

ST. GILES' CHURCH, WEST BRIDGFORD

The church is dedicated to St. Giles, who was the patron saint of cripples and wayfarers, and those who worked on farms and gardens. He was the first Abbot of St. Giles, a famous abbey in the South of France, near Arles, and originally lived in a cave as a hermit, with a pet faun as his companion. There are 160 churches of this dedication in England, three in Wales, and three in Scotland.

There is no mention of a church in the Domesday Survey of 1086, and no architecture of the Norman period appears in the building. The oldest part of the church is to be found in the south wall of the old chancel, and the Rector's door must be about 1230. Probably the church was originally built by the Lutereff family, who were Lords of the Manor of West Bridgford, and lived at Gamston, a small hamlet in the parish, in the thirteenth century. The first name, recorded in the list of Rectors, is Luke de Crophill, 1239. The Luttrells now live at Dunster.

The **Old Church** consisted of nave, south aisle, south porch, chancel and western tower.

The **Nave** is separated from the aisle by an arcade of four bays. The pillars, arches and clerestory windows are Perpendicular in style and were rebuilt about 1400. The entrance door is Early English, about 1250. Another small door near this one is now blocked up, and formerly led to a small chamber or parvise over the porch. But this has been pulled down and the porch rebuilt at some time. The south and east windows in this aisle are decorated work, about 1350, and were restored with new stonework in 1871. In this aisle the old roof may be seen. The small west window was cut from a single stone, about 1250. A piscina with part of an old window are in the south wall showing there was once a side-chapel here.

The **Chancel** arch was moved several feet eastward; and two clerestory windows added in 1898. A unique arrangement of three windows may be seen in the east wall, with decorated or flowing tracery, about 1350. The uppermost window is carved from a single stone and was restored in 1871; the old window may now be seen in the porch, very much weatherworn.

Sedilia. The stone seats were used by the priest and his assistants during part of the Communion service on Sundays. The usual number is three and it is rare to find only two. The carving is copied from that of the windows, and was probably the work of an apprentice about 1350.

Aumbry. A small recess in the wall used for storing the Communion vessels. Ancient village churches had no vestries.

Piscina. A small basin with a drain, used for washing the vessels. The aumbry, piscina and Rector's door are all Early English and this is the oldest part of the church, about 1230.

The two south windows were inserted later to give more light and are late Perpendicular, about 1500.

There was a small brick vestry built in 1786 on the north side of the chancel at a cost of £10. This was replaced by an organ chamber and vestry in 1871, which were removed in 1898.

The Communion table is Elizabethan, and this chapel was rededicated with new furniture in 1934.

The **Tower** is in three stages of dressed ashlar masonry, surmounted by battlements and pinnacles, and supported by diagonal buttresses. It is late 15th century and has a newel staircase in the south-west corner. A small debased doorway, now blocked up, probably once led to the west gallery, which was removed in 1871. On top is a heavy stone arched roof, which was possibly taken from the old porch. On the outside of the tower, near the footpath, may be seen high up on the south wall a stone with the letters "chr lapis adjutorii"—"Christ, the stone of help", which was probably a sort of dedication stone.

The old **font** with the marks of the staples fastening the cover, now stands in the tower.

Three old Bells formerly in the tower:

(1) Celorum xte placeat tibi rex sonus iste ("May this sound please Thee, O Christ, King of Heaven").

(2) J. & E. Smith and Co., Chesterfield, 1813. Gloria Deo.

(3) Ave Maria.

The first bell has the founder's mark of Richard Mellers, the Nottingham bell-founder, mayor of the city in 1499, about the time when the tower was finished. A new peal of eight bells was placed in the tower in 1956. The old bell is in the church.

The **Screen** stood for five centuries at the entrance to the old chancel and is a good example of the earliest type of screen and was erected about 1380. The tracery and lower panels have been restored.

The loft and wooden staircase were removed as being unsafe about 1821. It was much restored in 1871, and the new part added in 1934. At the north end is a curious carving of a fox carrying away a bird.

In the north chapel is a low canopied arch of 14th century date, moved from the old chancel, which once contained the tomb of one of the Rectors. Underneath is a military effigy, which was formerly used as a boundary stone on the Melton Road, and was brought into church in 1893. It most probably came from the old Hospital of St. John in Nottingham and is said to have been dug up with another similar one, when excavating the foundations of the city prison, a century ago. The Knight is always called "The Stone Man" and was a benefactor or Knight of St. John.

The **Porch** is of unusual length, and has stone seats and small windows, one of which was made out of an old tombstone. It is not the original porch and was restored in 1871.

The **Communion** plate is old and the chalice bears the inscription "West Bridgford 1659", and a silver paten, bowl and flagon are dated 1809. The church registers are complete from 1559. The south aisle was refurnished in 1941. The shields represent the Lords of the Manor and Patrons of the church.

A great restoration took place in 1871-2 at a cost of £800. The old "horse-box" pews and three-decker pulpit were then removed. A small organ was purchased from Sneinton Church.

In 1896-8 the new chancel and nave were added, and the north wall of the old church pulled down at a cost of £6,000. The old nave then became the south aisle. The pulpit is a fine modern one by Sir Charles Nicholson in 1948.

The **East Window** is a memorial after the first war 1914-18 and the choir stalls erected by Bridgeman of Lichfield at the same time. The altar and reredos are memorials of later date, by Woore of Derby.

The **Organ** is a large three-manual by Henry Willis, the builder of many cathedral organs. It contains 40 stops and 2,000 pipes, with electro-pneumatic action and is one of the finest in the Midlands. It was rebuilt and enlarged in 1952, at a cost of £7,000.

The **north aisle**, chapel and vestries were completed at a cost of £5,000 and dedicated to commemorate the Coronation of King George V in 1911. The architects were Naylor and Sale of Derby. The stone came from Coxbench.

A beautiful screen by Bowmans of Stamford, was given to the north chapel at the same time as the new pulpit in 1948. Both are memorials to members of the Flewitt family. The south chapel screen is in memory of W. W. Partington (1921).

There are many stained glass windows in the Church, which are much admired.

The great **East Window** by Arthur Bryant depicts the Crucifixion and the four learned doctors of the Church, and is a memorial to the fallen in the first war (1920).

The West Window, in memory of Mrs. Truman, shows the Resurrection scene in the garden (1936) by Harry Grylls. He also designed the East windows in the old chancel with the Christmas story, and the two West windows in the south aisle, which are to the memory of Clara Ogle (1934). Two other windows in this aisle with scenes from the Gospels are by Taylor and Clifton.

The old chancel contains two windows in the south wall, the Annunciation, in memory of Sarah Jane Simons (1919), and the three figures of Faith, Hope and Charity by Heaton, Butler and Bayne, in memory of Elizabeth Hemsley, 1901. This chancel was restored in memory of Tom and Emily Simmons in 1934.

In the south chancel wall is a window in memory of Thomas Howe (1907), with figures of St. Giles and St. Simeon. The clergy desks were given in memory of Mrs. Lois Abbott.

In the north chapel the central window is a war memorial gift (1949) of the British Legion with St. George and St. Martin, and pictures of the four Services. The other was the gift in 1946 of James Simons, showing St. Ambrose and St. Cecilia and musical worship. Both are fine designs by James Powell, of London.

The third window in the chapel is in memory of Albert Thompson (1913).

The six clerestory windows in the old nave show the twelve apostles, and were given to the Church in 1904. The processional cross is a memorial to Neville Hargreaves, 1925.

The screen and altar rails of wrought iron were the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Furse in 1898, and the large eagle lectern was given by the Sunday School teachers at the same time.

Two oak prayer desks in the Sanctuary were given by the Children's Mission in 1898 and 1948, and a third is in memory of Peter Westby who died on active service in India, in 1946.

A Book of Remembrance was placed in the north chapel by the British Legion in 1952 in memory of the fallen. The old south aisle was furnished by the young people of the congregation in 1941.

The Bishop's Chair was the gift of a family in 1950. The Church has accommodation for 1,200 people, and is one of the largest in the Diocese. The population is 20,000.

RECTORS OF WEST BRIDGFORD

<i>Date of Institution</i>	<i>Rector</i>	<i>Date of Institution</i>	<i>Rector</i>
1239	Luke de Crophill.	1662	Edward Greathead, M.A.
1267	Robert Luterell.	1673	Thomas Houghton, M.A.
1315	Andrew Luterell.	1692	Joseph Bruen, B.A.
1330	Henry Luterell.	1717	John Stokes, M.A.
1349	John de Aslackton.	1723	John Stokes.
1369	Thomas de Haverthorpe.	1749	Thomas Rose, M.A.
1415	Richard Clarke.	1764	John Gage, M.A.
1437	William Wragby.	1770	William Thompson.
1450	William Funtance.	1803	Peter Thoroton, Ll.B.
1479	Robert Hyll.	1818	Levett Edward Thoroton, B.A.
1479	John Alcock, D.D.	1831	Roger Pocklington, M.A.
1506	Robert Lovell.	1834	William Musters, B.A.
1517	Walter Wright.	1862	William Roe Waters, B.A.
1529	Walter Basse.	1894	James Robinson, M.A.
1556	John Cooke.	1903	Henry Marsh Edwards.
1571	Robert Grene, M.A.	1904	Richard Hargreaves, M.A.
1614	Francis Withington, B.A.	1930	Cyril Northcote Hatfield, M.A.
1648	Samuel Coates, M.A.	1941	Reginal Felix Wilkinson, M.A.