

WEST BRIDGFORD CHURCH Rev. C. H. B. Watson, M.A.

It is not easy for the visitor unacquainted with West Bridgford to find its parish church. As recently as sixty years ago it was the most prominent landmark of the district, and its tower could be seen, showing its pinnacles above the trees, even from the Nottingham side of the Trent, but now it is hidden by the closely packed dwelling houses with which it is almost surrounded.

The church is situated midway between Bridgford Brook, which may be seen where it emerges for a few yards from its culvert in Stratford Road, and the old Church Lane, now named Church Drive. So far as is known, the building occupies its original site.

There is no documentary proof of the dedication of the church, though throughout the centuries tradition has associated it with the name of St. Giles. Little is known about this saint, beyond the legend that he lived as a hermit somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Rhone. It is said that one day, a hind, pursued by hunters, took refuge in his cave, and that an arrow, intended for the animal, struck the hermit in the leg. Accordingly he has been chosen as the patron saint of cripples. The fact that he was also adopted by beggars and wayfarers is indicated by the large number of churches commemorating him at the gates of, or just outside, large towns.

MANOR AND BENEFICE.

In the Domesday Survey of 1086 we find that though West Bridgford formed an outlying agricultural centre of the Peverel manor of Clifton, [1] and had land enough for three plough teams, yet there is no mention of church or priest. In this respect West Bridgford falls short of its namesake, East Bridgford, of which we are told "There is a priest and a church and 12 acres of meadow". [2] Clifton, Wilford, and even the adjacent hamlet of Adbolton, each had a church and priest, and it has been suggested that the spiritual needs of West Bridgford were ministered to by the clergy of either or both of the two latter places. Yet we know from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle that a community existed in this immediate neighbourhood at any rate from the year 924, when Edward the Elder fortified the south end of the bridge over the Trent; and it is most likely that some place of worship would be provided, though it may have been extremely primitive in construction.

Under the Anglo-Saxons and the Danes this parish, belonging to the kingdom of Mercia, was probably attached successively to the dioceses of Lichfield, Lindsey, Leicester and York, though the history and extent of these ecclesiastical divisions at this period is obscure. From the middle of the tenth century, however, there is definite evidence that Nottinghamshire became an archdeaconry of York, and as such it remained until 1837, when it was transferred to Lincoln, only to become part of the new diocese of Southwell in 1884. But from the beginning of the twelfth century the Minster of St. Mary at Southwell became the pro-cathedral for the county of Nottingham. This status carried with it the interesting privilege of receiving the annual dues from the parishes, and the distribution of 'chrism', which was used in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and extreme unction. This holy oil was consecrated at York by the archbishop, and the allowance for Nottinghamshire was sent to Southwell where it was issued on the day following Whitsunday. For the purpose of paying their "Pentecostals" or "Whitsun Farthings" and receiving their portion of "chrism", the parishes sent representatives in procession or pilgrimage to Southwell. This practice continued down to the end of the eighteenth century, and it is noteworthy that the first account given in the churchwardens' parish book for Bridgford, dated 1759, is

for "Southwell Pentecostal Offerings", the item being the sum of 2s. 6d.

The first rector of whom we have historical record was Luke de Crophill (or Cropwell) who was instituted 13th October, 1239. [3] The patronage of the living was in the hands of the Luterells, who were lords of the manor at least from 1194 until 1418. They were probably closely connected with Nottingham, though they held the large manor of Irnham in Lincolnshire. One of the family, Galfredus Luterell, lord of Bridgford, was fined 34 shillings in 1195 for joining other gentlemen of Nottinghamshire in Earl John's revolt against Richard I. [4] In 1199 he paid 15 marks fine to regain land in the manor of Clifton of which he had been deprived as a penalty for his association with John. [5] During the years 1267 to 1349 three members of the Luterell family were themselves rectors of Bridgford, one being an acolyte, a clerk in minor orders, who was instituted on the presentation of Johanna, the widow of Sir Robert Luterell, knight.

The earliest surviving documentary reference to the benefice is contained in the taxation roll of Pope Nicholas IV, which was the result of an "inquest" (1288-91) valuing all livings. All "first-fruits" (first year's revenue) and "tenths" of benefices belonged of right to the pope, who granted the "tenths" to Edward I for six years to defray the cost of a crusade. In this survey the parish is referred to as 'Bridgford ad Pontem' (Bridgford at the Bridge) and the benefice is valued at £17. 6s. 8d.

In 1341 a subsidy of "ninth" of the yield of corn, lambs and wool was granted to the king by the lords and commons of England to pay for Edward the Third's wars in France, and the various assessments are given in the "Nonae" or "Ninths" roll. The value of the benefice of West Bridgford at this time was assessed, for taxation purposes, at 26 marks.

During the outbreaks of the Black Death which swept the midland counties in the years 1348-9, 1361-2, and 1369, and in which two-thirds of the clergy are said to have perished, it is probable that two rectors of West Bridgford were carried off by the plague. In the list of incumbents it will be seen that a new rector, John de Aslacton, was instituted in the stead of Henry Luterell 8th July, 1349; while he himself was succeeded by Thomas de Hawerthorpe, or Owthorpe, 23rd September, 1369. [6]

In the rolls of the mayor and sheriff's court of the borough of Nottingham is an inventory of household goods, dated 3rd August, 1390, confiscated by order of the court from John de Halam, clerk, and Agnes his wife, for payment of debts. "Thomas, parson of the Church of Bridgeford" received nine shillings.

Considerable information relating to the patronage of the living of Bridgford is to be obtained from a *post mortem* inquisition dated 10th June, 1496. It was taken in Nottingham on the oath of twelve jurors, including a local man, Thomas Marshall of Brygefod, and it related to the property of Margery, widow of Godfrey Hilton, esquire. This lady was later married to a William Walron. In 1459 Godfrey and Margery had obtained by charter the manors of "Gamalston and Brygefod with the advowson of Briggefod Church" from Sir Richard Byngham, Richard Wyllughby, Robert Wyllughby, John Ingelby, Thomas Hundon, chaplain, and Thomas Byngham. By what right these men held the manor and the advowson we cannot tell, because according to the other manorial records there is an unbroken chain of succession from the Luterells to the Thymelbys through the Hiltons. It may be that they acquired the lordship from the Belesbys, into whose family an heiress of the Luterells married, and whose claim was prior to the Hiltons, to one of whom the same heiress, (Hawisia de Belesby, ne Luterell) later allied herself. [7]

There is a further inquest, dated 14th June, 1522, after the death of Richard Thymelby, who had married Elizabeth, the daughter of Margery Hilton, mentioned above. This Richard died lord of half the

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manors of Gamston and Bridgford, and the advowson of the church of Bridgford. [8] The manor and advowson remained in the possession of the Thymelbys until it was sold to the Pierponts, about the end of the sixteenth century. But it would appear that Hawisia, a younger daughter of Margery Hilton and her husband Lawrence Brewerne, also held a half of the manor and advowson, since there appear in the court rolls entries of a lawsuit dated Trinity 1498 and Michaelmas 1499. A moiety was claimed from the Brewernes by Sir Henry Willughby, Thomas Hunston and Thomas Hartwell, and a recovery allowed to the same plaintiffs in 1503. [9] The marked similarity in the names point to the fact that they were descendants of the owner from whom the Hiltons had obtained the lordship in 1459.

In the reign of Henry VIII a survey was made of all church revenues, known as the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*. This was a sequel to the dissolution of the smaller monasteries, in pursuance of an act of parliament; all "first fruits" and "tenths" were given to the king in perpetuity. In this same valuation of 1536, the annual value of the rectory of "Westburghford," then held by Waiter Basse, was given as £16 14s., while an annual pension of 2s. had to be paid to the rector of Holme (Holme Pierreport). The place-name "Westburghford" as given in this return is interesting in connection with the "burgh" or fortress constructed on the south side of the Trent bridge by Edward the Elder or Ethelfleda, to repel the Danish attacks. It is possible that "Westburghford" had survived until the sixteenth century as a parallel to "West Bridgford" in popular speech.

Throsby's edition of Thoroton's history of the county (1790) gives the following information:- "Bridgford lordship is an old Inclosure; and owned principally by John Musters, Esq., of Colwick, who is Lord of the Manor . . . Thomas Fuller presented in 1692, Millicent Fuller, Widow, in 1723. Mundy Musters, Esq., in 1749. John Musters, Esq., in 1770. [10] The manor and the advowson remained in the Musters family until the land was sold for building in 1881. For over a century, from 1749 to 1862, the living was held in plurality with that of Colwick.

THE CHURCH

The most casual glance round the present church reveals that it is a composite building. It is made up of three distinct sections, of which the south side is obviously the old village church, while the two larger sections are modern extensions, built in an architectural style more or less similar to the original.

The masonry of the old church shows signs of frequent change and restoration, which make exact dating of its various features difficult, but it can be said with certainty that parts of the building belong to the early thirteenth century or even to the late twelfth. The priest's door and the double square piscina and aumbry are Early English, to which period also belonged the three lancet windows in the north wall of the chancel, which survived until 1871. At the east and west end of the vestry until the "restoration" of that year were two two-light windows of Early English "plate-tracery" undoubtedly taken at some previous date from an older structure. There still remains, in the west wall of the old aisle, a lancet window cut out of one piece of grit-stone, which also may have been removed from its original position. During the thirteenth century there were two lancet windows giving light to the south side of the chancel, but these were replaced about two hundred years later by the present debased mullioned ones. The church would be small, dark and austere when this early part was built. The bare stone floor, covered with rushes and on certain festivals with fresh green foliage, was unencumbered with pews, while a stone bench would be available for the aged and infirm. Standing and kneeling were the normal postures at the popular service, the mass; the floor space needed to be clear, since the church was used as the normal meeting-place for the whole village; for parish meetings to elect

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churchwardens and to discuss communal affairs; for sacred entertainments like miracle and morality plays; and for local courts of law hearing cases of immorality and disputed inheritance. The walls at this period were somewhat lower than at the present day, a high-pitched roof springing from them, with open beams, in the style of an ancient barn. There was either a small tower built in the Early English style, or, failing this, a gable-bell to remind the faithful in their homes or at work in the fields that the mass was being celebrated at the altar.

From about the middle of the fourteenth century there was a wave of great activity in church-building throughout the country. In some cases the elaboration of ceremonial demanded the extension of already existing structures; but the general tendency was towards beautification ; and so marked was this, that the style of building and ornament which came into vogue has acquired the name of “Decorated” among students of Gothic architecture. One of the chief characteristics of the period was the brightening of churches by an increase in the size of the windows. Such developments are well illustrated in West Bridgford church, for the lords of the manor and their dependents, the churchwardens and villagers, were not slow in adopting the new fashions. This applies to the nave in particular; for the responsibility for the fabric of the chancel devolved upon the rector alone; and one would expect development there to be slow, for financial reasons. The “flowing tracery” of the windows of the Decorated period is exemplified in the east window of the old south aisle, and in two square-headed windows of three and four-lights respectively, taken from the old north wall in 1898, and now to be seen (partly restored) in the new choir vestry. The two other square-headed windows, both of three lights, on either side of the porch, are modern replacements (1871-2) of fourteenth century originals. To the same period belongs the southernmost of the twin-windows at the east end of the old chancel, though the stained glass, as in the other windows, is modern. The triangular window in the gable above the two east windows is typically “curvilinear”, but the tracery, like that in the northernmost of the pair below it, is a modern reproduction. The original tracery of this triangular window, of identical pattern, was removed as unsafe in the restoration of 1871-2, and may now be seen resting on one of the stone benches inside the porch. It is an interesting fact that the tracery of all the windows hitherto mentioned, was, in each case, cut from a single piece of stone, instead of being composed of pieces jointed together, after the more usual fashion of bar-tracery. The late Harry Gill traced the materials of all these windows to quarries in the district between Hucknall and Mansfield. [11]

We know that considerable alterations took place in the early years of the fourteenth century. This was the age of the foundation of chantries where priests might say masses for the souls of the founders. In some cases provision would be made in the bequest for education and the relief of the poor. It is clear that a side altar existed about this time in the old south aisle, for there is a piscina let into the wall, consisting of a double recess, formed by stone carving of the Decorated period which resembles plate tracery. There is no documentary evidence of the existence of any such chantry, for though certificates of Edward the Sixth's reign exist for Radcliffe, Clifton and Ruddington, they are missing here. Mr. Gill maintained that the founder of the chantry in Bridgford church was Johanna, widow of Sir Robert Luterell, the lord of the manor called among the barons to the parliament of 1295, but I have found no evidence to support this view. [12] There is, however, a curious feature of the chancel which points to the fact that there were, at this time, two priests attached to the church. This is a sedilia, built into the south wall at the east end, near the high altar, composed of two seats of equal height, with Decorated carving in the spandrels of the “ogee” arches. It is the only example of its kind in the county, there being usually in large churches three graduated seats, the highest and easternmost for the celebrant at

the mass, and the other two for the deacon and sub-deacon; in small churches there was usually one seat only. Whether the normal occupant of the second seat in this church was a stipendiary assistant priest or a chantry priest who was accustomed to assist the celebrant at the ordinary mass, one cannot tell, though the latter alternative is more likely. To take a nearby example, the provision of a priest for the chantry of Our Lady in St. Mary's church, Nottingham, was "to maintain the services and to be an aid to the vicar, and partly to succour the poor"; the priest attached to the Amyas chantry in the same church was to assist in "God's service". [13] The Luterells undoubtedly contributed a great deal to the church of West Bridgford at this period, and it is possible that they maintained a second priest at their own cost for such duties as these. There is no trace left of the stone altar which must have stood in this side chapel, and which was, in all probability, dedicated to Our Lady, since the church itself commemorated another saint. Indeed, the high altar itself has not survived in recognizable form, an oak Elizabethan table having taken its place. Mr. S. Dutton Walker, describing the church in 1863, noticed that in the floor of the south side of the chancel a "stone appears which has originally been the altar stone, and would formerly have upon it five crosses, typical of the five wounds of Christ". [14] This stone has completely disappeared in the course of the renewal of the floor.

There is a low canopied arch of fourteenth century design, now much restored, in the north wall of the new north chapel. It was moved from the north wall of the old chancel when the church was extended in 1898. Underneath it at the present time lies a cross-legged stone effigy, presumably of a knight, who is known locally as "The Stone Man". According to the late J. T. Godfrey, writing in 1896, the arch in his day bore the inscription, now disappeared, "Christ is risen". [15] On this evidence, I should say that it was intended for an easter sepulchre, and not for the canopy of a founder's tomb as the late Harry Gill suggested. This writer arrived at the conclusion that the effigy represented Sir Robert Luterell, mentioned above, who was a benefactor of the church, and who died in 1296 or 1297. [16] But in the absence of a recognizable heraldic charge on the knight's shield, and of all other tangible evidence, it is impossible, to my mind, to identify the figure, or even to say that it originally belonged to Bridgford church. All that is known of its history is that it was dug up by a farmer about 1800 when he was digging or clearing a cattle pond at the junction of Loughborough Road and Melton Road. [17] For the greater part of the nineteenth century it stood in a field nearby, serving as a boundary-stone and as a gate post, and so became badly worn. In 1893 it was removed to the churchyard, and five years later found its way into the church. If it does not belong to Bridgford, it may have come from Flawford church (demolished in 1773) or All Hallows, Adbolton, (demolished in 1746), or from the old Hospital of St. John in Nottingham. [18]

The porch was added about the middle of the fourteenth century, but since that time it has suffered much alteration. It has been suggested that the curious vaulted roof of the tower, obviously fitted in at some recent restoration, once formed the roof of the porch. A little to the west of the present south entrance to the church may be seen, from the inside, a square-headed door, now filled in, which may have given access to a parvise, a little chamber over the porch for the purpose of lodging a priest overnight, or for the storage of church books and treasures. If there was such a room, there is no sign remaining of a staircase, and the original porch must have been much loftier than it is at present. The stone benches which still exist serve to remind us that in the middle ages civil business, like the payment of legacies, and parts of the baptism, marriage and burial services were conducted here. It is certain that at this time there was a holy-water stoup, filled every Sunday with newly consecrated salt and water, for the worshipper on entering to cross himself. There is no trace of this left in the normal place, one side of the inner arch of the porch.

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A new font of plain design and octagonal in shape was placed in the church at this time; it probably stood just inside the south door, symbolical of baptism being the entry into the Christian life, and conveniently near the porch where the first part of the service was held. This font still bears the marks of the staples and hinges fastening the old lid, which has been torn away. Archbishop Edmund Rich of Canterbury ordered in 1236 that the fonts of English churches be kept securely locked - to prevent superstitious practices in connection with the holy water. The font in Bridgford church in all probability occupied its original position until the restoration of 1871-2.

Towards the end of the fourteenth century, about 1380 according to the dating of Mr. A. Vallance, writing in "*Memorials of Old Nottinghamshire*" (1912) the present screen was erected. The same writer suggests that the framework of the screen betrays the hand of a stonemason - "the character of the framework is that of a stone screen carried out in wood". At all events, it was originally in the form of a rood-screen, consisting of the present carved oak screen, surmounted by a loft a few feet wide which bore the great crucifix, with the attendant figures of St. Mary and St. John on either side, and approached by a wooden staircase. The space between the platform or loft and the chancel arch would be filled with a wooden "tympanum", forming a background to the rood, and the whole structure was richly coloured, in accordance with the practice of the middle ages. At festivals it was decorated, and lighted candles were placed along the loft; during Lent veils were draped over the figures. Perhaps from time to time choristers and other musicians were accommodated here. This tradition was current even up to the restoration of 1871-2, when an old inhabitant told Mr. Phillimore that a 'singing-loft' had been taken down as unsafe fifty years before. The screen, which is all that now remains, has been greatly restored at different periods. It consists of a trefoil cusped central arch, with four ogee headed arches on either side, the divisions of the fenestration and the wainscot coinciding. The wainscot, a little less than four feet high, has 'Decorated' tracery superimposed, but only that on the extreme north is original. In the north end of the concave moulding of the top horizontal beam, is a curious carved figure of a dog or a fox, with a bird it has caught or stolen.

About the same time as this screen was installed there was a widespread desire in England for still more light and loftiness in parish churches. In West Bridgford church, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, the old arcade was removed, and a new one of early Perpendicular style built. On the south side it supported the raised wall of the nave, which was pierced by four two-light clerestory windows. On the north side the existing walls were made higher to take a similar group of clerestory windows. A careful scrutiny of the south side of the west wall, where the newer arcade meets it, will reveal traces of what may have been the original arcade, which by 1400 was over a century old. The three pillars and moulded capitals of the present arcade are octagonal, and the responds of the eastern and western arches are carved with grotesque faces, similar to those supporting the chancel arch, which was built at the same period. A new roof was constructed in the Perpendicular style, with its trusses resting on grotesque corbels. Externally a parapet with battlements was superimposed on the raised walls. A deeply incised groove on the eastern respond already alluded to, may have been cut to fix the beam of a parclose screen to partition off the chantry chapel. (The mutilation of some of the bases and capitals of the pillars was probably caused by the fixing of high box-pews at a much later date.)

The parish church of the middle ages was literally ablaze with colour, and there is no reason to suppose that Bridgford church was any different from her contemporaries in this respect. The splendour and colourfulness which distinguish theatres and ballrooms in these days belonged then to the church alone,

and was dedicated to the glory of God. Heraldry was normally displayed in the shields of arms borne by neighbouring families. Biblical incidents were displayed in pictorial form on the walls and in the windows. Much of the stonework, now bare, was painted in colour and silver and gilt. Although no complete mural paintings or shields remain in Bridgford church, there have been found traces of pigment and fragments of plaster which survived the restoration of 1871-2, particularly on a stone in the west end of the south wall of the chancel, at the height of about six feet; whether this is very ancient or not cannot readily be determined. A great amount of this ancient art survived until that ill-advised restoration. The late W. P. W. Phillimore stated that when the new distemper was removed from the jambs of a lancet window in the north wall of the chancel in 1871: "on the western side was a large shield of early form outlined with a broad black line. It was in height 2ft. 8in., and 1ft. 9in. wide, and bore 'argent, five fusils gules, each charged with an escallop of the field'. The fusils which were 17in. long were painted in vermillion, and the escallops were outlined in black .. The day after these particulars had been noted, this interesting painting was scraped off by the workmen". [19] The arms thus described were those of the Aslocton family, and it is interesting to note that John de Aslocton, junr. was instituted to the benefice of West Bridgford, 28th July, 1349 on the presentation of Sir Andrew Luterell. [20]

The colourful effect of the mediaeval church was further enhanced by the heraldic or sacred stained glass windows. Mr. Joseph Atkinson, who retired from the office of parish clerk in 1940, informed the present writer that a few fragments of the old glass were embodied in the new stained glass window at the east end of the old south aisle. A full account of what remained until the restoration mentioned above is given in a descriptive pamphlet on West Bridgford by Mr. Dutton Walker, dated 1863. [21] In that year there was ancient stained glass in the three principal compartments of this same east window of the aisle. There was a figure, probably of Jesus, in "an attitude of benediction, the two forefingers of the right hand being open, and the others closed". The figures in the other two compartments were probably St. John and St. Mary. Then the 'most noteworthy' specimen in the whole church was in the head of one of the windows in the north side of the nave "where the figure of Christ is given, likewise in the attitude of benediction. . . This figure, unlike the former we noticed, is seated, and upon a bench the front of which is shown in decorated panelling; a 'nimbus' or glory encircles the head and the face is bearded; the background is filled with foliage decoration". Other windows were filled with stained glass "some of it heraldic and figuring shields with arms displayed upon them belonging to the family of Luterell". It is known that the shield of the de Alfretons, borne by the Chaworth family, also appeared in one of the windows. All these relics of the middle ages were destroyed in the restoration .

To the early years of the fifteenth century belong at least two incised grave covers which were moved from the chancel to the floor of the tower in 1871. One, with a foliated cross upon it, commemorates William Wragby, who was instituted rector of West Bridgford in 1437. Enough of the inscription remains visible for the wording to be reconstructed: "*Hic jacet dominus Gulielmus Wragby*". A second slab, which cannot be dated with any degree of certainty, took the form of a small memorial brass of a kneeling figure, under which there was an oblong inscription. Only the matrix and the metal rivets are left and part of the stone has been cut off to fit into its present position in front of the doorway of the belfry staircase. From the shape of the impression it appears to represent a priest in academic dress, with the hood of a university degree projecting at the back. The rector who was instituted in 1369, Thomas de Hawerthorpe, remained in his office for 46 years and expressed the wish in his will to be buried in the chancel. Nothing would be more natural than a memorial to such a parish priest in this form. A brass to a priest was placed in Stanford-on-Soar church about 1400, and so by 1415, when

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Thomas died, brasses were known in this part of Nottinghamshire. Two alabaster slabs also were in the chancel, Mr. Dutton Walker stating that in 1863 they lay on the north side and that one of them had once formed the top of the “founder’s tomb”.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century some slight alterations were made in connection with the chancel. The two older windows in the south wall, probably lancets, were then replaced by new ones in a debased Gothic style, of two and three lights respectively, with hood-mouldings on the outside.

The great structural change at this time was the building of the tower in three stages of dressed “ashlar” masonry, and surmounted by battlements and four crocketed finials. It was supported by diagonal buttresses at the western angles. Connected with the nave by a large Perpendicular arch, the lower stage was lighted by a three-light window of the same style. In 1863 Mr. Dutton Walker wrote:—“There is no west door (to the tower) but a modern debased one with a square head has been inserted in the south side, probably for the convenience of the bellringers.” [22] A staircase was built into the south-west angle leading to the belfry and to the bell-chamber. On each of the four sides of the latter was built a circular-headed window to which louver-boards were added later.

It is probable that three bells were originally hung in the tower, though one of the present three is a nineteenth century replacement. [23] At all events, the commissioners of church goods, as the result of a survey, granted to Walter Basse, then rector, “three bells of one accorde hangynge in ye styple of ye same church”. Of these pre-Reformation bells, the two which remain are inscribed *Ave Maria* and *Celorum Xte Placeat Tibi Rex Sonus Iste*. The first bears the founder’s mark on a

shield which is charged with a saltire and a small cross superimposed. The second has a shield with two crowns, an elongated cross, an “R”, and a suspended bell, the mark used by Richard Mellers, the Nottingham bell-founder who died in 1507. The third contemporary bell, which has disappeared or been re-cast, had, according to Stretton, writing in 1808, [24] a similar mark to this second bell.

An interesting feature of the exterior of the tower was a sort of dedication stone on the south face, still clearly legible, and inscribed in old English lettering: “*xhr lapis adjutori*”. The actual reading of this inscription was the subject of heated controversy towards the close of the nineteenth century, but there is little doubt that it represents “*Christus lapis adiutorii*” – “Christ the Stone of Help” - the first group of letters in the original being a symbolic representation in Latin of the Greek for “Christ”.

Few structural alterations seem to have been made to the church from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, until, in 1786 a new vestry was built. [25] In 1833 the chancel was repaired. [26] This was a great step forward, for in many cases during the previous century this part of the English parish church had fallen into disuse, and the communion tables were often in the nave. The chancel in this year was filled with pews, to replace some old ones from St. Mary’s, Nottingham. The roof was rebuilt and a flat ceiling put in which hid the top part of the ancient threefold east window, which had already been bricked up. The lancet window on the north side of the chancel, nearest the east end, was filled in.

In the latter half of 1871 the restoration of the whole church was taken in hand, but contemporary comments indicate that the rector and the architect cared more for cheapness and quick “improvement” than for the preservation of the real beauties of the church. This restoration cost £800. Among other changes the white-washed plaster was stripped from the walls, leaving the rough bare rubble exposed. The porch was re-roofed, and the little gable replaced. The clerestory windows were also replaced. The easternmost lancet in the chancel was again opened. The old pews were removed, some of which incorporated ancient carved “poppy-heads”, and were replaced by the present benches of varnished

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pine. The lath and plaster wall between the screen and the chancel arch was taken down, and with it the royal arms. The chancel walls and roof were raised two feet. Hitherto the roof had been lower than the chancel arch; now the gabled roof was higher than the flat one of the nave. Another new vestry was built, and the middle north lancet window was converted into a doorway for it. The westernmost lancet was made into an arch for the organ chamber, in which was placed an old organ from Sneinton church. The mediaeval oak door was burnt and two alabaster slabs from the chancel were cut to make steps for the sanctuary. The traceried windows of the south aisle, one of the mullions of the tower window, and the external battlements of the nave were renewed; a new gargoyle was placed at the south-east corner of the nave; the small doorway in the tower was filled in; and the font removed from the south door to its present position. Both the rood-screen and the musician's gallery under the tower arch were pulled down, but while only scars serve to remind us of the latter, the screen was cleaned and replaced.

It was in 1881 that Mr. John Chaworth-Musters, the lord of the manor, began selling plots of land for building development, and the village rapidly grew into a populous suburb. It soon became obvious that a village church with a seating capacity of a little under 200 was inadequate for the needs of the new residents, and so the question which confronted the church officials was whether the need should be met by building a new church or by extending the old one. The latter alternative was adopted, and on 28th October, 1896, the foundation stone of a new nave and chancel was laid by Lady Byron. The present central portion of the church was added to the north side of the old building, the north wall of which was completely removed, and replaced by a large new arcade. The chancel arch, and with it the rood-screen, were taken from their original position and placed over the entrance to the old sanctuary, and the recess thus formed was made to accommodate the organ. The gabled roof of the former chancel was replaced by an extension of the flat battlemented roof of the nave, and a new clerestory with two double windows was added. A boarded floor was substituted for the old stone one.

In 1904 the upper part of the tower was restored. In 1911 the extension of the church was completed. A new north wall took the place of the temporary partition beyond the north arcade, and a large north aisle was thus formed. A "morning chapel", a clergy vestry and a choir vestry were built, and the "Stone Man" and the organ were moved to the new chapel, which was dedicated to commemorate the coronation of King George V.

Considerable changes took place under the guidance of the late rector, Canon C. H. Hatfield. In 1932 the chancel and sanctuary of the new church were refurnished, and in 1934 the old south chancel was converted into a lady-chapel. The chancel arch and rood-screen were removed once more, and replaced as near to their original position as was permitted by the arcades of the newer central portion of the church. A stone floor again replaced the rotting boards, and the old Elizabethan communion table was cleaned and utilized as an altar for the new chapel. New screenwork, perpendicular to the old screen, was introduced. Repairs were effected to the parapets and windows, and the walls were strengthened to compensate for the disturbance of the structure presumably caused by the flood of 1932, when water had swept through the church.

New stained glass has been added from time to time, notably the great west window, depicting the resurrection, in 1936.

To-day St. Giles' is one of the largest churches in the diocese of Southwell, accommodating over a thousand worshippers. It consists of mediaeval south aisle and chapel, attached to which is the

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Perpendicular tower, central nave, chancel and sanctuary, and north aisle with morning chapel. The vestries are approached through a door at the north-east end of the north aisle; and through another door behind the organ chamber. The new portions of the church are built of regular dressed masonry, and are furnished internally with chairs, while the south side retains the old Victorian pews. The windows in the north wall are square-headed and filled with plain glass. There is a north-west door and vestibule, and an ambulatory divided from the church by an oak screen. A modern screen separates the old chancel and the new, carved with vines and cherubs.

The altar of the north chapel is of plain modern oak, and the reredos behind the high altar is also of oak, carved with vines. On either side are angels clothed in priestly vestments, one holding an orb, and the other a crown of thorns, with the text "*Diligis me*" inscribed beneath each. The picture in the recessed centre of the reredos is of the Good Shepherd, with a lamb on his shoulder; in the left panel is a lamb and a cross on a hill, and in the right panel a ram caught in a thicket. The piscina under an ogee arch is imitation Decorated, with shields now emblazoned with the arms of York and Southwell over each side. Oak-backed sedilia, an old bishop's chair of uncertain date, brass altar rails, candlesticks, cross and vases make up the furnishing of the sanctuary. The chancel is well raised and divided from the nave by ornamental iron screens. Both the brass eagle lectern and the wooden pulpit (taken from the old church) are approached from the level of the chancel.

CHURCH PLATE AND REGISTERS.

There is a paten cover (or chalice cover) bearing London hall-marks for 1564-5, a chalice with the date and inscription "West bridgford 1659"; paten, flagon and lavabo-bowl each dated 1809, in addition to some modern plate. The church registers are almost continuous since 1559.

CHARITIES

Dame Frances Pierrepont's charity, founded in 1620, allocated £2 per annum to the poor of West Bridgford.

In 1778 the Rev. William Thompson founded a school in West Bridgford, for the instruction of the children of Colwick and West Bridgford. In 1803, under the terms of the same rector's will, the school was endowed with a capital sum of £912.

RECTORS AND PATRONS [27]

Date of Institution.	Rectors.	Patrons.
13 Oct., 1239	Luke de Crophill	Andrew Luterell, Kt.
1 June, 1267	Robert Luterell	Petronilla Luterell
11 June, 1315	Andrew Luterell Henry Luterell	Johanna Luterell
28 July, 1349	John de Aslacton	Andrew Luterell, Kt.
23 Sept., 1369	Thomas de Hawerthorpe	<i>idem</i>

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22 Aug.,	1415	Richard Clarke	Geoffrey Luterell, Kt
26 Mar.,	1437	William Wragby	Godfrey Hilton, Kt.
24 Dec.,	1450	William Funtance	Godfrey Hilton, Kt.
6 April,	1479	Robert Hyll	
21 Nov.,	1479	John Alcok, D.D.	
24 Oct.,	1506	Robert Lovell	Elizabeth Hilton
9 June,	1517	Walter Wright	Richard and Elizabeth Thymelby
21 May,	1529	Walter Basse	John Thymelby, Kt.
21 Jan.,	1556	John Cooke	Richard Thymelby, Kt.
21 June,	1571	Robert Grene, M.A.	John Thymelby, Kt.
20 Sept.,	1614	Francis Withington, M.A.	Assigns of Henry Perpoynt, Kt.
		Samuel Coates	
11 Feb.,	1662	Edward Greathead, M.A.	Henry, Marquess of Dorchester
6 Aug.,	1673	Thomas Houghton, M.A.	
19 Jan.,	1692	Joseph Bruen	
11 Nov.,	1717	John Stokes, M.A.	Millicent Fuller
8 Sept.,	1749	Thomas Rose, M.A.	Mundy Musters
		John Gage	
	1770	William Thompson	John Musters
27 Oct.,	1803	Peter Thoroton, Ll.B.	John Musters
30 Jan.,	1818	Levett Henry Thoroton	John Musters
30 Jul.,	1831	Roger Pocklington, M.A.	John Musters
19 Mar.,	1834	William Musters Musters, B.A.	John Musters
11 Jun.,	1862	William Roe Waters, B.A.	John Chaworth Musters
	1894	James Robinson, M.A.	
	1903	Henry Marsh Marsh Edwards	
	1904	Richard Hargreaves, M.A.	
	1930	Cyril Northcote Hatfield, M.A.	
	1941	Reginald Felix Wilkinson, M.A.	

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WEST BRIDGFORD PARISH CHURCH BEFORE ALTERATION (*from a Painting*).

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WEST BRIDGFORD PARISH CHURCH BEFORE ALTERATION.

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