churchwarden was firm in claiming that they belonged to the parish. For this he was attacked, so when in 1829 he gave £50 towards liquidating parish debts, he felt obliged to say that his contribution "has not been exacted by any vulgar threats or abusive language" but was his voluntary gift. (GRO P 76 CW 2/17). People who had no ancient pew could purchase one at greater cost. George Stevenson of Bafford House purchased pew No.35 in the south gallery for £35 in 1826; when he left the parish in 1834, he notified the churchwardens that he had now sold his pew to General Leighton. Gael paid £45 for a pew in 1854 (GRO P 76 SP 1/2).

According to one of Middleton's drawings, the chancel had a four-light window at the east end. This must have been inserted in 1822-4 - can Lovesey as Lay Rector have given it? Something was certainly being done to improve the sanctuary; Alexander Nicholson of East Court gave a silver flagon, "a rich velvet covering for the Communion table", oak panelling and railing, and "two Handsome antique chairs". For these gifts he was warmly thanked in 1828.

Only minor alterations were made between 1824 and 1877. By 1846 the clock's dial needed regilding, and the parish had yearly maintenance contracts with clock repairers (GRO P 76 CW 2/18). The church was heated by two stoves, with a boiler and chimney in each transept; new stoves were put in by Mr. Hancock in 1856, when he was paid £9.15.6 for fitting them up. "Two well-secured stoves" were allowed in the insurance policy of 1865. About 1859 a new organ was acquired (but not paid for by the parishioners). Staging for childrens' seats was put into the south transept in 1860 and into the north transept in 1864. Lighting was still by candles (not lamps) till in 1862 the first gas bill appeared in the churchwardens' accounts and the pew-opener Mrs. Timbrell got a regular fee for lighting and attending to the gas, 1s for Sundays when there were two services and 6d for Thursdays. Gas lighting is mentioned in the 1865 insurance. Bills for whitewashing or colouring the church occur throughout the period (keeping walls clean is a problem when a church is plastered). At some point before 1868, the three-decker pulpit was removed by Gabb. The resulting row is mentioned in his Obituary (Parish Magazine April 1893) but as no item in connection with the change occurs in the churchwardens' books, the Vicar probably paid for the work himself.

M. Paget

6. THE CHURCHYARD AND ITS WALL

(1) The old churchyard

"In the Parish of Charlton Kings which contains between 3 and 4 thousand Inhabitants the only Burial Place is the Church Yard the extent of which is less than an acre of Ground. The Rectory is an Impropriation and the Impropriator has for about 40 years past claimed and exercised the privilege of disposing of the Vaults and Brick graves in the Church yard at his pleasure, only allowing to the Parishioners as such the right of being buried in one part of the Church Yard with the burden of keeping up the Church Yard fences and Walks" - the churchyard then terminated at the path round the south and east of the church.

"The Sexton is appointed by the Perpetual Curate and obeys the Impropriator. The common part of the Church Yard is filled with Graves, so much so, that in making a new Grave there, it frequently happens that the remains of persons previously buried are disinterred. In a few instances, the Impropriator has sold Brick graves in this part also".

In this "Sketch of the Case" (GRO P 76 SP 1/5), Mr. Gael explains why an extension of the churchyard was needed. He goes on to explain the obstacles facing the Vestry when it sought to remedy the situation.

"Around 1833, the Want of Burial Space began to be felt and an endeavour was made to throw into the Church Yard a piece of Ground on the south side, being the site of a Building called Church House belonging to certain Charity Trustees (See sketch p 26). The Trustees were willing to give the Ground and the Church Building Commissioners were applied to on the subject and they also consented. But it being considered that under the Church Building Acts the freehold would on consecration vest in the Impropriator and he intimated his intention to extend thereto the practice of selling Vaults, the Parishioners

declined to incur the expences of getting the ground consecrated, and the project was abandoned".

Gael's report was submitted to the Church Building Commissioners by the Vestry with a request for an opinion on the lawfulness of the Impropiator's claim after the passage of certain Church Building Acts, in particular 8 and 9 Vic c 70. But the Commissioner's reply, read on 7 November 1851, was considered to leave the question too open to be satisfactory. In the circumstances, the Vestry decided that "negociations should be opened with him (i.e. the Impropiator C. W. Lovesey) to ascertain whether he will accept any, and what compensation for the soil of the Churchyard with the view that the same may be under the control of the Parish Officers, and be kept in a decent and becoming condition". In January 1852 "it was reported that Mr. Lovesey had agreed to take £200 for his rights and it was resolved that the money required should be raised forthwith". A paper was drawn out accordingly and afterwards submitted to members of the Committee. "Subscribers of 15 gns or of 20 gns should have burial places allotted to them in the back or in the front of the existing Churchyard according to their subscription should they choose to take them". By 27 February next nearly all the money required had been collected. (GRO P 76 SP 1/1). By May 1852 the draft conveyance was produced and two days later, Trustees for the Church Yard were appointed by the Vestry. In November the Committee reported "that at length the Church Yard has been conveyed to and is now vested in the Trustees approved by the Vestry on the fourth day of June last and that the deed of conveyance will be deposited in the Parish Chest as soon as it has been enrolled in Her Majesty's Court of Chancery. In the conveyance, the vault and tomb of the family of the late C. W. Lovesey have been exempted from passing to the Trustees. The claims of parties who had purchased burial rights of the late C. W. Lovesey or his Trustees were also saved".

The Committee then suggested rules for the future management of the Churchyard.

- (1) The management was to be vested in the Minister and Churchwardens.
- (2) "Parties who had purchased burial rights of the late C. W. Lovesey or his Trustees to be permitted to enjoy them without any restriction subject only to the hitherto customary payment of one guinea for each permission to reopen a bricked grave or vault".
- (3) In all other parts of the churchyard, parties who were allowed to make or reopen bricked graves or vaults or to place on any grave flat stones or head and foot stones were to be at liberty to use their own workmen and materials.
- (4) "No coffin unless made of lead or placed within well-cemented stone or brick-work to be deposited less than four feet beneath the surface of the ground".

Lots of burial ground were to be apportioned to those who had contributed to the purchase money - their names are given. The proceeds of charges in connection with burials were to be placed at the disposal of the Perpetual Curate for his private use. A Board of Trustees was appointed.

(2) Churchyard extension

Before any of these negotiations had been begun, back in April 1851, the Committee had reached the obvious conclusion "that the existing Church Yard which contained only 23,089 sq feet could in no way be adequate for the needs of the parish" (GRO P 76 SP 1/1) and had constituted Sir William Russell, Nathaniel Hartland and Charles Cooke Higgs a sub-committee to look out for an eligible

piece of ground to serve as a new Parochial burial ground. This was not an easy task. They inspected several sites and reported on 7 November 1851: No.1 Miss Rodway's ground adjoining the Cirencester Road. This is not to be sold. No.2 The field next to No.1. The owner Mrs. Taylor demands much too large a sum for this. No.3 The field called Mr. Lovesey's Piece. This is not to be sold at present".

In February 1852 the Church Yard Committee submitted a memorandum. Having considered the possible alternatives, they considered that "the properties at the East end of the Church Yard would be best fitted for the purpose of enlarging it" and authorized Mr. Parry (acting under the advice of Mr. Gael) to enter into correspondence with the owners of the properties to ascertain whether it will be expedient and practicable to complete a contract for the purchase of those properties at sums not exceeding £500 and £150". The properties were separated from the old churchyard only by a narrow footpath (the path round the east end of the church). To speed matters up, members of the Committee had taken upon themselves the responsibility of purchasing at once, and by 3 December 1853 had done so.

No.1 "Mr. Powells'. This consists of three Old Cottages and gardens". These were copyhold of Ashley Manor but Sir William Russell had offered to enfranchise. Price paid £135. Property now vested in Russell.

No.2 "Messrs. Harwards. This consists of three Cottages and a piece of Ground at the back", with right to a pew in the church. Ashley copyhold. After various difficulties, this was purchased for £450 and surrendered to Russell.

No.3 "This consists of an old House called Church Cottage and land adjacent". It was freehold but the Proprietor Mr. Newman declined to sell "unless an eligible Investment could be provided for his Money" (he did not trust banks). The solution was that Gael should exchange some land of his own contiguous to Newman's land near the reservoir of Cheltenham Waterworks (Hewletts). Newman was to receive a money payment as well, retain his pew in church and have possession of the building material, except that of the boundary wall, when Church Cottage was pulled down. In 1852 a tenant had a valid lease so demolition could not begin at once. The final purchase price was estimated at £447.10.0, and eventually Gael bought the pew for £45.

"It was estimated that the purchase price of all these properties together was £1032.10.0. In addition, there would be law expenses attending the Purchase and Exchange, cost of Surveyors and Agency fees, and some charge for interest on money borrowed to pay the purchase monies".

There was, too, the site of Old Church House south of the church which they had hoped to throw into the churchyard in 1832. It was recommended that a sum not exceeding £20 be offered to the Charity Trustees - since the land was unused and likely to remain so, they would probably accept.

Now there was the footpath between the old Church Yard and the new land. It was considered doubtful (according to Gael in a letter to Gabb) if the bishop would consecrate ground with a public right of way across it. It was therefore proposed to extinguish this right and replace it by a new carriage way from Hollow Lane to Church Street. This was done. It is New Street.

Next the Committee suggested "a scale of charges for the ground which is supposed to be in plots with front and back approaches:

		£	s	d
1. with liberty to erect stone tombs or monuments	(1) Bricked Grave front single	6	6	0
	(2) " " " double	10	10	0
	(3) Bricked Grave back single	4	4	0
	(4) " " " double	7	7	0
	(5) If Rails are added, extra	2	2	0
	(6) Common Grave in intermediate space	0	0	0
	(7) Common with liberty to erect head and foot stones without rails		15	0
<u>Fees for Inscriptions payable to the Minister</u>				
	On Head and Foot stone		7	6
	On Flat stone		10	6
	On Tomb or Monument	1	1	0
<u>To the Parish</u>				
	(8) For Re-opening Bricked Grave		10	6
	(9) For Re-opening Common Grave having head and foot stone and being at least 9 feet deep		5	0

("these are the Sexton's fees in Cheltenham")

Non-parishioners were to pay considerably more.

It is made clear that these are proposed fees "suggested to afford the means of calculating the probable proceeds of the ground. The Average Number of bricked Graves required annually may be taken to be 10 and the income thence derivable at £75".

(3) The Churchyard wall

In 1853 it was decided "That it is most desirable to surround the old as well as the new Churchyard with a dwarf wall and iron railing, so that the whole may be kept free from the desecrations to which open burial grounds are exposed". A report of the Committee and parish officers dated 20 March 1854 (GRO P 76 SP 1/2) gives details of the wall "The railing to be 3 ft 9 ins high and three-quarters of an inch thick, of wrought iron with each bar let into the coping and one iron stay between each pair of piers excepting where the distance between the piers is too little to require it, the wall to be built of werthen (?) stone 10 inches wide and 21 inches high with Cleeve Hill coping fourteen inches wide and six inches deep werthered off on both sides, the stonework to be supported on bricked arches under the level of the ground of 12 feet span 14 inches width, having a double or nine inch arch and a base three feet square with 3 setts off, put in eleven feet deep". For the base of the piers and upright sides and crowns of the arches old materials on the ground, i.e. from the demolished properties, might be used. The rest of the work was to be in new materials. The entry was to be by two double gates five feet 2 inches wide. Later it was decided that an iron bar was to be added to the railing above the coping. A tender from Mr. J. Cornell for £685 was accepted. His work has stood well.

(4) Re-imbusement of purchase money

By 1854 (GRO P 76 SP 1/2) the land required for the new churchyard and the

proposed new road was in the possession of members of the Committee who had purchased the various properties with their own money and were prepared to make them over to the appropriate authorities but must be reimbursed. "The purchase money being the sum of £487.4.0 --- for so much land as belongs to S. H. Gael, the sum of £580 for so much of the land as belongs to Sir William Russell Bart, and the sum of £19.19.0 for the strip of land belonging to the Charity Trustees of the Parish of Charlton Kings, amounting in all to the sum of £1082.3.0". This was to be defrayed by a Church Rate to be levied on the Parish "the estimated cost of the fence to inclose the said land being £700 and the estimated cost of Consecration fees and Law expenses being £217.17.0 should be in a like manner defrayed by Church Rate, making the whole sum to be borrowed £2000. That the sum of £2000 be borrowed of the following persons in the following manner -

E. L. Newman	£300)	
)	
Sir Wm. Russell	£200)	to be secured by Bonds of £100 each bearing
)	5% per annum interest, such interest to be
C. C. Higgs	£200)	payable half yearly. The loan to be paid
)	off in 20 years by yearly instalments of
Nath. Hartland	£300)	£100. The bonds to be numbered 1 to 20 and
)	the Bond to be paid off yearly to be
J. Burrows	£200)	determined by lot on Easter Tuesday in
)	every year and the Bond drawn to be paid off
Col. Hennell	£100)	on the anniversary of the Borrowing.
)	
Sir D. Leighton	£100)	
)	
R. W. Lovesey	£100)	
)	
	£2000		

This Easter Tuesday draw must have had something of the excitement of a sweepstake. And here, for the time being, the story of the enlargement of the churchyard must rest.

J. Paget



View showing cottages South of the old Churchyard c.1830

7. A TRAGEDY IN THE CHURCHYARD

From the Cheltenham Examiner, March 14th, 1855:

A Gravedigger Buried Alive

On Monday evening much excitement was caused in the village of Charlton Kings by a fatal accident which befell a man named Stephen Curtis, while engaged in building a vault in the parish churchyard. It appears that the deceased Curtis, a man named Richard Shayler, and another, were engaged on Sunday and Monday in excavating the vault, and about 2 p.m. on Monday they had got to a sufficient depth, say 12-14 feet. About that time Shayler, who had been at work at the bottom of the pit, called upon Curtis to come and take his place, as he had to go to the church to toll the bell. Shayler continued absent for about an hour, and on his return found that Curtis had commenced the brickwork and he accordingly proceeded to assist him in carrying the bricks down a ladder, and placing them at his side at the bottom of the vault. While they were so occupied, deceased being in a stooping position, adjusting the bricks, the side of the vault suddenly fell in, burying the men under a heap of sand several tons in weight. Shayler, who happened to be standing at the time, was covered all but one of his arms, but by the exertion of the bystanders, he was got out in about a quarter of an hour; but the poor man Curtis was completely imbedded in the loose sand, which, as it continued to run in almost as fast as it was dug out, rendered his extrication a slow process, and when at last the body was got out, it was found that he was quite dead; death having been caused, in the opinion of the medical man, by suffocation. The sides of the vault were supported in the usual manner under the supervision of Mr. Parry, but the sand being of a very fine description at this spot, the usual precautions were unavailing. The sand-slip extended for several yards beyond the side of the vault.

The Jury, on these facts being proved before them, returned a verdict of "Accidental Death": but suggested that the churchwardens should immediately take the matter into their consideration, with a view to devise some means by which vaults or graves might be dug without the persons so engaged incurring the risk of falling sand. They refrained from pointing out any precise plan by which this might be done; but Mr. Gael, one of the churchwardens, promised that the subject should receive their anxious attention. The model of a cross supporter, which would fasten the planks by means of a screw, was produced, which would be far superior to the present system.

Simon Fletcher

8. RESTORATION AND AFTER

The Revd. F.E. Witts had visited Charlton on 22 April 1824 and approved of the alterations to the church "the whole will be very neat" (The Diary of a Cotswold Parson p.37). "Neat" was the height of commendation just then. So it came as a shock to parishioners (very many of whom had seen the galleries put in to general approbation) to be told in 1875 that galleries in churches were an abomination and must be removed. After 41 years, Gabb had retired and the new incumbent Charles Leslie Dundas came with burning zeal to restore. Speaking after the work had been completed, he described the first visit he paid with Mrs. Dundas "in the midst of a drenching rain one November day, and the somewhat gloomy impression which they consequently carried away with them...". No doubt there was room for change, but it need not have been nearly so drastic. For this we must blame the architect John Middleton. But Dundas had no appreciation of the antiquity of St. Mary's - in a letter he described the old church as "very ugly, very uncomfortable, and very badly ventilated". (Jesus College archives).

(1) 1876-8

At a Vestry meeting held on Easter Tuesday 1876, the Parish Magazine (then in its first year) recorded "unanimously Resolved that the complete restoration of the Church comprising the removal of the Galleries, the extension of the fabric westwards by a bay and a half and the re-seating of the whole floor of the Church, should be carried out as soon as the state of the funds will permit". In fact, the meeting was very far from unanimous. Colonel Holmes of Whithorne is said to have jumped on the table and shaken his fist in the Vicar's face! (1) and he was not the only opponent of the scheme. Gael (speaking as churchwarden at a luncheon given after the bishop had re-opened the church) admitted this. "The opposition which had been made was not in a Spirit of hostility but from a feeling of reverence for old associations connected with their parish Church, which were almost of a sacred character; and also with regard to burial rights. However, the one would in time, no doubt, diminish, and the other had been settled by compromise ---" (Parish Magazine May 1878). Those who wanted the church left alone had no chance; a faculty for the work was acquired in January 1877 and removal of the galleries began directly after Easter 1877. Services continued in the upper portion of the church which was boarded off and seated with chairs.

"The removal of the flooring in the body of the church disclosed a state of affairs in connection with the vaults beneath which amply accounted for the unpleasant state of atmosphere which has been for some time notorious in Charlton Church. It was indeed high time that these vaults should be filled in with sand and covered with concrete --" (Parish Magazine May 1877). Burials inside churches had been stopped in 1852 so none of these interments can have been very recent; and I have been told that the real trouble was that the church had got buggy. (2) The bones disturbed by the westward extension of the church were re-interred at the south-west corner of the extended churchyard, and a willow was planted to mark the spot. The willow has gone but the place is still indicated by a slight bump.

Some of the gravestones outside may have been relocated; memorials on the floor inside (and we know from Bigland how many there had been) were destroyed. Concrete raised the level of the church to that of the ground outside and the transept floors were raised still further. It is understandable that old Charlton families did not like this total obliteration of the memorials to their ancestors. Nor did they share Middleton's objection to anything not gothic. They were unable to prevent him destroying the 12th century west doorway, but they did dig in their heels about the rose window (2) which he agreed to move (along with the two gargoyles) to the new west front.

In the first proposals for restoration it was not intended to alter the old windows in the south wall, but once work was started, Middleton got permission to remove them and substitute a large window each side of the south door. He also persuaded the parish to allow him to remove the old nave roof (which he admitted was sound), telling them that an entirely new roof would cost no more than an extra 14 ft! This gave us our dark oak ceiling. All plaster was removed from the walls. The new pillars designed by Middleton are alternatively round and octagonal and though the effect is a little restless the proportions are pleasing. Ten ornamental gas standards, with pink glass shades, were installed. The contractor for all this work was Jones of Gloucester.

Dundas dealt tactfully with the opposition and his enthusiasm was infectious. The irate Colonel was asked to be Treasurer of the Restoration Fund and his wife worked a kneeling mat for the Communion rail. Other ladies trained boys for the new choir - for the first time the choir was to wear cassocks and

surplices. Gifts poured in, but noticeably from new residents, not old Charlton people.

Mrs. Clayton Daubeny of the Grange and her daughters gave the lectern. "It is a handsome work, executed in polished brass and the design is that of a reversible stand supported by four twisted columns (two of them terminating in branched candlesticks) with a pedestal resting upon four lions. Upon the base Mrs. Daubeny has had inscribed very suitable texts ---". The church bible was rebound in two portions to suit the new lectern; and when experience showed that the lectern was too low to be comfortable for the reader, Mrs. Daubeny added the oak stand. Mr. Bush designed and made the Litany desk.

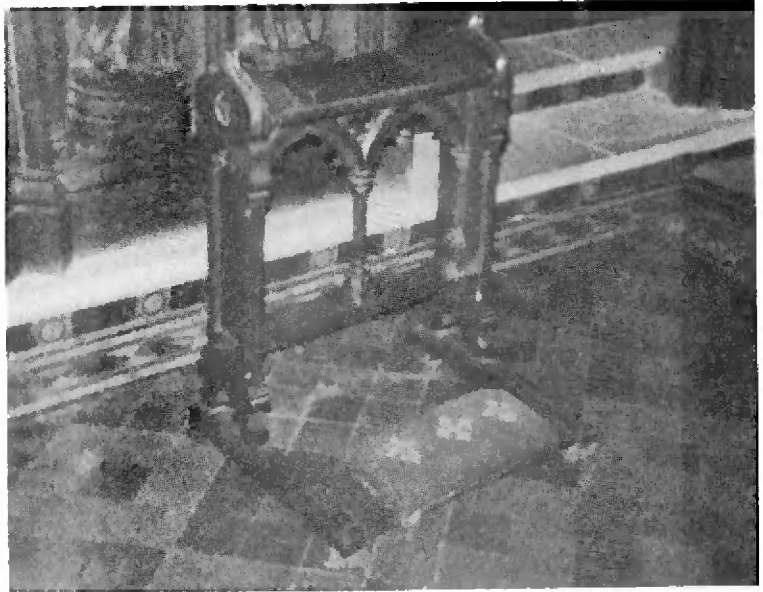
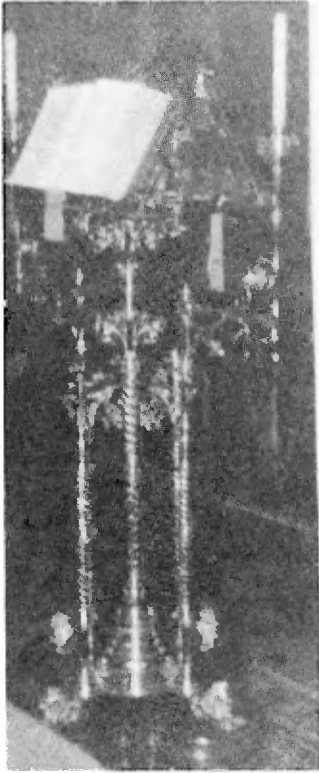
"A few friends in Charlton" presented the "very handsome Brass Altar Desk", Miss McLeod worked two Altar kneeling mats, Miss Rensch gave a white Altar cloth for festivals and Mrs. Hunt two new Altar books with markers. The Misses Willmott gave a hymnboard" both useful and ornamental". The brass font ewer was bought with offerings at the Childrens' Services - it cost £4.6.0. The two Parish Guilds of St. Peter and St. Mary gave the silver-mounted Cruet.

The restored church was re-opened by the bishop on 25 April 1878. Its appearance must have been a surprise to anyone who had not been in touch with the Restoration Committee and not realised the extent of the alterations. However, a tea was provided in the school-room for 300 parishioners and the general opinion was favourable. With plain glass windows, the church was very light.

In June 1878, the Parish Magazine announced the next step, rebuilding the chancel "It is with great pleasure that we announce that an offer to restore the Chancel -- has been made by F. Dixon-Hartland Esq in combination with other members of this Family, as a Memorial to the late Mrs. Hartland who was so long resident at the Oaklands --- The Lay Impropiator C.W. Lovesey Esq, has kindly given his "full consent" to our acceptance of the offer".

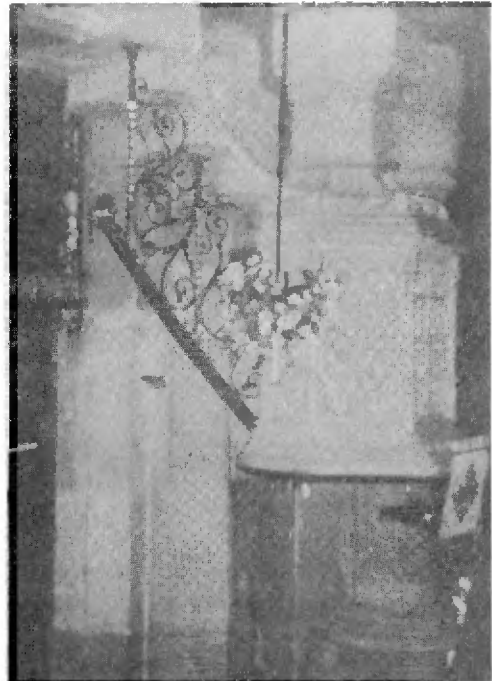
The walls were built along the lines of the old foundations - there was no attempt to enlarge the chancel - but new windows were inserted in the north and south walls and a new 3-light window in the east wall. The magazine for July 1878 reported:- "The Restoration of the Chancel is making satisfactory progress under the guidance of the same contractor to whom the restoration of the Nave was entrusted"-- All monuments were removed from the walls and repositioned in the nave.

The chancel was re-opened on 7 November 1878. Miss Sarah Curry gave "an exceedingly beautiful Cross for the super-Altar --- worked in brass according to a very handsome design and --- ornamented with crystals". Frederick Dixon-Hartland gave "two handsome gas standards for the Chancel and a brass alter rail" - this rail was rather graceful; it appears in old photographs of the church, but was replaced in 1956 by an oak rail (which doesn't need cleaning). Mrs. Holmes worked a cushion for the sedilia.

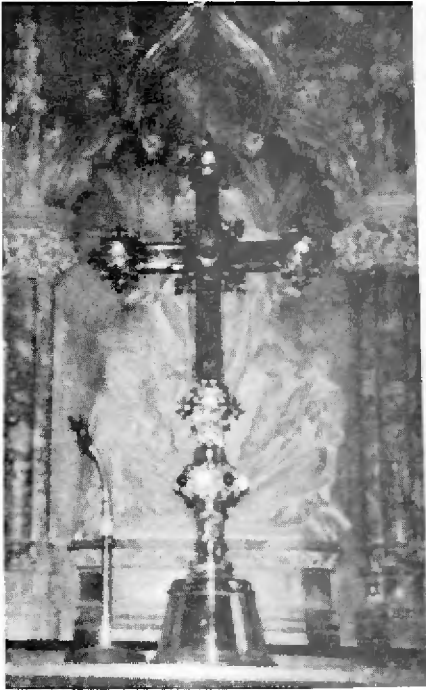


Lectern, desk, and floor tiles of 1877-8

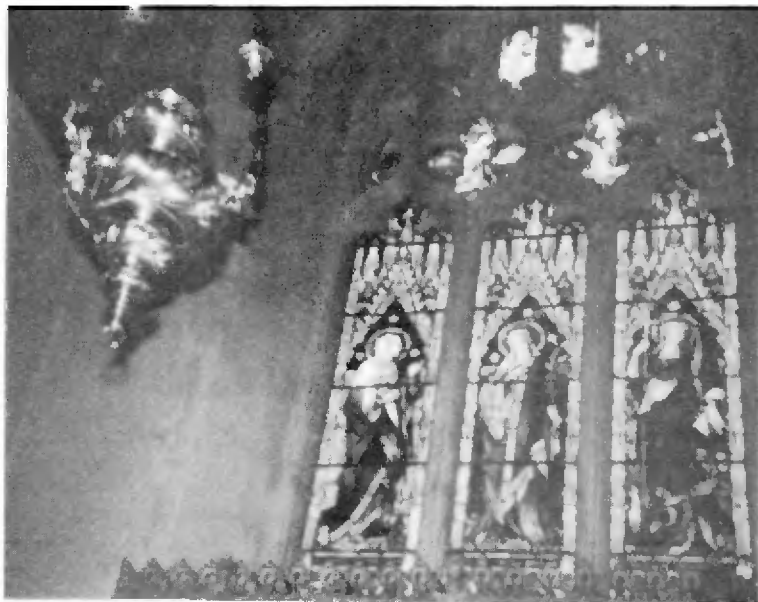
Miss Curry of Brierton House gave three brass alms dishes and Mrs Winter the offertory bags. Miss Caroline Curry gave the new pulpit, carved (to a design of Middleton's) by the firm of Martyn and Emms. It had no rail at first.



The third sister, Miss Sarah Curry gave "a very handsome linen cloth and napkins fringed with Macrame lace", to replace a cloth dated 1836



Then in 1883, the chancel was "completed" by a stained glass window at the east end, given by Sir Brook-Kay bt in memory of his mother Margaret (which explains why, in addition to St. Elizabeth and the Virgin, we have the figure of St. Margaret of Antioch with her dragon). "It need hardly be said that the improvement which it effects in the general appearance of the chancel is very great" wrote Dundas. At the same time, Miss Caroline Curry gave hangings for the east wall on either side of the altar (as there was no reredos). "The Pomegranates and other Embroidery, upon them are beautifully worked, as might be expected from their having been executed at East Grinstead."

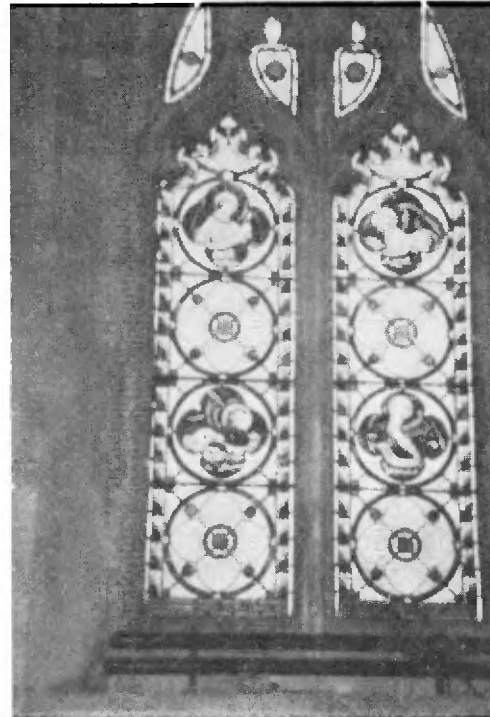


Many of the gifts of 1877-8 are still in use over 100 years later. All this was not achieved without some cries of 'popish' and Dundas defended his practices as "the plain teaching of the Church of England" (Parish Magazine Jan. 1880).

"Two excellent stained glass windows" were given by William Barwick Cregoe Colmore in memory of his father Colmore Frind Cregoe-Colmore, his first wife Mary (nee Owen) and his second wife Margaret (nee Eden) in 1880. (Parish Magazine Jan. 1881). They are the windows at the west end of the north and south aisles and, show Mary Magdalene at the feet of Christ, and the women at the sepulchre; by Clayton and Bell (Verey) The following year, one of the side windows in the chancel was filled with glass in memory of Lt-Colonel W.H. Newport, "who fell at the Sortie of Deh Khojah on the 16th Aug. 1880 during the Siege of Candahar" - it was erected by his brother officers. Dundas records it in the Magazine without enthusiasm - the circles with symbols of the evangelists was not much to his taste.



Colmore Window



Newport Window

All seemed to be going smoothly; but Dundas was hoping for a better living and foresaw trouble coming over the National Schools (Jesus College archives) So in March 1883 he announced his resignation. A presentation was made to him at which he said "the restored church was to him the dearest place on earth, every stone of which had been laid on, he might say, with sword in hand ---". Perhaps this metaphor was only too apt. For once his forceful personality was removed, all the weak points and unresolved problems came to the fore.

(2) RESTORATION COMPLETED

The Restoration Fund had been exhausted by 1880 and much still remained to be finished. The side aisles had been concreted but not tiled, the south transept was not yet pewed as intended, the organ was giving trouble, the clock was wearing out, Middleton's doors let in draughts, and the north transept was reported to be in such a bad state that the chimney and roof might collapse! The vestry was far too small for a choir of 30 plus clergy to vest in. The plaster of the new chancel was of inferior quality, which does not say much for Messrs Jones of Gloucester. The Magazine lost money. Worse still, there was a crisis over maintaining the National Schools in School Road. The school buildings with the master's house in the centre had been erected in 1872 through Gabb's efforts and it seemed disgraceful to allow Voluntary Schools to be put under a School Board. But the great Agricultural Depression

of the 80s had struck Charlton and there simply was not the money in the parish. Many who had worked on farms were unemployed, they and their families being supported by wives who took in washing from Cheltenham. A group of ladies raised money with a jumble sale and started cooking penny dinners for the school children.

One extra problem, though a temporary one, faced the new Vicar. There was an influx of navvies building the new Dowdeswell Reservoir and provision had to be made for their welfare in cooperation with their own Missioner.

Thomas Moore, Vicar 1883-1886

The new vicar could afford to accept St. Marys because he already had a pension for nearly 20 years work in India. He speaks of himself as crippled from exposure in a snowstorm and for the last 5 years he had been Perpetual Curate of Minsterley, a rough lead-mining area of Shropshire - he thought the Cheltenham climate suited "Old Indians", he already knew "some of the more affluent", and he had a brother at All Saints; so he pictured Charlton Kings as "a neighbourhood where good houses are being built", where he might fairly hope to succeed since he was "pretty well known as a good preacher and speaker" (Jesus College archives). He had not realised the nature or extent of this parish, the distances he would have to walk to visit - he simply could not do it. He was used to the pace of life in India and had not got Dundas's enthusiasm and optimism. His contributions to the Parish Magazines get gloomier and gloomier.

At a Temperance Fete in May 1883, the weather was bad "The Vicar lost his voice in trying the impossible feat of addressing 5000 people in the open air, many of them swinging backwards and forwards in the creaking swings". In the same spirit of attempting the impossible, he made a final appeal to the parish on behalf of the schools but it fell on deaf ears though Mr Folley the master was willing to take a reduction in his meagre salary - at the end of October 1883, the schools were actually closed until a School Board could be elected. No collection for the Additional Curates' Fund had been taken so the parish lost the £15 grant - that year's money was made up by Mr Leighton and the curate did receive the £70 he was entitled to up to the point when his services were transferred to Holy Apostles; the difficulty then was to replace him at £80 a year, and yet a curate was essential when the Vicar was "well nigh worn out by foreign service and great bodily weakness" (a fact he had not mentioned in his letter of application). St. Mary's was without an assistant priest for 9 months, which imposed a burden on the Vicar but lessened the strain on the church accounts.

Moore had calculated that tiling the aisles could be done for £25, but actually it cost £8.10.0 more than that, and money for this object came in slowly in very small amounts. Rebuilding the north transept was achieved through a timely legacy from Miss Willmott; but the transept seems to have been lengthened to provide a small vestry for the choir boys (who entered by the new east door), so her £200 was insufficient and a deficit remained. Only that debt prevented Middleton from proceeding to "restore" the south transept. Moore wrote "It seems a pity not to complete the Restoration by finishing the South Transept in the same style as the rest of the Church; by inserting a window similar to the other windows in place of the wretched one put in about 100 years ago; lining the ceiling so as to correspond with the nave, seating the transept so that it can be used for daily prayer and also, on Sundays; putting up Screens to both the North and South Transept; in a word completing the design as originally intended--" (Parish Magazine August 1885). Fortunately the £200 it was expected to cost was never raised, though the south transept was ceiled like the rest of the church.

There was a row about seats, for there was still not sufficient seating capacity. Moore complained that there were no pew rents (but then, in Charlton Kings there never had been pew rents, pews had belonged to houses and parishioners still thought they did!) One solution to the seating problem was to have a special service each week for the children - previously there had been a Children's Service once a month - this freed 100 places. The Vicar and churchwardens consulted "We hope to be able to give convenient seats to all; but we agreed that we could not reserve seats beyond the commencement of the service. Once the bell stops, all seats then unoccupied are free to all comers, parishioners or otherwise". Obviously this arrangement was going to lead to more trouble.

A curate was eventually found for St. Marys and during the Vicar's illness at Easter 1885, the curate's energy plus help from neighbouring clergy saved the day. There was a problem that Easter about the debt on the north transept "and some other debts incurred by the churchwardens amounting in all to £80 or £90. Through the kindness of the local gentry and the exertions of Mr Clarke, this debt is nearly extinguished and we enter the year 1886 nearly clear of debt", a state of St. Mary's had not achieved for years. Members of the Lovesey family had promised to fill the rose window with glass in memory of the late Lay Rector C.W. Lovesey (11).

W.J. Mayne Vicar 1886-1892

Mayne was a brother of the Vicar of St Catharine's, Gloucester, and was the candidate preferred by the bishop (Jesus College archives). He came promising to maintain the status quo, which he did; his parish letters are business-like and intended to instruct. His immediate problem was the organ "the instrument has seen considerable service, having performed a leading part in the service at St. Marys for 30 years, during which very little money has been spent on it." A new one would cost £300, the old could be patched up for £58; of course the parish chose the latter alternative. When the organ builder came to look at the instrument in September 1889 "an examination of the pipes and other internal fittings has shewn them to have been reduced to a desperate condition through wear and want of cleaning and has proved that the work of reparation and purification has not been begun a day too soon". Money for the organ came in readily. The sanctuary plaster which had cracked was replaced with white cement at the expense of Mr. J. Holder. The Vicar suggested that an iron safe for the records "some of them decidedly old" might be paid for by subscription, but nothing was done.

A new tower clock was bought to mark the 1887 Jubilee.

The need for mission rooms to serve outlying parts of the parish was first mentioned in September 1890 and a beginning made in a room at the Ryeworth Coffee Tavern, rented for 2s a week.

Thomas Hodson, Vicar 1892-1906

Hodson had spent his boyhood in Russia and found it hard to understand the attitude of Charlton people to church-going and the Eucharist (Parish Magazine October 1897), even though he had served 4 curacies and a Vicarage before coming to St. Marys. He was not a strong man and he worried incessantly over the spiritual state of his people; he introduced high church practices for which some of them were not ready; and he could be provoked into hasty speech which he afterwards regretted. Yet he was described by one of his curates as having helped to put him in the right road "in that quiet kind way many of you know so well" (September 1897) and he was long remembered for his kindness to those in trouble.

In July 1893 two new bells were acquired and two old ones recast, so that St. Mary's now had 8. Mrs. Hodson presented a new banner as a thank-offering for her recovery from illness in March 1894, and that April the Gabb window in the chancel was dedicated. That summer the temporary choirstalls were at last replaced by permanent ones designed by Prothero (Middleton's successor). "The work will be carried out by Mr. Fry: the stalls will be of oak and free from ornamentation as being best suited to the character of the church, those for the clergy being returned" (Parish Magazine July 1894). Not till the following January did the Vicar disclose



Gabb Memorial Window

that the new stalls had been presented "by a regular worshipper" who lived outside the parish. "I fear, however, that the satisfaction of one want only leads to the disclosing of another; a light screen, not to hide the Clergy and Choir from view but to shew out in truer proportions the beauty of our noble church, is seen to be needed --" This desire for a screen was to cause a lot of trouble. In the minds of some, it got tied up with another scheme "the transformation of the (south) transept itself for the purpose of Diving Service" which Hodson mentioned in the magazine in April 1895 and again in June "I feel strongly from past practical experience that a certain element of suspiciousness is always present with uninstructed minds whenever Clergy suggest anything new, which is entirely absent when the same thing is done by Laity".

In September 1898 a faculty was obtained for enlarging the clergy vestry, and providing a separate choir vestry, to "do away with the unsightly box in the North Transept" (P 76 CW 3/8/1). To this no one had any objection, even though it meant removing some graves. The "box" vestry appears in the photograph on page 48.

Up till now, Easter Vestry meetings had been described as "harmonious"; those of 1899 and 1900 were so noisy and acrimonious as to achieve mention in The Times! H.T. Carrington (the "friend") had offered to present a wooden screen designed by Prothero which would have a solid centre door. In 1899 the proposal was to fix this screen between nave and choir; in 1900 an alternative proposal was to place it between choir and south transept, so that the parish could judge what its effect would really be. Many objected to both schemes. There was those who disliked the design as too heavy, it would make the church darker; those who thought it would cut choir and clergy off from the congregation; those who said that if St. Mary's needed a screen, we should pay for it ourselves; and those who condemned it as popish! It was seen as a first step towards the chapel in the south transept, which the Vicar desired so that he could "have an altar and candles which he would crawl behind the screen to worship"! Grievances going back years, totally irrelevant to the matter in hand, were raked up; and Hodson was provoked into making several very unfortunate remarks - the proceedings were reported verbatim in the Cheltenham Free Press. The Vicar's supporters were as noisy as his opponents. In 1900 the screen was totally rejected.

Yet the same donor was permitted to give St. Mary's a new reredos and a processional crucifix less than one year later! But the reredos was for the sanctuary which the parish did not consider its affair, and it may have pleased

parishioners that the pink marble arches and white alabaster figures were to be carved by a Charlton man, W.H. Fry. Fry's work deserves more attention than it generally gets. Within the gothic niches, the representations of the Annunciation, Assension and Deposition, flanked by evangelists, are treated in a very simple semi-abstract manner, quite un-Victorian.

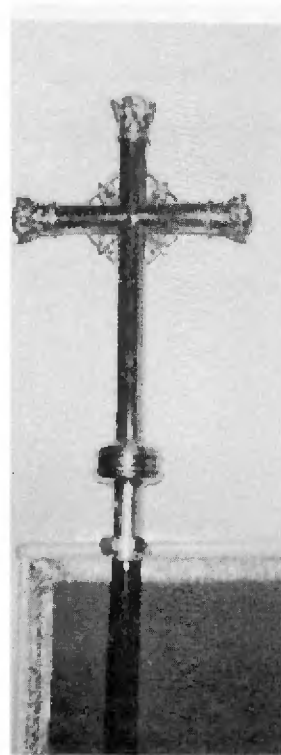
The silver choir cross was also given in 1901, by Arthur Winkley. (The story is that he had first offered it to Winchcombe and it had been rejected, so that for a long time it was known as "Winchcombe's Leavings") (3)

The oak screens across north and south transepts were given by Sir Frederick and Lady Dixon-Hartland in 1902 and 1903; and they too were carved by Fry.

The 1877 pulpit had no rail. One was given by Mr and Mrs Bullock-Webster in 1896 (Parish Magazine May 1896) and that was replaced by the present one in 1902 - a gift from Mr. W. Price, "universally admired" (Parish Magazine, January 1903).



Processional cross



Choir cross

Reredos - north side to south side

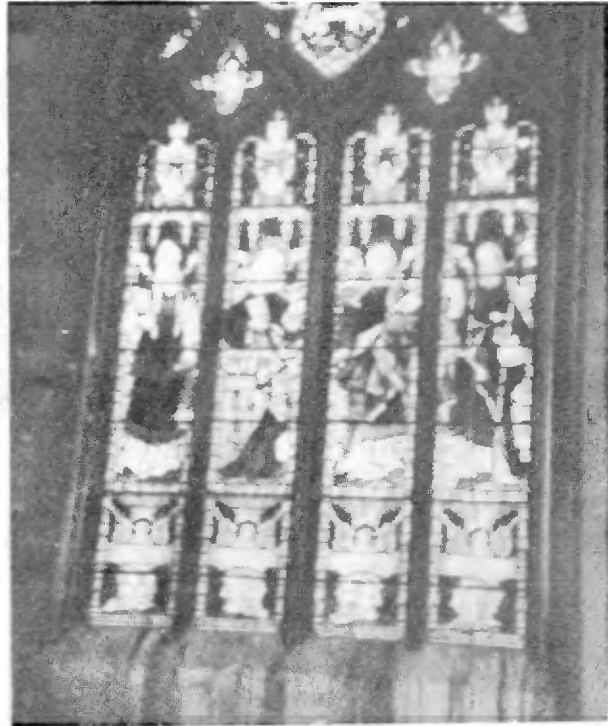




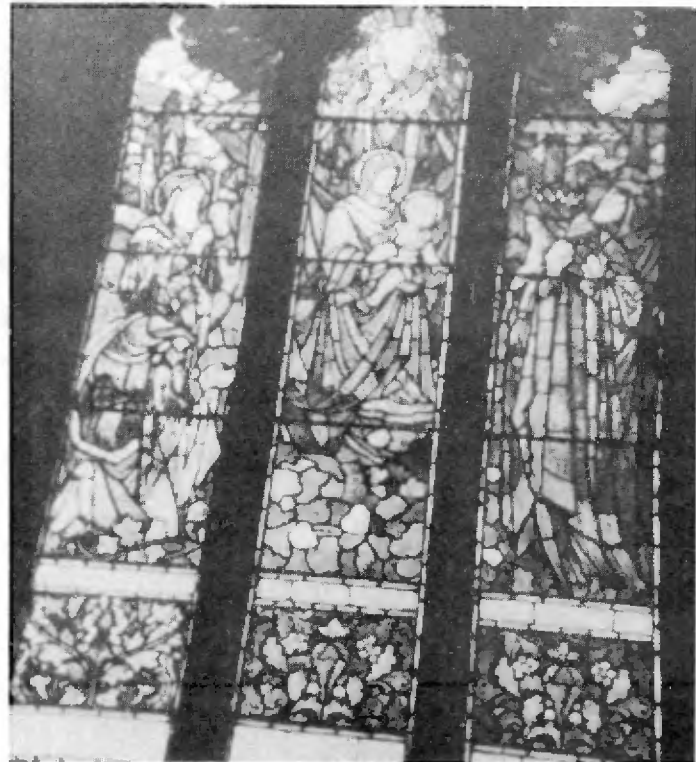
Screen

The improvements of 1901-3 were completed by the sale of the old organ and the purchase of a new one. The old one dated from about 1859; it was sold for £80 to Churwell Mission church near Leeds and in spite of its ill-usage at Charlton, is still in use in 1985! (Information from Mr. R. Williamson). There was no organ at all when a Chronicle reporter visited St Marys early in 1902 and commented on the doleful hymns chosen. The new organ cost the huge sum of £793 and was by W.Hill of London. This is the instrument remembered with regret by older parishioners and it certainly had a good tone, though its pipes and pumping handle nearly filled the north transept.

Objectors in 1899 and 1900 had complained that the church was getting darker; this was an unfortunate result of new windows. In December 1895 Hodson had dedicated the "armour of God" window in memory of Colonel Holmes, saying "it will frequently recall to those who knew him the activity of his soldier-like character in the service of others"; the two side lights represent the Sermon on the Mount, Gethesemane in the background (in memory of his mother and sister-in-law) and the Walking on the Water with the sea giving up its dead (in memory of two brothers both drowned). The total effect is overcrowded and throws a dim greenish light. In April 1896 the Vassar-Smiths gave the "raising of Jarius' daughter" in memory of their daughter Edith - the best Hodson could say was "strikingly realistic"! A more pleasing design was that chosen in 1896 by the children of the Revd. James Daubeny and his wife Eleanor "As in Adam all die--" Design-wise, the best window in the church is that given by Lady Norman in memory of her husband General Norman who died in December 1899 (hence the stylized holly) - the fiery angel represents adoration. The trouble is that we are bound to see this window close up - it would be more admired if we could see it at the end of a long vista.



Daubeny window



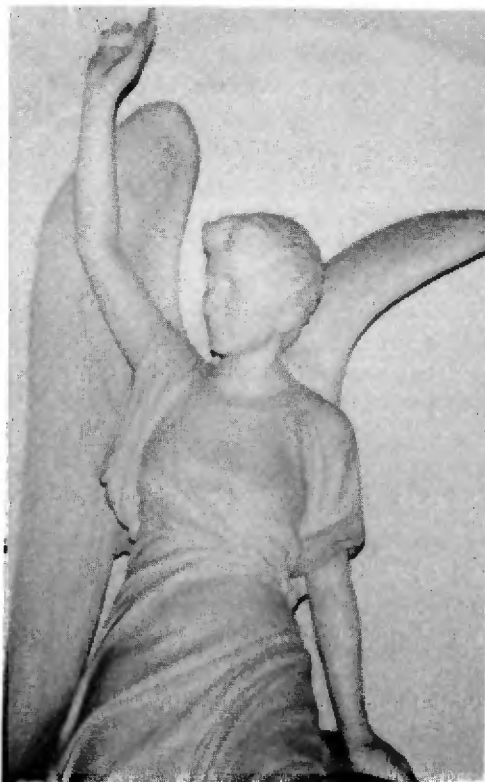
Norman window

Edgar Neale, Vicar 1906-1937

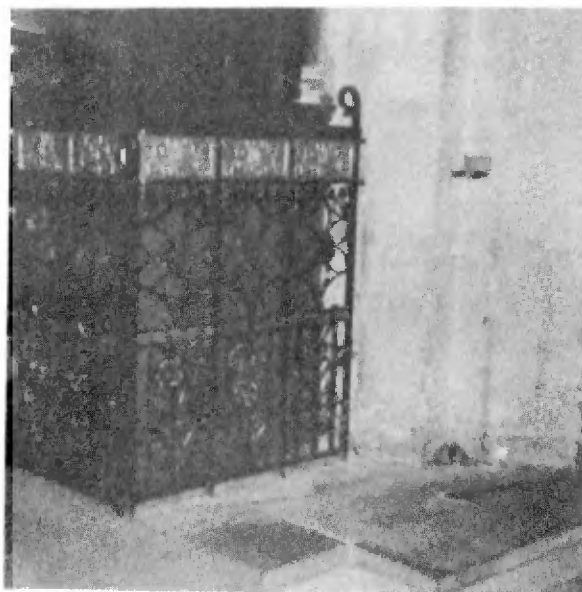
After the melancholy Hodson came a Vicar whose most obvious characteristic was his enjoyment of everything! Neale was not afraid to speak out when he thought something was wrong (see Bulletin 10 p25) but equally he was warm in praise when things went well. Though a strong Anglo-Catholic himself, he would not make any changes till he had been here 7 years.

In 1908 the Dixon-Hartlands offered to give chancel gates and wanted to place a memorial in the church; all the correspondence on the subject passed between them and the senior churchwarden. Major Dudgeon was one of those who had wanted a wooden screen, and tried to persuade the benefactors to chose something of the sort; he had to be reminded that the faculty was for gates, gates were what had been offered and all Hartland could afford; no parish meeting was likely to agree to anything bigger. Meanwhile a "lady parishioner" was "very anxious to erect alabaster and marble panels in front of the ends of the oak stalls"!

The memorial, the Angel of the Resurrection by Wade, arrived in Charlton in May 1909 after exhibition in Italy. Hartland wrote "I am very glad to hear the statue has safely arrived and that you think it is beautiful. It will be a great ornament to your church, and if you treat it in the same manner as one by the same sculptor in a church in the Midlands, it should bring you in some revenue --- I think the railing round it a very good idea and it would be made to harmonize with the gates. Meanwhile I would suggest that you do not allow it to be shown to strangers except at 6d a head to church funds but of course that is as you like". The Angel (not railed) was put into the chancel in an alcove formed by the tower arch and what had been the vestry door - a new door had to be made further east. She is not to everyone's taste and Bishop Robert wanted her sent to Glyndebourne to be a garden ornament! But given time she will find her place as a typical and better than average example of early 20th century sculpture (The story that she was a memorial to the first wife for which the second acted as a model is neither here nor there).



The final design for the chancel gates was by Lady Hartland herself. On 8 November 1909 her husband wrote "I have been able at last to give some attention to the screen for Charlton church and my wife has made a beautiful design for it which has been worked up by Messrs Hart, Pearce, and Co ---"; the order for the work was given by her immediately after his death (GRO P 76 CW 3/9)



The new Vicar's hand is seen in a suggestion of May 1909 that the organ might be blown electrically, taking power from the tram cables. But the Borough Electrician Engineer advised against it "I find the distance to the church from the nearest point of the trams is 240 yards and the cost of the necessary cable would be £61. I am afraid, however, that you would not find this arrangement very satisfactory, as the supply would be liable to interruption at any time a fault occurred on the tramway system". So an electric blower had to wait till Neale had been here 21 years.

A chapel in the south transept was made possible in 1911, when Miss Hay furnished it in memory of Louisa S. Harris. The curious observer will be able to distinguish the 1911 work from the additions of 1938 when the reredos (carved by Alfred George Washbourne Hailing) was superimposed. The pitchpine parquet flooring dates from 1911. The screen between chapel and choir was given in memory of Elizabeth Maude Bullock in 1923.

The churchyard cross received a new head, the gift of Miss Gabb, in 1913 - if any one else had offered it, the parish might have refused. The old sundial head was placed on another pillar near the north entrance to the churchyard.

Four new banners graced the church in 1910 - the choir banner presented by Major Shewell, the Guild of St. Mary by Guild Members, the Guild of St. George by the Vicar, and the Guild of the Holy Name by the curate "Bumps" Gardner. Members of the congregation worked frontals, green and violet ones in 1908, the pomengranate one in 1913 - it had taken them 2 1/4 years to complete. On Easter Day 1914 the servers appeared for the first time in scarlet cassocks and lace cottas. But Neale did nothing about vestments for himself till two sets were offered and accepted in 1915, the gift of Mrs Percy Shewell-Creek, Miss Hallam, and others. He said of this "I never make changes, I hope, in a hurry, I have preferred first of all to teach the Catholic doctrine of the Sacrament of the Altar as faithfully as I know how and to waive for a time the question of proper "ornaments" of the celebrant". Even then, he used the vestments for Choral Eucharist but the surplice at all plain celebrations.

The Podmore window had been dedicated in April 1908 (see Bulletin 10 pp 13-15). In 1911 "the Crown of Life" window was given in memory of William

Stanley Bury who had died in Rome aged 33 in 1909; and in 1914 the last window in the nave was filled in memory of Samuel Compton Turner and his wife Ellen. Verey says both these windows were by Curtis, Ward, and Hughes.



This completed the creation of a "dim, religious light" which Middleton would have approved, and we find a problem.

In 1914-5 the brass 3-light gas standards were replaced by 3-light inverted incandescent pendants suspended from the arches - there were already two in the church. The estimate came to £18.7.0 and the churchwardens haggled till the Gas Company agreed to allow 1s each for the old pink squat glass globes (if in good condition), 2½d each for glass chimneys, and 6d each for the bypass burners, though it was pointed out that the burners were not saleable and could only be valued as dead stock. The old piping was to be plugged off and left in situ. The hanging lights were an improvement, but it wasn't long before they too were swept away and electric light put in by Mrs Bagnall and her children in memory of William Henry Bagnall of Bafford House - this was at Christmas 1922.

In July 1916 Mrs Percy Shewell offered to enlarge the vestry, the work was done in 1917; and she also gave the glass in the vestry windows. The rood, designed by George Ryland, was erected in 1920 as a war memorial. Our aumbrey (originally in the chancel, now in the chapel) was given in 1924, in memory of Tom Fry and of Walter Fry who had been verger and sexton 1903-1924.

In 1938 a baptistry was created by the removal of two short pews, and the font was brought there from its old place at the west door. This was as a memorial to Edgar Neale and his 31 years as Vicar. An elaborate font cover previously given by the Revd. Nigel Nash and Eva his wife was discarded.

Middleton's draughty doors had been cured about 1886 by the erection of an inner porch, in pitchpine with purple bubble glass, before the west door. This erection was replaced about 1940 by the present oak one, given in memory of Georgiana Helen Heber-Cook who died in 1932.

1. A.W. Keen (1860-1953)
2. W.J. Turner
3. Elsie Keen and her brother Bill Keen.



The church c.1890, without reredos or chancel gates. The photograph shows the hangings at the side of the altar, the pulpit without rails, the brass gas standards in the pews,

Mr. Bush's litany desk, and the vestry "box" in the north transept.

Photograph from John William's album.

The chancel arch now, with the rood and the war memorial tablet behind the lectern.

Drawing by Ken Venus.

