

West Bridgford, St Giles Church in the 1860s

J Potter Briscoe in his "Jottings about West Bridgford", written for the handbook for a bazaar to be held in 1895, refers to visits to the church in the 1860s by his late friend Mr Samuel Dutton Walker, F.S.A., a Nottingham architect and an historian of some considerable note. Today we must be grateful for these visits, for not only does his report fill an important gap between Stretton's visits of 1816 and Godfrey's account of 1887, it also describes, in some considerable detail, what he was able to see of the remains of the mediaeval glass which has since disappeared in subsequent 'restorations'.

In 1864 Dutton Walker makes reference to "the scanty remains of the mosaic glass" then in the windows, regarding it as "highly valuable, from the fact that we cannot boast of the possession of much original glass of this date and antiquity in the neighbourhood" or even, he suggested, in the whole country. He speaks of the most eastern window of the north side of the nave as "a four light, square headed, window, with flowing tracery, the internal part of the opening being splayed and covered by an obtusely-pointed arch; the spaces formed by the mullions which trellis the upper part of the window into tracery, resemble in form the oval or 'vesica piscis', (an almond-shaped halo) each cusped to form elongated quatrefoils, and, as they are pierced over the mullions, there are but three entire and two half spaces. It is, plainly speaking, net tracery of pure geometrical character, and represents the best period of Gothic art, say AD 1550".

He says that the patterns were then enclosed in the ancient lead. The centre quatrefoil was "the only one in any way perfect". It contained "a circle struck to intersect or touch the points of the cusps, and the intervening spaces or spandrels filled in with blue and red glass of plain deep coloured, much spotted by corrosion". Abrased upon the surface was a beautiful running design composed of the thorn leaf. This circle contained the portion upon which the principal point of interest centred. The subject was a sitting figure of Jesus Christ, and belongs to the same period of art as the stonework of the window enclosing it. Mr Walker says that the glass "showed evident marks of its near approach to fusion, during the process of annealing or vitrifying the surface colour". Its groundwork of the aureole was yellow, upon the outside of the glass. The figure was pencilled in outline, with vitrified enamel brown upon the internal surface of the glass.

With the exception of the hand, which was yellow, the whole was left white or transparent. The artist made the hair fall in luxuriantly flowing lines over the shoulders. This was long and abundant. The face depicted was a fine oval form, regularly marked, wearing a sweet and benign expression, not at all bordering upon the severe type that prevailed in the previous century. The beard was short and forked. The head wore a cruciform nimbus, or glory of four rays. The inner lines were drawn lighter, and enclosed the wing of a thorn leaf, and the outer edge had a double line, the groundwork being diapered with cross hatchwork. The arms in the figure were extended; the right one being somewhat upraised with the hand partly open, with three fingers fully extended, representing the act of shedding blessings, or the granting benediction in the Latin form. The left hand indicated the act of bestowing. The body was clothed with a mantle or robe and Christ is seated upon a bench or seat of very elaborate workmanship, indicative of the 14th C period of Gothic art.

The ancient glass was missing, in 1863, from a similar window in the same wall towards the west end.

Mr Walker reported the glass in the east window of the south aisle as being, then, much mutilated and neglected. This he regarded as being "a splendid piece of early art, exhibiting a much better

class of drawing than is usually found in the representations of the figure at that remote period, the cutting of the glass, and the workmanship to be observed in the lead, are of the best description. The whole of the colours, where not obscured by dirt or whitewash, are as deep and rich as when first executed, though slightly less brilliant, owing to the spots of corrosion on the exterior”.

The upper quatrefoil contains a portion of a sitting figure of Christ in the act of showing his wounds to the people and giving his exhortations to the faithful. The front of the seat was green, and the top draped with brown on a white ground. Common glass had been substituted for that on the whole of the face and breast. The nimbus (halo), in green and yellow remained. The rays of this were yellow, with a three winged leaf. The green portion had a running ornament of semi-circles, enclosed by a double lined margin on the outer edge. The ground work was a brilliant ruby, ornamented with a prettily executed design in a lighter shade, having for its foundation the thorn leaf. The raiment was composed of an outer robe of a golden yellow, the lining being green. The hands were extended and open displaying all the fingers. The feet were resting upon an orb with horizontal belts running round and across it, intersecting each other. Each foot showed the point of the nails used in crucifixion, and also blood trickling down the flesh.

The lower quatrefoils were filled in with a similar arrangement of coloured glass, though with different subjects. That on the left contains portions of a figure in a yellow mantle and white tunic, probably St Mathew. The upper part of the figure had been destroyed, and also the whole of another figure in the same quatrefoil.

Dutton Walker prepared a pamphlet containing the foregoing information and Potter Briscoe records that when Dutton Walker sent him a copy he said “All the ancient glass herein alluded to is broken since publication of paper: notwithstanding my repeated warnings to the Rector and others. S.D.W., November 23rd 1871”.

Potter Briscoe refers to the fact that the chancel had been repaired in 1833 at considerable cost, but he does not record what work had been carried out.

Samuel Dutton Walker prepared a description of the exterior and interior of the church in the autumn of 1863, and this, being prior to the extensive works carried out in 1872, which Godfrey lists, in detail, in his description of 1887, is interesting for comparison with Stretton’s account in 1816 and which will give some indication of the alterations of 1833 which Briscoe mentions in his “Jottings about West Bridgford”.

J Potter Briscoe then goes on to give an account of the exterior and interior of West Bridgford church “as it appeared to a masterly hand. Mr S Dutton Walker, F.S.A. in the autumn of 1863, eight years ago, before the church was “restored and repewed”.

The Exterior of the Church in 1863

“ The church has, in some measure owing to unstudied repairs and alterations, lost its picturesqueness, the more especially when we turn towards the chancel end, but shows, on closer examination, many portions worthy of interest. Its plan is, west tower, nave, south aisle, chancel, south porch and vestry. The tower is of the usual three-story class, the upper-story being the belfry, arranged for three bells. It appears to be, with the exception of the vestry, the most modern or recently built part of the edifice, and would probably be erected circa 1600. It is square in plan and is surmounted with battlements and crocketed pinnacles, and is ornamented with a moulded cornice. The roof, which is of stone, carried upon circular ribs or groins throws off the water in the usual manner, through carved gargoyles. The windows to the belfry are very obtusely pointed, the

arches, indeed, almost approaching to semi-circles. Several other openings of a small size, lighting the staircase turret and ringing chambers, appear on different faces, but the general effect of the tower is plain, though the lower story is a little relieved by the angular buttresses, and by a window on the west side, having an appearance of Perpendicular date. There is no west door, but a modern debased one with a square head has been inserted on the south side, probably for the convenience of the bell ringers. Two inscriptions, in Old English raised characters, are carved on the south side, one about half way up the tower, and the other under the south eastern pinnacle. From the effect of the weather, the old gray lichen, and the height of the inscriptions from the ground, we are unable to decipher them, but they would, in all probability, give the date of the reconstruction of the tower”.

“The south porch is probably of Early Decorated date, but it has also been so much debased by repairs and alterations that it is difficult to arrive at any exactness about it. Its entrance is very plain, the jambs not even being chamfered, having no doubt been added during the last 200 years. This porch is of considerable depth and contains stone seats or benches, and on both east and west sides there are narrow chinks or orifices, formerly open but now glazed. It has originally been lower, and, perhaps, thatched, but was re-roofed in the Perpendicular period, as the stone mould or eaves, and cornice is similar to that on the clerestory of the church, and the upper courses seem of better masonry than the rubble work of the original part of the walls below”.

“The chancel is, perhaps, the most interesting part of the sacred edifice, and has been of very good character, but having been recently plastered and re-roofed in anything but an ecclesiastical style, it has lost, at first glance, some part of its beauty. Nor has the addition of the vestry on the north side enhanced the beauty of the scene”.

“The date of the chancel is Early Decorated. It has originally had upon it a steep roof, which is clearly proved on close observation, as the chancel arch now shows itself on the outside of the building above the present roof of the chancel. The priest’s or south door is pointed, single chamfered, and has a moulded label and impost; and this label has originally been connected with a string course running underneath the windows, both on the south and west (east?) fronts. On the same side also is a window of three lights of what we should term Late Decorated character. It has been restored, in the “plasterer’s” style, in such a manner that it is difficult to see what the tracery has been. The window may be termed square-headed, though the centre rises slightly. It is very similar in form to one at Wymington, in Bedfordshire, which was constructed AD. 1300, though this at Bridgford must be of a later date, if we may judge by the deeply sunk and hollow moulded jambs, and by the curved mould of the mullions. At the east end of the south wall there is also a two light window of a similar character. At the east end of this chancel is rather an unusual arrangement, namely, two three - light windows. They are of Decorated type, and have still some very fine tracery in them, though partially blocked and concealed to suit the low flat ceiling of the interior. A hood mould runs round the head of both these windows, and connects the whole as it were into one of six lights. These windows have good details, and are well worth the trouble of inspecting and sketching. The north side shows one lancet window, and also a low side window of one light. The upper part of the latter had been cut away and made larger, debased, and filled with lead lights of common character”.

“The south aisle is interesting on account of some of the windows, which are of good form and detail. It is of Decorated date; the walls are of rubble masonry except the upper part, which has, together with the parapet, battlements, and cornice, been rebuilt at a later period, and with better worked stone, probably at the same time as the addition of the clerestory. The east end of this aisle has a rich Decorated three-light window of the same date as the two at the east end of the chancel. It contains some good tracery and the section of jambs and mullions correspond to those alluded to.

The hood mould is, however, of a richer section, and is finished by moulded terminations; a somewhat similar window may be seen at St Magdalen Church, Oxford, though the sections of the mullions differ. The south side of this aisle also shows two other windows of Decorated date, each of three lights, square headed, and containing tracery, excellent in its form. Though much dilapidated the windows differ from each other in design, but are yet of corresponding character. One has a great affinity to a good example of 1320 Decorated style at Over, in Cambridgeshire; and some very similar - indeed, so much so as to raise the idea that the designs may have emanated from the brain of the same architect, may be seen at Ashby-Folville Church in Liecestershire, constructed AD. 1350. The west end of this aisle has one window only, of a lancet form”.

“The nave next calls for attention, and it may here be remarked that it is lit on the north side by two windows, one a four light, and the other a three light. Both are square headed and have tracery in them of similar character to that previously described; the lights, generally speaking, are narrow, and the mullions small in appearance. The clerestory is lighted on both north and south sides by four windows, each of two rather wide lights, with flat arched tops, nearly square, and filled in with late Perpendicular tracery. The roofs, both over the nave and south aisle are partially concealed by battlemented parapets, and the water is thrown off through gargoyles. We regret also to add that, the south eastern angle of the nave, a vile-looking brick chimney stalk rears its head and destroys the harmony and ecclesiastical appearance of that part of the building”.

The Interior of the Church in 1863

“Let us now, however, enter the interior of this time and prayer-hallowed building, first premising that the western doorway is of plain form, pointed, single champhered, and without shafts or caps, though a moulded impost and neckings relieve the appearance. It contains what we should surmise to be the original door, which is of oak, and is hung with the ancient bands of stamped ironwork used in former days. The interior of the church produces a very agreeable effect upon the beholder, owing to the amount of early decorative art which still remains. The nave was most likely originally built in the Decorated period, but subsequent alterations have been made to it at a later date. Thus, for instance, the arcade or arches and piers between the nave and south aisle seem to have been rebuilt, or then added, as some of the mould and the carrying of the respond at the east end of the arcade bespeak a later date, namely the Perpendicular. This arcade consists of four bays of arches, double sunk and champhered, with octagonal shafts or piers, with moulded caps and bases; the arches at both ends are brought down onto two corbels, that at the east having rudely carved grotesque heads, enclosed among the foliage of the conventional form used in the Perpendicular period. The roof has at some date been raised to form a clerestory, probably at the same period as the date of the arcade. No doubt the church would previously have had a steep roof, but it gave way to one of a much flatter pitch when the clerestory was formed. It is supported by moulded principal beams, strengthened by solid curved struts of rather nice form sloping down on to carved figures, these trusses, or struts, and this roof are alluded to in a recent publication, namely Dobson’s “Art of Building” in which also a wood cut sketch of the roof may be seen. Upon turning round the angle of the tower we may see, near to the north-east angle, the original form of the ancient roof gable being still visible, together with one of the buttresses”.

“The “fittings” are they are usually termed, may next be described, but will need little notice beyond that they are the usual “pens” or “pews”. A pulpit of post Reformation date, occupies a site at the north east angle of the nave. The tower arch (which is a fine one, with champhered arris, the inner orders being carried on splayed corbels of early date) is blocked up and nearly concealed by the usual ugly western gallery. Turning our steps towards the chancel, we observe the chancel arch is partially blocked up, and that the remains of a very handsome chancel screen still occupy

the rest of the opening, it is likewise of Perpendicular character, and is very much dilapidated. We had also nearly forgotten to notice the chancel arch which is carried upon corbels of nice form, very richly cut into foliage and sculpture of grotesque forms”.

“Upon looking eastwards we are again struck by the peculiarity which the presence of the two and three light windows in the east end gives to the appearance of the chancel, though their beauty is much marred by the flat ceiling crossing the panes and shutting out the tracery. The north side of the chancel is occupied by the door into the vestry, and by a recess arched over and richly moulded, the front of which has also at some time been filled with tracery and cusplings. This has probably been the tomb of the founder of the church, which was most frequently placed in this position in ancient churches”.

“On the south side there is a two seated sedilia; the heads over the seats are arched in an ogee form, and the spandrels are fitted in with crude carving, and resemblance of tracery. There are also to be seen the usual “Piscina” and “Aumbry”. The altar rail is of “post Reformation” character, and is probably coeval with the pulpit. On the north side of the chancel we observe that part of the floor is formed of alabaster or gypsum. This would be the top of the founder’s tomb, which has, with this exception, been destroyed, and on the south side another stone appears, which has originally been the altar stone, and would formerly have upon it five crosses, typical of the five wounds of Christ, namely two in the hands, two in the feet, and one in the side. Upon the tomb at one corner, we observe some characters, which we presume to be “In Dei nomine. Amen”.

“In another part of the floor we observe also a recess, or incision, in one of the stones, which has formerly contained a brass, but this, no doubt, has long since been melted down by the marine store dealers. Contiguous to this is a cross body stone, with inscription running round it. The arms of the cross are terminated with the “Fleur de Lis” and at the lower extremity, in place of the usual steps, or “Calvary” as it is termed, is a moulded base, incised the same as the rest of the ornament”.

The Restoration of 1872

“The Restoration” set in at West Bridgford in 1871, when the ancient glass was broken, and the church refitted with open benches, and other things done. The sum of £800 was spent, and was raised by public subscription. Mr W. P. W. Phillimore, M.A., B.C.L. writing in the mid-September number of Notts and Derbyshire Notes and Queries, on this subject says:-

“The Church, was, no doubt, in want of considerable repair, and the interior was disfigured by high deal pews of irregular shape, whilst a singing gallery, erected about seventy or eighty years ago, blocked up the tower arch. The chancel was filled with square pews, put up some time in the twenties or early thirties, at a time when the use of a chancel was pretty well forgotten, or was viewed as an anachronism, or, at best, a survival from “Roman” days. The chancel appears to have been new roofed then, and was generally “beautified” a process which was as destructive in the days of our grandfathers as “restorations” are now. A flat ceiling had been put in, blocking up part of the two beautiful east windows of the chancel, as well as the curious triangle window above them. The easternmost lancet window on the north side of the chancel was then walled up, and the exterior stuccoed to represent masonry. Benches - taken, it is said, from St Mary’s Nottingham - formerly existed in the chancel, but these were replaced by the pews already mentioned. Over the chancel screen had been a singing loft, but this was done away with, as well as the staircase on the south side which led up to it. The architect during the restoration pulled down some portion of the north wall in an unsuccessful attempt to discover the stairs to this rood loft. Whitewash covered the

whole of the interior, but, depressing an appearance as whitewashed walls are, many will agree in the opinion that bare rubble walls, roughly pointed, are not a bit better in appearance”.

“There are several fragments of stained glass of considerable merit still left in the windows. A fine medallion in a window on the north side of the nave was broken shortly before the restoration. Other glass was destroyed in the course of that process; amongst it was the coat of arms of the ancient lords of the manor - the Luterels, who died out in the male line as long ago as the year 1418. That so interesting a relic - their sole memento in the place - should have been thus destroyed, is a fact which reflects great discredit upon the architect, rector and others responsible for the restoration. In the same window was also the shield of the Alfreton family and this shared the fate of the Luterel coat”.

“The first steps were taken on the 11th August 1871, when the workmen, without any adequate supervision, commenced to remove the fittings and to strip the plaster from the walls. My first visit was made on 21st August. By that time, a little window in the gable of the porch, which had been plastered up, was exposed to view, and the lancet window in the chancel before mentioned had been opened out. In connection with the latter, a most interesting discovery was made. The window jambs and arch were painted in a sort of distemper to represent sienna and white marble in a somewhat conventional manner. the western side was a large shield of early form outlined with a broad black line. It was in height 2’-8” and 1’-9” wide, and bore argent, five fusils gules, each charged with an escallop of the field. The fusils, which were 17” long, were painted in vermilion, and the escallops were outlined in black. These appear to have been the arms of the ancient Nottinghamshire family of Aslacton, though no mention of this family is to be found in the pages of Thoroton in connection with West Bridgford. (See list of Rectors. John de Aslacton 1349-1369). The day after these particulars had been noted, this interesting painting was scraped off by the workmen”.

“All the pews in the church were taken out, and numerous fragments of the ancient oak bench ends and poppy heads - many of them handsomely carved in various designs - were found worked up in the modern pews. What became of them? They might have been utilised as patterns for new seats, which would have had a far more handsome appearance than the present varnished pine benches. But restorers like to have a clean sweep and to have everything quite new, spick and span, all complete for the opening ceremony. Money is never too plentiful and the natural result is that much of the new work thus hastily put in is of a cheap and flimsy character. Far better it would be if they could be induced to follow an old motto “*festina lente*”, and carry out church restoration by degrees. An opportunity was lost at West Bridgford. Of several of these bench ends the writer made sketches before they disappeared”.

“The space between the top of the chancel screen and arch was filled up with a lath and plaster partition, on which were the royal arms. This was removed, thus revealing the fact that the chancel roof was lower than the arch. Here was a clear indication that those who rebuilt the nave in the Perpendicular period contemplated also the rebuilding of the chancel.

As that, of course, was not now to be thought of, the restorers were obliged to raise the chancel walls, and the roof as well, a couple of feet to enable them to clear the arch. This, though a decided improvement to the interior, has, unfortunately somewhat injured the external appearance of the church, since the apex of the chancel roof over-tops the nave. The triangular window at the east end was raised two feet six inches; and the old red stone tracery, being much decayed, was replaced by new work in white stone of similar design, though executed in a somewhat mechanical manner. It is open to question whether, it would not have been preferable to have raised the chancel walls still higher, and then to have placed upon them a flat roof of Perpendicular character to better

accord with the nave, both inside and out, than does the present arrangement. A series of small clerestory windows in the chancel would have obviated any objection which would have arisen had the raised walls been left blank. The subject will be taken up again in the October number of the same magazine of which I am editor”.

This October Issue of the Notts and Derbyshire Notes and Queries has not yet been traced.

West Bridgford Church in 1887

J. T. Godfrey’s description of the church in his ‘Notes on the Churches of Nottinghamshire; Hundred of Rushcliffe’ (1887) is as follows:-

“West Bridgeford church, dedicated to St Giles, comprises nave, south aisle and porch, chancel with north vestry, and western tower.

Internally the fabric measures:-

Length of nave and aisle	41 feet 9 inches
Width of nave	18 feet
Width of aisle	9 feet 6 inches
Length of chancel	33 feet
Width of chancel	17 feet 3 inches
Length of porch	13 feet
Width of porch	7 feet 6 inches
Base of tower	13 feet by 10 feet

The nave, aisle, porch and chancel are all of the Early English period, and were originally built of random masonry, the tower is Perpendicular, and the vestry modern.

The nave is supported on the north side by two rectangular buttresses and a diagonal one. The north wall contains two Late Decorated windows, of three and four lights respectively, the easternmost containing a fragment of old stained glass. The tracery in each of these windows is cut out of a single stone. The clerestory was added in the Perpendicular period, when the rage for erecting clerestories was so general that they were added to churches where the early north wall of the nave already contained sufficient windows. There are four two-light windows with obtuse angled heads on each side of the clerestory, which is embattled on each side and covered with lead. On the north side are four gurgoyles, and the remains of others on the south side, that at the south-east angle being modern. The old flat Perpendicular roof is supported by ten grotesque corbels.

The aisle is separated from the nave by three octagonal pillars with moulded capitals, the responds of the eastern and western arches being supported by grotesque corbels. There is a small rectangular buttress at the east and west angles, and the walls are embattled like the nave. The roof is leaded. The aisle is lighted by two, three-light, square headed Late Decorated windows, modern reproductions of older windows, and at the east end there is a pointed Late Decorated window of three lights with hood moulding terminating in carved heads. The tracery in the head of this window is cut out of a single stone, and contains the remains of some ancient stained glass. At the west is an original lancet, also cut out of a single stone. There is a double piscina in the south wall, and the old octagonal font stands to the west of the doorway.

The south porch, of unusual length, has a small light in each of the side walls, and one in the gable. The roof is high pitched and covered with tiles. The inner stone seats remain.

The chancel was originally erected in the Early English period of random masonry but has been restored as hereafter described.

In the north wall is an original lancet, and the upper part of a second, the lower part of the latter having been included in the doorway which, with a modern archway, opens into the vestry and organ chamber erected in 1872. The arched recess in this wall, mentioned by Mr Stretton, is of Decorated character, but its original use is evidently misunderstood, for it bears the inappropriate inscription "Christ is risen". The south wall contains two windows of two and three lights respectively, with external hood moulds, and which appear to be of Late Perpendicular work. The small square piscinas and double sedilia, described by Mr Stretton, still remain. There is also in this wall a small pointed Early English doorway. The interesting east windows of Decorated work are conspicuous features in the church, the small triangular window being a reproduction of an older one. The chancel arch, 21 feet high, is of two orders of chamfers terminating in grotesques, and contains a good screen of Decorated work. The roof is high pitched and covered with tiles. The vestry has a high pitched tiled roof and a two light Early English window at the east and the west ends.

The tower was erected of ashlar masonry, in the Perpendicular period, and is supported by diagonal buttresses at the north-west and south-west angles. It is in three stages, embattled, and surmounted by a crocketed finial at each angle. The upper stage has a circular headed opening in each side, but the tracery is concealed by louvre boarding fixed outside. The Perpendicular west window is of three lights. The tower arch, pointed and of two orders of chamfers, is open to the nave, and the staircase is in the south-west angle. There are three bells. The first is inscribed in Lombardic characters AVE MARIA. The second bears the mark No 1, and the inscription in Old English "Celorum xte placeat tibi rex sonus isle". The third bears in Roman capitals,

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The only tablets in the church are on the north wall of the nave. One is described "Underneath lie the remains of Millicent Stokes, youngest daughter of the late Rev John Stokes, A.M., Rector of this Parish, Ob. Nov.5, 1806 AET, 67 - In affectionate regard to her memory this monument was erected by her adopted daughter M. G". The initials M. G. refer to the wife (whose maiden name was Millicent Guy) of the late Captain Andrew Gideon Fisher, formerly of H.E.I.C. Bombay Artillery. The other tablet is in memory of Robert James Fisher, son of Captain Fisher, born January 24th 1812 died October 4th 1815.

These tablets were formerly in the chancel, and do not, therefore, now correctly record the places of interment of those they commemorate. Several ancient incised slabs were converted into altar steps at the restoration.

Previous to the restoration of the church, the arms of Lutterell, former Lords of this place, Azure a bend between six martlets argent, and of de Alfreton (borne by Chaworth) Azure, two chevrons or, were to be seen in some of the windows, but they have now disappeared.

The church was restored in the year 1872, at a cost of £800, when the following repairs were effected:-

Scraping the white-wash off the internal dressed masonry.

Renewing the traceried windows in the south wall of the aisle.
 Taking down and rebuilding the gable of the porch and resetting the gable light.
 Renewing the eight windows in the clerestory and decayed battlements.
 Inserting a new gargoyle at the south east angle of the nave.
 Building up the small doorway in the south side of the tower.
 Restoring one of the mullions in the west window of the tower.
 Removing the font and fixing it in its present position (1887).
 Taking down and restoring the chancel screen.
 Taking down and rebuilding the gable end of the chancel as far as the spring of the windows, straightening the east windows, renewing the broken tracery in the same, and renewing the triangular window in the gable.
 Rebuilding the upper part of the side walls and the inner arch of the eastern lancet in the north wall of the chancel.
 Restoring the chancel roof.
 Taking down the old vestry and building the present one (1887).
 The church was also fitted with open benches, and new furniture was provided for the chancel.

Godfrey makes no reference to the position of the chancel arch and therefore its removal to its new eastern position must have occurred in the first of the major alterations, in 1898.

He also refers to the rebuilding of the inner arch of the eastern lancet in the north wall of the chancel. He makes no reference to any work on the external wall at this point and, therefore, (by the engraving of 1896 which depicts this window) Harry Gill's report that all lancets were cut out of one piece of stone must have been incorrect.

West Bridgford Church in 1887 - Another View

In the Nottinghamshire Archives Office there is a series of manuscript notes made by one Arthur Barratt, compiled from his visits to churches in various parts of England. These are in hard cover notebooks and comprise volumes one, three and four. The N.A.O. reference is DDTS 14/32/1-3 and in volume one (DDTS 14/32/1) there are notes of a visit made to West Bridgford church with "A.G" on April 20th 1887. At present nothing is known of Arthur Barrett or his friend "A.G". Barrett's notes are comprehensive and from them one comes to the conclusion that he was either an accomplished ecclesiologist with an eagle eye, or he had carried out considerable research prior to making his visits. In fairness to him, however, he might very well have been both keen eyed and a knowledgeable researcher. His account certainly throws light on some further factors not previously mentioned by the well known sources.

Of West Bridgford church he confirms that it comprised a chancel, nave, south aisle and porch, with a western tower and a vestry on the north side of the chancel. He observes that "it stands in a well kept churchyard, and looks as God's acre should. On approaching the church one is struck by the large projecting gargoyles, formed in the shape of human heads, one of which bears an uncommon likeness to W. E. Gladstone".

William Ewart Gladstone (1809-98) was prime minister, first between 1868 and 1874; he was M.P. for Newark and a lifelong friend of the Fifth Duke of Newcastle. He was therefore well known in the county and as J. T. Godfrey includes in the list of repairs carried out in 1872 one of "Inserting a new gargoyle at the south east angle of the nave" Arthur Barratt might well be right. Barratt might well have seen Gladstone and indeed might have met him.

In describing the chancel, Barrett remarks that he believes it to be of two dates, containing Early English work, probably around 1230, and Decorated work of at least a century later. He suggests that the chancel was largely rebuilt about this latter period.

During the time of Black Death (1348-49) a wave of devotion swept the country and the Archbishop of York issued instructions for a Litany to be sung in procession on Wednesdays and Fridays in every church in the Diocese. Nottingham, which at that time was in the diocese of York, received its instructions on the 22nd November 1348. By the end of 1349, 65 out of 126 benefices in Nottinghamshire were without their priest. The plague came again in 1361-62 and yet again in 1369 and when it had abated many churches were enlarged or rebuilt to provide adequate accommodation for these processions. Whether or not the priest, Henry Luterell, succumbed to the plague, we do not know but it is coincidental that John de Aslocton was instituted as Rector of St Giles on July 28th 1349 on the death of Henry Luterell. It is also coincidental that John de Aslocton was succeeded by Thomas de Hawerthorpe (Owthorpe) on September 23rd 1369.

Barratt also remarks on the unusual setting of the fenestration in the east wall of the chancel, where there is what he describes as a "spherical triangle" over the two, lower, three light windows. He also draws attention to the hood mould, on the outside, running continuously over both the lower windows. This detail can still be seen today.

On the north wall of the chancel Barratt says that there are two deeply splayed lancet windows which, with the priest's door on the south side, form part of the original Early English chancel.

Godfrey says in his account of the same date that on the north wall of the chancel there is an original lancet, and the upper part of a second. The lower part of the latter had been included in the doorway which, with a modern archway, opened into the new vestry and organ chamber erected in 1872. The inference by Barratt is that no alteration had taken place on this north wall. This must be wrong because we know (from Stretton in 1816) that there was a small brick and tiled vestry on the north side of the chancel and therefore there must have been a door into it from the chancel. As Stretton also says that (in 1816) there were two north lancet windows, there must have been a doorway to the west. Stretton does not mention a door in the north wall, but there must have been one, either an original Early English north door, which is unlikely, or one cut in before 1816, to give access to this earlier vestry. Godfrey makes no reference to this door either but one can assume that it disappeared in 1872 when the new vestry and organ chamber was constructed. One assumes that the organ chamber was on the western end of this new structure and that there would have been a substantial opening cut, where the original vestry door was situated, to accommodate the organ console, thereby forcing the new vestry doorway eastwards where it interfered with the lancet window. Godfrey also says that the inner arch of the eastern lancet window was rebuilt at the same time as the rebuilding of the upper parts of the side walls, which suggests a major reorganisation here in 1872.

In the absence of any further information it must be assumed that Godfrey's account is correct and this certainly accords with the engraving of 1896 which shows only one lancet window on the external face of the north wall.

Barratt's account of the piscina and sedilia accord with all the others and these features are still in existence today. However, in respect of the arch at low level which was on the north wall of the chancel he says "The authorities are of the opinion that it is the remains of an Easter sepulchre. At the restoration of the church (1872) the words "Christ is risen" were painted thereon with reference to this theory". By authorities it is assumed that he means the rector and the Parochial Church Council. This arch can now be seen in its reordered form, containing the "Stone Man", in St

George's chapel. The arch, originally set in the mediaeval chancel, almost certainly formed the canopy to the founder's tomb and would not have been an Easter sepulchre. The founder's effigy could well have been thrown out during one of the times of church desecration.

Barratt gives a good description, and the only one it would appear, of the sanctuary at this time. "The altar is of oak of Georgian character and is nicely vested. On the retable are a cross, four candlesticks and vases. It looks dignified but it is not quite satisfactory. The dossal (fabric screen at the rear of the altar) wants raising a little, more taste exercising, and loving care bestowing on it".

There is a photograph showing what is said to be the last view of the church before it was temporarily closed, in 1896, for the new extensions to be carried out and this shows the sanctuary as described by Arthur Barratt on April 20th 1887. The organ chamber arch can be clearly seen and there are painted texts over the lower two east windows which are behind the dossal and altar described by him as needing "loving care bestowing on it". This photograph is a record of vital importance and, in spite of Barratt's comment, it shows the old building to be very well looked after. The corbels on which the chancel arch rested are clearly shown and this confirms that the present location of the chancel arch, (moved back to the east of the three light chancel window and the priest's door) happened during the 1896-98 rebuilding and extension. This chancel arch was probably built in its original position at the time the nave clerestory was constructed.

Barratt makes another very interesting observation regarding the 14th C screen which then was located under the chancel arch. He says that "When the present vicar came to the parish it was painted green, but it has been very carefully restored to nearly its original beauty. It is disfigured by several gas jets which project from the top and by a ludicrously small gilt cross in the place of the ancient rood". Again this screen can be seen in the photograph.

The "present vicar" referred to by Arthur Barratt, would have been the Rev William Roe Waters, B.A, who was instituted on June 11th 1863, and who remained rector of the parish until he was succeeded by the Rev James Robinson, M.A. in 1894. Godfrey's list of works carried out in 1872 includes the taking down and restoration of the screen.

In discussing the four bay Decorated nave we are told of the 15th C change in roof line, from a steep pitch to one similar to that seen today, the alteration being carried out when the clerestory was put in. Barratt mentions the corbels of this 14th and 15th C work and he says "All the corbels throughout the church are remarkable, being heads of uniform ugliness". Many of these ancient corbels can still be seen but others were replaced when the old north wall was taken out in the formation of the new nave. Presently these corbels on the north side of the old nave appear not to be taking any load, the new north arcade wall taking the weight of the old nave roof. This was realised recently when a mediaeval corbel, in the north west corner, failed. On inspection it was found that the old oak wall leg, between the roof beam and the corbel, was also not taking any load and could be moved in and out of its intended position. The fallen pieces of the corbel were reinstated by the use of stainless steel pins and epoxy resin, by John Green, Stonemason of Beeston.

Barrett saw the pews which are in the church today. These were put in during the 1872 restoration, replacing earlier box pews, according to Canon R. F. Wilkinson, who was rector here from 1941 until succeeded by Canon F. E. Worwood in 1961. Godfrey's list of works confirms "The church was also fitted with open benches, and new furniture was provided for the chancel". The 1896 photograph shows these pews either side of a central walkway and today one can see that the two banks of seats have now been joined together to make a complete run of seating between the

Victorian piers on the north side and the 15th C piers dividing the old nave from the original south aisle. This appears to have been carried out in a simple operation by leaving the south pews in position, taking the inner pew ends off the south range and moving the north pews across to meet their southern neighbours. The now central line of pew ends, where they exist, is clearly south of the centre line of the old nave and chancel.

Barratt also refers to many windows having their tracery out of one large piece of stone, he says "The windows on the south side are new - and ugly - but at the west end is a lancet window cut yet of a single stone and evidently part of the original structure". The south aisle was originally a chapel and a double piscina still remains, with its openings cut out of one piece of masonry.

The 1896 photograph shows a good view of the pulpit which Barratt records as being "old and interesting. Its base is formed of the old sounding board and the old altar rails have been utilized as pillars. The panels are part of the old pulpit, but have been turned "inside out" and carved".

"They have a surplised choir and a good service of bright hearty character".

In 1903 Arthur Barratt visited the church again, reporting that there was now an altar in the south aisle and that the "whole of the north wall taken down and a fine large, wide nave with spacious chancel erected in the "Decorated" style. The old chancel arch has been moved two bays eastwards, thus the priest's door is in the aisle. The screen occupies the arch and the organ, the old sanctuary. There are old photographs of the interior which show the chancel arch with the organ pipes above and 14th C screen below.

With regard to the south porch Barratt says that this is very deep and has a small chamber in the gable. We know from Godfrey's list of works carried out in 1872 that there was an item "Taking down and rebuilding the gable of the porch and resetting the gable light", but neither he nor Stretton make any reference to a chamber having been part of an earlier south porch. S, Dutton Walker's description of the church in 1863 makes good reference to the porch but again there is no comment about it once having a chamber over. Barratt's reference is, I believe, to the "gable light" referred to by Godfrey.

However, one feature appears to have been unnoticed, or ignored, by all the authors of their respective accounts of the church and that is the blocked doorway which can be seen internally to the west of the porch in the outside wall of the south aisle. The evidence of blocking is very clear on the inside, but on the external face between the window jamb and the junction of the west wall of the porch, whilst there is evidence of disturbance, there is none of matching similarity to that on the inside. Is it possible therefore that some form of staircase leading up to a "chamber" over an earlier porch was previously here, or has there been so much modification to the external stonework on this south wall such as to destroy clear evidence that there was, at some time, a separate doorway into an area formed inside the church which had no physical link with the interior. (for example a blocked off area forming a school room)?

In considering all the content of the various accounts, between 1790 and 1903, and acknowledging that, at present, the evidence which alludes to the extensions, the centenary of which is marked by the year 1998, has not yet been evaluated, the only three items which have not yet been fully established beyond reasonable doubt are the following:-

The detailed description of the west gallery and the access to it, (perhaps via the tower staircase); the reason for the location of such a large chimney stack in the south west corner of the chancel; and the establishment of the possibility of a chamber over the south porch (a good example of such

a possibility can presently be seen by visiting “Nan Scott’s” chamber over the south porch of Holme by Newark, St Giles).

Whilst there are many gaps still to be filled in by further in-depth study, the evolution of the ‘old church’ can, I believe, be said to have been safely set out by Harry Gill when visiting the church, with the Thoroton Society, in 1915. His suppositions are largely supported by the evidence gleaned from earlier reports and any further information which might come to light will I believe embellish his description rather than contradict it.

A Bazaar for a New Church

In 1895 an illustrated handbook was published to advertise a bazaar at the Mechanics’ Hall in Nottingham to be held on Thursday, Friday and Saturday the 26th, 27th and 28th of September of that year. Opening ceremonies were to be performed at 12 noon on each successive day by Mrs Heymann, of Bridgford Hall, Mrs Mills, of Ruddington Hall, and Mrs Peatfield, of the Poplars, West Bridgford. Contained within this handbook was ‘The History of West Bridgford’ by J. Potter Briscoe, F.R.H.S.

The object of this bazaar was to raise money to build a new church for the parish of West Bridgford. This was considered a great necessity if the Church of England were to hold its own in the village, which had grown from 500 souls a few years previous to a population of nearly 5000 in 1895.

The handbook stated “it is not intended to touch the old church, because it could not be enlarged sufficiently without interfering with the ancient character of the sacred building, which has a beauty and interest peculiar to itself, moreover, its position is not central, neither is the site all that could be desired. Consequently the parishioners have decided to erect a new church at the south end of Musters Road, on a site kindly and generously given by Colonel Davies.

For the present, services are held in the Central Hall of the new Board Schools, and, although this arrangement answers very well for the time being, and the services are well attended, yet people naturally prefer to worship in a consecrated building, and there is a considerable sum to pay as rent. These are difficulties which would be overcome by the erection of a new church”.

The parishioners wished to seat about 400 in the church, they were prepared to build in stages but, at the time of publishing the handbook, they disclosed they already had £1150, either paid or promised, out of an estimated cost of £3000.

According to the handbook, J Potter Briscoe F.R.H.S., who was chief librarian of the Nottingham Municipal Libraries from 1869 to 1916, wrote the history of West Bridgford especially for the publication. He was widely known and respected as an historian and this is acknowledged by the following reference in the handbook’s introduction to this work:- “The author’s name is a sufficient guarantee as to the accuracy, and literary merits of the work”.

This bazaar was evidently a success as in the South Diocesan Magazine (Volume 8, November 1895, page 177) the following report is given:- “Some time ago it was decided to erect a new church on a site generously given by Colonel Davies. In aid of this object a three days bazaar was held in the Mechanics Hall, Nottingham, on September 26th, 27th and 28th, with the result that a substantial sum of about £630 was raised. Some 200 of the parishioners took part in some way or other in the work of this bazaar. There is now in hand about £1600 and it is intended to commence building one section of the church in spring. The complete buildings will cost about £6000, and as

other needs in the work of the church are becoming rapidly more urgent, help for this object is very earnestly desired.

Reports had previously been published in this magazine and in Volume 7, of 1894, on page 131 under the heading "Church Extension at West Bridgford" the following is recorded:-

"It has been decided to build a new church in this parish, to meet the needs of a rapidly increasing population. The funds in hand and contributions promised at present amount to £577".

In Volume 8 of June 1895, page 97 under the heading of West Bridgford "For the purpose of extending the interests of the church and providing further accommodation for public worship for the residents of this rapidly increasing suburb, the Church Extension Committee and Council have rented the large hall in the new Board Schools, in which to hold services on Sundays. The opening took place on Sunday May 12th.

Between the article in November 1895, reporting on the success of the bazaar, and the next time West Bridgford appears in the Southwell Diocesan Magazine, there must have been a considerable swing away from the proposal to build a brand-new church on a separate site to one of extending the mediaeval parish church. As yet nothing has come to light to explain the change of mind, but it is clear from the report in the 11th Volume of the Magazine, in 1898, page 156, entitled "West Bridgford Church, Consecration of Nave and Chancel" that such a decision was made. Perhaps this great concern of the parishioners for originally wishing to build a new church in order not to spoil the character of the mediaeval building, became the very reason for reverting to an extension. Had they pursued the original proposal, the parish might possibly have found itself in a very similar situation to that of the parish of Colston Bassett some three or four years previously, but for different reasons.

The parish politics at Colston Bassett were quite different from those at West Bridgford, but the result would probably have been similar. In the case of Colston Bassett, Squire Millington Knowles decided to build his new church, St John the Divine, as a memorial to one of his family. The result of this caused the redundancy and deroofting of St Mary, which is at least of Norman origin, if not possibly earlier. This course of action resulted at the time in an outcry from devoted antiquarians who accused Knowles of desecration of the old parish church. This must have caused embarrassment to the first Bishop of Southwell, who allowed the Faculty and later resulted in a legacy for the parishioners of having to try to look after their new place of worship, and their ruined church of St Mary at one and the same time. This situation is still ongoing.

Obviously the parishioners of West Bridgford loved their mediaeval church because they did not wish to spoil it by enlargement, but in the light of what had only just happened at Colston Bassett, which, by the fuss which had been created by Squire Millington Knowles's actions they must have known about, they might have realised they could easily be going down the same road. This is, of course, conjectural but it is possible that similar events could have followed. However, it is also possible that they came to realise independently that by building a brand new church, their own actions would put their much loved mediaeval church under threat and that common sense told them it would be a costly business keeping two buildings in good order when they only needed one big enough to contain their increasing population.

Their final decision has of course been proved to be the right one and the approach which was taken gave them the best compromise. In the event only the north walls of the old building were lost, and if we, today, follow the advice of Harry Gill when, in 1915, he told his Thoroton Society members to imagine the south arcade of the 1898 nave to be the north wall of the old church, then

we can still very much appreciate the character of the old church as it would have been one hundred years ago.

It would be less than fitting if this document, researched to record the history of St Giles, in its celebration of the hundredth anniversary of its transformation, from a village church serving a small rural community, to that of the parish church of the town of West Bridgford, did not contain an accurate account of the consecration of its new extension on September 15th 1898, and to ensure that the account is accurate the following is taken verbatim from the Southwell Diocesan Magazine Volume II, October 1898, page 156.

The Parish Decisions 1894-1898

No scheme for any reordering of a church can be implemented without much deliberation and hard work by a dedicated number of parishioners who serve on their Parochial Church Councils and the various subcommittees which are set up to guide the project from conception through the construction, and to dedication on completion.

Such was the case, between 1894 and 1898, at West Bridgford when, on Thursday, June the 28th 1894, the Rector, the Reverend J Robinson, presided over a meeting at the National School. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the question of a church extension. The word extension at this stage did not mean an addition to the old fabric, but an extension of facilities to provide for greater numbers in the parish to take part in Anglican worship. It would appear, from the resolutions made at this meeting, that those present firmly held the view that it had to be a new church and this view appears to have been taken following previous considerations relating to the enlargement of the old building. This is borne out by the following motions which were put forward by Mr John Beardsley, seconded by Mr W. H. Simmons and carried unanimously by the parish meeting.

“It is desirable to build a new church as soon as possible to meet the needs of the increased and increasing population and this meeting pledges itself to use every legitimate means to raise the necessary funds”.

“That the money raised some years ago for the enlargement of the parish church be applied for a building fund for a new church”.

These decisions are recorded in the Minute Book of West Bridgford's Church Extension Committee (N.A.O. PR21499). The minute book confirms “A large Committee of Ladies and Gentlemen was appointed and it was resolved that the Gentlemen's portion of the Committee meet at the schoolroom on Wednesday July 4th at 8 o'clock and the Ladies forming the Committee on Thursday July 5th at the Rectory”. Such a segregation of the sexes would not be tolerated today, for at first glance it almost suggests that the men will be making the decisions whilst the ladies will be making the tea.

Meetings appear to have been held regularly, either in the schoolroom, the parish room, or at the Rectory, initially to organise subscription lists, printing of circulars, and collecting monies from those who had promised contributions. Rotas were set up for house to house collections and it is likely, although not specifically mentioned, that the ladies were the organising force behind the raising of money. Clearly the segregation of the men and the ladies had a practical reason as the men would be working during the day whilst the ladies, looking after the home, would be in a position to make visits and persuade the womenfolk, who usually looked after the financial side of the household, to donate the funds. This would be a good move because a woman to woman

approach would produce a sympathetic consideration and perhaps a half promise "I agree to donate but I shall have to ask my husband when he comes home" resulting in a commitment depending upon the persuasive powers of the wife. As the ladies usually get their own way, the funds would be better for it. Certainly the men were not mean however, for it is recorded that substantial sums were donated by those men on the committee, including the Rector, who was particularly generous.

At a meeting of the committee, in the Parish Room, on Wednesday October 24th 1894 with the Chairman (the Rev. J Robinson) and 22 members, plus 3 more also appointed, the following decisions were made:-

"Resolved on the motion of Mr Browne, seconded by Mr Simons, That to meet the pressing wants of the parish an iron church be erected upon or adjoining the proposed new site, this to be regarded as a temporary provision until the new church is erected".

"Resolved on the motion of Mr Storer, seconded by Mr Furse, That the cost of the iron church be defrayed from the funds already in hand for the erection of the new church".

It was further resolved, on the motion of Mr Hill, seconded by Mr Furse, that The Committee visits the alternative sites offered before coming to a decision. No details of those sites are recorded in the Minute Book but the next meeting was set for the following Saturday, at 3.30pm.

Presumably these visits were made and, at the resumed meeting, the Rector was asked to enquire specifically about "the Henry Road site" and to report. It was decided that "the proposed site, near Melton Road in the rear of Mr Temple's house" be abandoned.

On November 12th 1894 it was resolved that "The Rector and churchwardens be authorised to negotiate with the owners of the iron church at New Radford for the purchase of the same, £225 to be the limit of price". It was also resolved that "The bell and interior fittings be purchased at a price". The Rector also reported what steps had been taken as to the site on Henry Road, but unfortunately the information given, which would have proved invaluable today, was not recorded in the meeting's minutes.

Obviously matters were dealt with very quickly because on the 15th November, 1894, the Rector reported on "the iron church at New Radford as being totally unfit for removal". He was supported by his churchwardens and it was decided not to entertain the purchase of the building. At the same meeting it was decided to await some definite assurance as to the site of the land for the new church, from Colonel Davis, before proceeding further in acquiring a temporary building for worship during the construction of the new building. The Rector suggested that it might be possible to hire accommodation at the West Bridgford Board School as a temporary measure and he was asked to make approaches to the Chairman of the Board, Mr J.J. Hill, and ascertain terms.

This was successfully negotiated as the Rector reported, on January 23rd 1895, that, for £50 per annum, the parish could hire the Central Hall and two Class Rooms for Morning and Evening worship and for morning and afternoon Sunday Schools. There was to be 3 months notice on either side for termination of the lease, which included the use of lighting, heating, furniture, attendance and cleaning. This proposal was accepted by the committee and a further recommendation was made that the Rector be empowered to hire a curate to assist him so that the needs of parish duties could be shared and that services could be held in the parish church as well as in the Board School. The committee agreed to form a guarantee fund to pay the curate's salary. This was all notified at the next parish meeting on February 11th 1895, the fund to be not less than £200. £59 was promised at this meeting and by the following meeting, on February 20th, £95-7s-0d was promised.

During a meeting on July 20th 1895, in the parish room, with the Rector and 30 members present, the churchwardens and sidesmen were elected for the church services to be held in the West Bridgford Board School. There is a pencilled note at the end of these minutes which gives some indication of the seating capacity in the Board School rooms: 58 x 30 central (250) (150) 26 x 22 classrooms (2) These dimensions are, of course, in feet.

It was on Tuesday March 12th 1895 that the committee met in the parish room to consider the offer of a site for the proposed new church, that offer being made by Colonel Davis. Unfortunately, again, the location of the site is not recorded in these minutes, but the offer was accepted, with gratitude, and the executive committee agreed to meet a Mr Parr, who presumably was Colonel Davis's agent, when he set out the site. The minutes of a number of meetings have suggested various sites as proposals, none of which are recorded, but it is hoped that further research will identify these locations. At this same meeting the "Bazaar Committee" was formed and the proposed "openers" were suggested as Lord Henry Bentinck; The Duchess of Portland; and Mr Radcliffe. It will be noted, from the previous chapter, that none of these performed the opening ceremonies.

On April 22nd 1895, the meeting heard from the Rector that he had received a letter from Mr Thomas Parr, Surveyor to the West Bridgford and Colwick Estates, to the effect that he wanted to know how much land was needed for the new church and a member of the committee, a Mr Beardsley, was asked to liaise with Mr Parr on the subject. It is significant that, as far as is known, no plans and estimates of cost had yet been drawn up for the new church.

One thing that does appear, however, is that the chosen architect was not likely to be Mr Thomas Chambers Hine for, at this same meeting, the Rector read out a letter from the Reverend D Williams of Bleasby Vicarage, one of the executors of the late Reverend W R Waters, (William Roe Waters BA was Rector of St Giles between 1862 and 1894 and Mr Robinson's predecessor) calling attention to a threat of a writ being served on the executors of the late Rector, Mr Waters, for payment of Mr Hine's charge for preparing plans etc, for altering the present parish church. Again there is no detail of which plans were being referred to. The alterations of 1872 were (according to Nikolaus Pevsner) carried out by T. C. Hine, but we also know that consideration had previously been given for enlarging the old church (as money had been raised for this "some years ago"). It may have been that T.C. Hine had been approached to prepare plans in the late 80s or early 90s for enlarging the old building some years before the present decision was made to build a new church. Hine did not retire from practice until 1890, at the age of 77, and he was still active until a brief illness caused his death in February 1899. He could therefore have been involved in some original proposals for enlarging the old mediaeval building he had worked on in 1870-1872. Both of these projects occurred during Mr Water's incumbency and I would hazard a guess that the later plans were those not paid for, perhaps the account being overlooked at the time of Mr Water's death. In any event all we know, at present, is that "The Rector was requested to reply to the letter referred to. "Poor Mr Robinson always seems to be left with the difficult problems to sort out".

There seems to have then been a gap in the meetings, which had earlier been set up with considerable regularity, for after the July meeting of 1895 there does not appear to have been another until January 14th 1896, when the Rector and 20 members were present. A further 8 members were elected to serve on the committee and because of the significance of this particular meeting the full content of the relevant items of the meeting are set down.

"A discussion was introduced by the Rector, in consideration of the probable greatly increased expenses that would be entailed by the need of a new church on the site offered by Col Davis, whether it would not be more advantageous to build a new church contiguous and adjoining the old

church. Discussion was freely indulged in by most of the gentlemen present and it seemed to be almost unanimous opinion that this alternative would be to the advantage of the of the parish. The proposal to enlarge the older church was carried and Mr Beardsley proposed that an architect be engaged to view the old church and to present a report to the committee as to the adaptability of the ground contiguous to the old church for the erection of a new church. A small subcommittee was set up to discuss the situation and report back to the next meeting at 8.30pm on Tuesday Jan 21st at the Rectory”.

A report was also presented to the meeting, by Mr Beardsley, to the effect that he had now received a letter from Mr Hine’s solicitors demanding payment on his charges incurred on the proposed alteration of the old church during Mr Water’s rectorship. The parish seemed to be somewhat obtuse in settling Mr Hine’s account as it was nearly nine months since the Rector read out the letter from Bleasby vicarage.

The appointed subcommittee met, as agreed, on January 20th, with the Rector and 6 members present and the following architects were selected to be approached:-

Messrs Naylor and Sale of Derby
Mr Fowler of Durham
Messrs Paley and Austin of Lancaster

and on January 21st the subcommittee met the main committee to make their report. the Rector and 18 members were present.

Prior to their report a sketch plan suggesting a method of treating the enlargement was produced by Mr Storer and on the proposal by Mr Furse, seconded by Mr Hill, this was approved.

Following the subcommittee report it was proposed by Mr Henshall and seconded by Mr Barsby “That Messrs Naylor and Sale, Derby, be the architects consulted as to the adaptability of the ground adjoining the church for the purpose mentioned and a report be obtained”. This was approved. The Rector was authorised to communicate with Messrs Naylor and Sale to arrange a meeting on site when the executive committee would meet the architects.

Presumably this meeting was quickly arranged, using Mr Storer’s sketch plans as a preliminary brief, for the next report is of an Executive Committee meeting on February 27th 1896, when the Rector and the Reverends, W. Smith and A.H. Millard attended with 16 members present. Mr Naylor, of Naylor and Sale, attended on behalf of the architects, complete with plans and elevations for two possible schemes, one for enlarging north to south and the other east to west. Mr Naylor explained the main points of both schemes and then the members of the committee broke into groups, discussed and examined plans, elevations and seating arrangements, “displaying the greatest interest in obtaining a thorough insight into the advantages and disadvantages of each scheme. After a considerable time spent in this way the members settled down to formal discussion”. Mr Derbyshire asked a number of questions and the following are the minuted.

Comments made by Mr Naylor during the meeting:-

- (a) The total cost of either North to South scheme or East to West scheme would be roughly about £9000.

- (b) If the Nave and Chancel of the East to West scheme only were completed the cost would be about £5000.
- (c) If Nave to North and South scheme only were built, about £6000.

Mr Naylor further said that it would be quite possible to adopt either plan and make a structure at much less cost, but to keep up the character of the building the work would have to be undertaken on quite a different basis and would be more expensive.

The seating accommodation under either scheme would be a little over 700 or, at a pinch, 800.

Mr W.H. Simons then suggested that the architect should give his views as to the merits of the proposed schemes.

In reply Mr Naylor said:-

- (a) From an archaeological point of view and if it were intended to keep up the ancient characteristics of the sacred edifice the East to West scheme was the better.
- (b) If the idea of a new modern church were kept in view then the North to South scheme might, with advantage, be adopted, but even then when looked at everyone would at once say "a little church at the end of a new one".
- (c) Either church would be very good for sound.
- (d) East to West would be much prettier than North to South.
- (e) To build Nave and leave out North aisle and Chancel of East to West scheme would give a good 500 seats and cost £4000.
- (f) The cost of the Chancel would practically be £1000 in East to West scheme.

After two and a half hours the meeting was adjourned until Saturday February 29th at 8.30pm.

At this resumed meeting, the three clergy were again present with 13 members. A resume of the proceedings on February 27th were read out and approved. Mr W.H. Simons proposed, seconded by Mr Henshaw, "That the East to West scheme be adopted and recommended to the General Committee".

Mr Roescher supported the scheme on the ground of economy, as there would be only one building to maintain.

Mr Storer asked a question about the graves at the east end of the church. The Rector, in reply, said that if the East to West scheme were adopted, the architect would then mark out the ground needed for foundations, and he (the Rector) would then personally visit each grave owner and lay the case before them. He would undertake that all removals necessary would be reverently and carefully carried out and a short burial service performed.

Mr Derbyshire supported the East to West scheme:-

- (1) Because it was cheaper.

- (2) Because it would be easier on accomplishment but he would strongly support any and every endeavour to build nave and chancel.

Mr Storer, while supporting generally the previous speakers, thought that by a variation in detail of design a saving might be effected of £1000.

In answer to a question as to the arrangement of services when the parish church should be given to the builders,, the Rector said that they would have to be consolidated in the Board Schools.

Mr Johnson gave his support to the East to West scheme.

Mr Flewitt, while feeling that the North to South scheme had its advantages in the matter of convenience and accommodation, he would support the East to West scheme.

Mr Marriott supported the East to West scheme, thinking that it would make a much nicer building, but thought modifications in the design would lessen the expense.

A suggestion to pull down the whole of the old church was not entertained at all.

The Rector said that the first idea to be kept in mind was unity of service. There was another possible scheme viz:- To build an entirely new church on some spot adjacent to the parish church so that two separate services would not be necessary. He favoured the East to West scheme.

The Reverend A.H. Millard thought the East to West scheme undoubtedly the better and suggested “that £10000 ought not to frighten the people of West Bridgford”.

Mr Hill supported the East to West scheme.

The original proposition (by Mr W.H. Simons) was then put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

It was then proposed by Mr Marriott and seconded by Mr Storer “That this Committee recommends the building of Nave and Chancel, taking the architect’s figures of £5000 as the probable cost”. This was also carried unanimously.

Proposals were then discussed on the best way to raise the money. It was also decided to ask for a perspective view of the new church to present to the general body of subscribers.

At the eighteenth recorded committee meeting, held at 7.30pm on Wednesday March 4th 1896 and immediately prior to the General Committee, the Rector reported to the 13 members present that two gentlemen had already advanced £2000 leaving a balance of £1200 to be raised. Mr Roesher said he would advance £50 and Mr Henshall said he would do the same.

The following report was read to the general meeting at 8.30pm on the same evening.

“The members of the Executive Committee, after very careful consideration and numerous meetings and discussions beg to submit the following report to the General Committee”.

“They consider it advisable to have, in West Bridgford proper, two churches with two sets of services, two congregations and two complete organisations, for the following reasons:-

The area which these two services would cover is not sufficiently large to, at any future time, divide into two separate parishes.

By dividing forces, strength and unity is obviously lost, and the cause of the Church of Christ to some extent hindered in its development.

Financially the erection of a second church in West Bridgford proper would entail an additional expense of an assistant clergyman at £150 and maintenance of fabric (repair, cleaning, gas etc) of £135", (presumably per annum), making a total for these item items of £285 and still leave the Rector single handed at the parish church. Then the necessary organisations in connection with the new church would need another £30 per year making a total annual income to be raised of £315.

The question of erecting a church on the Lady Bay Estate - an absolute necessity in the near future - is not here considered as it does not affect the present position of church accommodation for West Bridgford proper. But as the Lady Bay estate forms part of the parish, this expense will have to be borne by the whole parish and emphasizes the necessity for economy.

A plan to save the expense of a second church was therefore sought for and, after weighing the matter very carefully, the Executive Committee passed the following recommendations by a unanimous vote".

Recommendation 1

"That a new church be erected alongside the old one with an accommodation of 800 as shown on the plans marked scheme A. To assist the committee in forming an opinion, an experienced architect has been consulted and a rough estimate of the probable cost obtained as follows:-

- (a) To completely build the church as shown on scheme A, keeping up the character and design of the original edifice, £9000.
- (b) To build Nave and Chancel only, leaving out the choir vestry, clergy vestry and North aisle £5000.

Recommendation 2

"That the building of Nave and Chancel as shown on plans at an estimated cost of £5000 be at once begun, leaving the question of the section of North aisle and Vestries for future consideration.

Financial Aspect

The amount already in hand and promised, after deducting the expenses in connection with the commencement of the church extension, services in the Board School, and allowing for the other contingencies is £1600. This leaves £3400 to be raised and the following scheme is suggested:-

That a number of gentlemen should advance the necessary money and receive interest at the rate of 4 p.c. This interest to be guaranteed by a Board of Finance and paid from the offertories. The united offertories of the Parish

Church and the church extension services at present average £6 per Sunday or say £300 per year. Interest of £3500 at 4 p.c. £140 per year. This would leave a balance of £160 per year to pay current expenses of gas, fires, cleaning, etc, which is estimated would amount to £130 this leaving a margin of £30 for contingencies. The principal advanced by these gentlemen would be repaid as the funds come in either by ballot or pro rata.

Two gentlemen in the parish have already advanced £2000. Gentlemen prepared to advance money but wishing to make further enquiries respecting security, will be satisfactorily answered by the Rector privately.

The question of obtaining new subscriptions or increasing those already paid or promised is earnestly commended to the attention of the General Committee”

After a careful explanation of the plans by Mr Storer several questions were asked of the Rector and answered.

Mr Heymann then proposed Recommendations Numbers 1 and 2 combined. “That a new church be erected alongside the old one, with accommodation of 800 as shown on the plans scheme A, but that only the Nave and Chancel be at present proceeded with at an estimated cost of £5000”.

Mr Barsby seconded the proposal and the motion was carried without dissent.

Following the approvals of the proposals there was a discussion upon the financial aspects of the scheme and how to raise money, and one suggestion, perhaps put lightheartedly, by Mr G.O. Swift, was that pew rents might be charged. This was strongly opposed by Mr Derbyshire, and the meeting agreed that the financial matters could be left to the Board of Finance which would be appointed by the Executive Committee.

Finally the appointment of Messrs Naylor and Sale as architect for the work was proposed by Mr Lowe and seconded by Mr Henshall. This received the General Committee’s support subject to the approval of the Bishop and the granting of a Faculty.

The General Committee meeting closed, and the Executive Committee had a short meeting afterwards, regarding finance and the legalities involved, this being adjourned for further consideration at 8.40pm on Wednesday March 11th.

After, no doubt, an extremely long and tiring evening, particularly for the Executive Committee, the parish had made its decision to go ahead and implement the work which was to be the first part of the major extensions to cater for the ever growing population of West Bridgford.

The celebration of the centenary of the completion of these proposals clearly demonstrates that wise decisions were made at that historic meeting on March 4th 1896. This resulted in the preservation of the old parish church and provided the setting for the future extension which was based upon the original scheme of redevelopment, East to West.

The Parish Involvement in the Construction 1896-1898

Having reached the decision to go ahead on March 4th 1896 the committee, set up to oversee the detail of the project, could not rest upon its laurels as there was much work still to do. The

implementation of a building contract carries great responsibility and this must be borne by the employer, the architect acting as agent, and the builder responsible for the construction. Unless all three members of the team work closely together, and in harmony, the project suffers from errors, delays and extra costs. From the continuation of the reports in the Minute Book it seems that the parish was well up to the job and indeed very quickly ready to go ahead.

A week later, on the 11th March 1896 the Rector, presiding over 14 members present, announced that the money required to build the nave and chancel had been advanced “although if any other gentlemen wished to assist he would be pleased to hear from them”.

Legal opinion had been obtained regarding advancements, interest, securities and agreements and Mr Goodall put forward draft documents for approval.

Discussion took place on the various methods of implementation, which are briefly discussed in the Minute Book, the Rector put forward a proposition of pledges, recommending that “An army of ladies, under Mrs Robinson’s (his wife) direction, would then undertake to call and collect the amounts promised every fortnight”. This was approved and it was further decided “to meet the architect at the earliest opportunity and discuss certain matters with him”.

The meeting with Mr Naylor, of Messrs Naylor and Sale of Derby, took place on March 23rd at 6.30pm. The Rector and 13 members were present. Mr Henshall proposed and Mr Derbyshire seconded a resolution that Mr Naylor of “Messrs Naylor and Sale, Architects, of Derby be and are hereby instructed to proceed with all dispatch in the work necessary for the erection of the Nave and Chancel of the church”. This was carried unanimously, following which, the Rector, in answer to a question on procedure stated that “it would be necessary to obtain a resolution from the Vestry approving the scheme. The necessary steps for obtaining a faculty could then be taken and the question of graves dealt with”. In connection with the graves the architect promised to have a plan at once made showing the graves that would be interfered with. He recommended that “in each case the owner be offered removal of body with a short service”.

Humour is rarely recorded in formal documents but one does wonder if there were a few West Bridgfordian sniggers at that remark. Perhaps not, as Mr Naylor did use the word “owner” rather than “occupier”.

In answer to questions the architect said that:-

The foundations might be laid early in June (1896).

The erection of the church would take 12 to 15 months.

The services in the church would have to cease from August or September (1896) until completion.

The Committee should select builders to whom invitations to tender might be sent but he would like to add the names of about two others.

Members were asked to think of names and suggest them at the next committee meeting and it was felt that, other things being equal, preference should be given to a Nottinghamshire firm in selecting a builder.

The Vestry meeting was to be called for Wednesday March 25th at 8.30pm followed by a General Committee meeting at 9pm.

The General Committee meeting on March 25th appears to be mainly concerned with financial matters and there is no record of a tender list. However, the record would not be complete without a reference in detail and the Rector reported the following information to 13 members, including the Reverend A.H. Millard:-

The Lenders, at a recent meeting, were prepared to accept the following:-

- (a) Ten percent of monies would be advanced in the first year plus four percent interest on monies advanced.
- (b) Efforts were to be made to raise as much or more than the ten percent of the principal but no legal claim could, or would, be made upon anyone to repay a loan or interest, the Lenders trusting, solely for the interest, to the energy and generosity of the church workers and friends.

Mr Beardsley supported the scheme. Mr Storer advocated another canvas of the parish to obtain help, either in donations or subscriptions and this was thought to be a good idea. Mr Hill further suggested that parishioners should be circularised prior to calls being made.

The constitution of the Church Extension Finance Committee was discussed and it was agreed that the committee should comprise, the lenders, the churchwardens for the time being, Mr J.S. Derbyshire and the Secretary (presumably the Secretary of the General Committee presently meeting).

The work of the committee would be to take over, after a proper audit, all the funds and accounts connected with the Church Extension Fund. It would also receive and pay out all monies in connection with the said fund and would be required to make half yearly returns to the General Committee as to the financial position of the Fund.

The auditors were to be Messrs Goodall and Hill, appointed on the understanding that if professional accounting services could be obtained at no expense to the fund, they were to be released from their duties.

At the next meeting of the General Committee, held in the Parish Room on June 3rd 1896, the Rector addressed the 15 members present on the progress of the work, or indeed the lack of it, as delay there seemed to be.

This was due to the visitation of the Bishop, who took with him on his rounds both the Chancellor and the Registrar, which meant that no Consistory Court could be held. This situation had obviously held up the granting of a Faculty. The architect had however got on with his work and the Registrar "had promised to push on with his branch of the work as quickly as possible". The meeting was told that the parish had already petitioned for a Faculty.

The architect had obviously staked out the location of the new work as the committee was told that "Very few graves would be affected and in nearly all cases the suggestions for removal had been kindly received". It is to be presumed that the few "not kindly received" were eventually resolved in an acceptable way as there is no later record of any difficulties over this matter.

Progress on financial matters were then discussed and three possible methods of raising funds had been decided upon. These were:-

- (a) To obtain a definite sum of money as a donation to the Building Fund.

- (b) To obtain a subscription for two, three, or more years.
- (c) To obtain a promise of a small sum (sixpence or one shilling) per week for, say, twelve months. This sum to be collected by a band of workers (the ladies no doubt) specially organised (by Mrs Robinson?).

The Rector then declared that “unless some excellent reason could be advanced against it, it was his intention to let the Rectory House and its grounds and take a smaller house”. He said that if the house lets for over £100, say £120, he would give £100 to the church Building Fund and, in addition, ten percent on all money raised by other efforts in the parish. He had already written to the Bishop about this and was awaiting his reply.

It is recorded that “All spoke on this unparalleled suggestion, trusting that such an act would not be necessary”. Mr Robinson, it would seem, was a man of great determination, resourceful and prepared to set an example of self denial in order to ensure that the parish of West Bridgford got a church big enough to welcome all who wished to join his congregation.

Other church activities were going on apace to assist the completion of the new works, as on Wednesday July 1st 1896, at 9pm in the evening, the Floral Fete Committee met with the General Building Committee when obviously the two groups were combining to run a fund raising event.

The Rector, who chaired the meeting, gave a recap to the 15 members present on the organising of the event thus far, and a diversion into the mechanics of setting up such an occasion is worthy of inclusion here to demonstrate the efforts made to ensure success.

There were to be egg races, cricket matches, sack races, etc. to which it was intended to charge one penny entrance. The Rector asked for “as much assistance in the pushing and managing of these as possible”. Mr Barsby and the committee secretary were deputed “to see upon what terms a good band of seven to nine men could be engaged for 3 days. “One thousand hand-bills were to be printed and distributed to every house in the parish, the Rector undertaking “to organise a band of workers who would do this well” (was it the stalwart ladies, again under the direction of Mrs Robinson?) Hand written notices were recommended announcing the fete, to be displayed in prominent places, one being near Trent Bridge and arrangements were made for setting up the event, including “the question of police to protect the Rectory fences”.

The Floral Fete Committee met again on July 8th, when the Rector chaired the meeting at which the Reverend Millard and six members were present. Another meeting was also programmed for Saturday morning July 11th at 9.00am, but there is a note in the Minute Book “Only 4 present July 11th 9.30, decided to leave entries open until 18th July”. The event appears to be imminent and obviously some chasing up was done as on the next Wednesday, July the 15th, the Rector chaired a meeting where Mr Millard and 17 members were present. It was reported that the committee had decided to engage Hindley’s Band at 37 shillings and sixpence per day, prizes were to be distributed on Thursday about 4pm by Mrs Hubbersty and “the night watchman” was “to be left to the Rector”.

Yet another meeting of the Floral Fete Committee was held on July 20th, with the Rector and 16 members present. Letters had been received from Judges who stated they would be present on July 23rd before 11am. This meeting was entirely devoted to general domestic matters and, by the arrangements for Judges (and the fact that the band had been hired for three days), the fete took place on the 23rd, 24th and 25th of July, an event on Thursday, Friday and Saturday of that week. Presumably the week of July 20th must have been the works holiday week in Nottingham and surrounding areas.

It is hoped that newspaper reports may come to light and give further details of the event for the Minute Book records no further details either of the fete or of the financial success of the event.

The next Executive meeting was on August 17th, in the Parish Room, when the Rector and 12 members were present. This meeting was to receive the architect's letter enclosing the unopened tenders.

Twelve tenderers had been invited, with the result being as follows:-

Messrs Woodsend (Nottingham) declined to tender.

Messrs Smith of Newark declined to tender, too full of work.

Baines, Newark	£5230	Messon, Nottingham	£5789
Green, Nottingham	£5400	Hutchinson, Nottingham	£5950
Thompson, Louth	£5414-10s-0d	Enoch Hind, Nottingham	£6007
Hodgson, Nottingham	£5695	Enoch Kent, Nottingham	£6011
Dennett & Ingle, Nottm	£5750	Fish & Sons, Nottingham	£6065

“the Rector read the main items of the building and invited remarks”. There was some discussion as to the designs submitted for the East and West windows and alterations were suggested. It was decided to ask the architect to meet the Executive Committee on Thursday, before the General Committee meeting.

It was proposed by Mr Beardsley, and seconded by Mr Johnson “That Messrs Baines tender be recommended to the General Committee for adoption subject to the subcontractors, if any, being approved by the Executive Committee and the architects”.

The General Committee met on August 20th 1896, in the Parish Room, with the Rector and 12 members present. The Rector referred to the meeting of the Executive Committee and its meeting with the architect, Mr Naylor. He reported that:-

The architect would submit amended designs for the E and W windows.

The question as to battlements was satisfactorily answered.

Subcontractors, if any, would have their names submitted to the committee.

The church would need to be vacated by November 30th 1896.

The possible date for completion was September 1st 1897.

Part of the present church would be reserved during building operations for Holy Communion, marriages and funerals.

Foundation stone would possibly be laid on October 28th 1896 (Wed. 3pm).

The question of submitting plans (drainage) to local authorities was left to Mr Furse, who would enquire and report.

Mr W.A. Abbot proposed and Mr M. Chorley seconded “that the tender of Mr Chas Baines, of Newark, £5230 be accepted”.

This motion was carried without opposition.

Mr Abbot asked whether a Clerk of Works would be appointed. The Rector replied that this expense would be spared as the architect, Mr Naylor, had promised to do all that was necessary.

The question of signing the contract was then considered but as there appeared to be difference of opinion on the subject, the Rector adjourned the meeting until Monday August 24th at 8.30pm.

At the adjourned meeting held on August 24th, the Rector and 20 members were present. The minutes were read and signed and the Rector gave a report of the financial situation as follows:-

Cash in hand £1500; solid promises £300-£500. Amount proposed to be lent by friends £2500. The difficulty appears to be in finding the last £1000. In the Minute Book there is a comment "and if the people of West Bridgford can not do this the parish is not worthy of such a church". Does one here detect an exasperated secretary, or a despairing one, as this sentence has been struck out, presumably by the Rector, prior to signature. Obviously some strong words were said at the meeting, Mr Beardsley saw £1500 in hand and £2000 lent, making a total of £4000. He obviously had little confidence in the £300 to £500 as Mr Derbyshire, presumably to calm the situation, "spoke encouragingly and hoped some scheme would be devised to find the last £1000".

It was becoming obvious that the work was starting and the parish had not raised the money to pay for it and Mr Swift wanted to know when the last payment on the contract would be due. The Rector said about the first of December 1897.

There then followed a discussion on raising the balance, four people undertook to find £50 each by September 1st 1897 and there was a further offer of £5 per annum up to a limit of £50.

Mr Beardsley then suggested that the contract be signed at the time when the lenders signed the bond to find the loan money. The difference of opinion referred to in the minutes of the adjourned meeting on August 20th, must have resulted from a dispute between those who wanted to sign straightaway and those who wanted to wait until all the money was in hand.

Mr Simmons spoke in support of signing the contract straightaway and this must have been agreed, as the Minute Book records "The Contract was signed by the Rev Jas Robinson (Rector), J. Beardsley and W. Simons (Churchwardens) Messrs W.A. Abbot, W.E. Bass, J. Simmons, W.A. Marriott, J.S. Derbyshire, T.J. Hodson, J.H. Middleton, G. Merchant, M. Chorley, J. Margerson and H. Tomkins.

A social tea was suggested and thought to be a good idea and a committee to organise this was formed, to meet on Friday September 18th 1896.

The next recorded meeting was that of the Building General Committee, held on February 24th 1897, with the Rector and 31 members present. The Rector referred to the first meeting, held in June 1894 and mentioned that a great amount had been done since, but that much had yet to be achieved before the task was complete. The large attendance was reflected by the fact that a number of new members had been added to the committee, brought in, no doubt, to progress the canvassing in the lists of districts which had been drawn up. Introductions were given and actions agreed and the date of the next meeting was set for March 26th at 8.30pm in the Parish Room, when a progress report would be expected.

The canvassers, 11 of whom were present, reported their success at the March meeting and the Minute Book records the promises obtained.

On April 9th, at 8.30pm in the Rectory, (obviously Mr Robinson had not been required to give up his house, or the Bishop had not allowed him to do so) at which 18 members were present, very encouraging results were reported by the canvassers. Only two districts were unrepresented, those of Patrick Road and Colwick Road.

In spite of what was reported at the last two meetings as being a good result from the canvassing, the situation was not good at all. The General Committee meeting of June 18th 1897, at which 27 members were present, heard from the Rector on the recent Finance Committee's report. He said that there was a small result from the recent canvass and that when the contract was signed there was still £1000 unprovided for. Since then only £200 had been received or promised and consequently £800 was urgently needed in cash, or promises or on loan. He felt that until there was a reasonably good chance of obtaining this money, he did not think the lenders should be asked to put down their cash. Mr Beardsley stated that £471 of the promises was still unpaid and the parish had in cash £627. Obviously the situation was looking bad. Mr Furse felt that the church extension should not be stopped. "They should at the very least get the roof on as to stop building now would be in the highest degree detrimental".

Mr G. O. Swift argued that the building ought to be stopped and the question of lack of funds brought forcibly home to the parishioners. Mr Beardsley stated that the simplest way to obtain the money would be for a promissory note to be signed. Following lengthy discussions the meeting closed with an agreement that the balance sheet should show that £3002 was still needed.

The contract was presumably allowed to continue for, on October 7th 1897, at a General Committee meeting comprising 19 members, the Rector brought forwards plans of the choir stalls which had just been received from the architects. Design 'B' costing £140, was in accordance with the specification, but design 'A' was put forward at a cost of £180, "in case any donor would prefer the more elaborate design". The ground plan was the same in each case, the greater difference being in the carving. Both designs were considered suitable, the only criticisms being with respect to the terminal of the Men's seat and the front of the clergy desk.

The Rector dwelt upon his anxiety to have the best possible work in the Church of God but said that eyes must not be shut to the fact that in works of this kind extras were apt to creep in. He had, however, made special enquiries of Mr Naylor, in whom he had every confidence, and he had been assured that this item would not be great.

Even so the Rector also drew attention to the need to consider the following remedial works, in addition to the contract:-

- The condition of the old roof.
- The underpinning of the Tower.
- The fixing of the pinnacles.
- The fixing of the battlements.
- Repainting of the old church.

He stressed that each of these items would run the committee into further expense.

The ensuing discussion resulted in a decision to defer the inclusion of the choir stalls at this stage.

The next point to be discussed was that of the north aisle, which had been omitted from the original East to West scheme. He suggested three possible alternatives as follows:-

The erection of a temporary iron and wood aisle.

The building of a temporary brick and slate aisle.

The construction of 14 feet of permanent north wall and windows but with a temporary roof.

The last proposal was felt to be the most satisfactory and the Rector said he would have costings available in a few days.

In fact at the next meeting of the Church Building Committee, at which 14 were present on Thursday November 11th 1897, the Rector had costings for only two of the three north aisle proposals. The proposal for a temporary brick and slate north aisle would cost £252 and the stone proposals £710. After discussion it was agreed "that these estimates would lie on the table".

Mr Baines, the contractor, had prepared an estimate of £22 for the repair of the battlements on the south aisle and this was accepted and the work was ordered to proceed.

On December 1st 1897 the 11 members attending the Executive Building Committee heard the Rector report that he had now received an estimate from the architects for an iron north aisle as quoted by Messrs Humphreys.

The estimate was as follows:-

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------|
| (a) | The provision of an iron north aisle | £105.0.0 |
| (b) | Foundations, lighting and heating | £88.0.0. |
| | Total cost | £193.0.0. |
| (c) | Less the cost of the brickwork (which would presumably have been taken for blocking the north arcade) | £49.18.5 |
| | Final total cost | £143.11.7. |

The accommodation of a north aisle appeared to take up the rest of the meeting. Mr Abbot drew attention to the fact that a previous letter gave an estimate for the brick wall at £59-0-0 plus; (the previous letter referred to has not been mentioned before and, so far, nothing is known about its content). Mr J. Simmons, in criticising the estimate, drew attention to the item for foundations etc. and South E chairs were already in use at the Board School (the significance of this last remark is not yet understood).

Mr W.A. Marriott thought that it would be a mistake to put up an iron structure against such a beautiful building and suggested that the need for it had yet to be proved. It appears that some members wanted a temporary brick building, some an iron building and others nothing at all. The need, at this stage, and the costs, were questioned. Whether or not this swayed a decision, however, it was recorded that the Rector had an eye for the reuse of an iron north aisle if it were to go ahead. He suggested that when its use in the church was finished it could be used on the south side of the parish room. Nine members were in favour of an iron structure, 4 were against with (presumably) one abstention. The names of those voting are recorded in the Minute Book and therefore further and more detailed particulars could be abstracted if necessary.

The Minute Book then records “The Rector next read a draft letter he had sent to Col Davies, Lord Mayor of London, anent church extension “Again there is no explanation here. Was the Rector explaining why the parish did not want the site previously offered (wherever this site eventually was situated) or was he asking for financial assistance in lieu of the building plot?

The last recorded meeting in the Minute Book is that of the Executive Building Committee held at the Rectory on April 6th 1898. The Rector and 9 members were present.

The Rector reported the result of correspondence with Mr Naylor, concerning the estimates for the north aisle, which showed that £120 would practically cover the expense.

The Rector then further reported the result of a special interview with the architect as follows:-

The opening. The architect thought that the work could be finished by the second week in June and the Rector then fixed the second week in July as a possible date of opening and mentioned that Mr and Mrs Heymann were prepared to assist by inviting and entertaining “The Country Folk”.

Altar steps. The additional step to the altar, at an estimated cost of £10, was agreed to.

Chancel screen. There was a variation of the original design that a low open wrought iron screen, or chancel rail, could be erected. This was favourably received and a suggestion to include the lectern in the arrangement was thought to be a very good one. The chancel wall ground plan was accepted and estimates for a curb of (a) Black Marble and (b) Alabaster were to be obtained.

Windows. The estimate for windows and pointing, as per estimate supplied by A. Browning was accepted.

It was also agreed to authorise the two ladders required to reach the roofs from the heating chamber and the roof of the old church.

On the proposal of Mr W. H. Simmons, seconded by Mr W. Roescher, it was decided to have the internal carving completed.

The question of a carriage entrance from Stratford Road was then discussed and the Rector was deputed to see, and if possible arrange, with Mr J. C. Gray and his neighbour for a permanent widening of the entrance from Stratford Road,

The final signature of the Reverend James Robinson, closed this meeting and presumably also the appointed Church Building Committee, on October 3rd 1898.

The Special Finance Committee, in charge of the funds for the church extension carried on until March 7th 1900, when the Rector, the Reverend James Robinson, signed the last entry.