

## **St Andrews Church, North Kilworth, Leicestershire**

### **A Brief History**

**Welcome to our Church- we hope you enjoy your visit**

**Please take time to wander around the church and the graveyard**



## The beginnings

It is believed that the Church was built around the time of Henry II (1154 to 1189) when it comprised the existing Chancel, central Nave, north aisle and the bell tower (without a spire). The period is Early English. The arches at the east and west ends of the Nave are dignified in their proportions and regarded as fine examples for their period. It is likely that Robert Rabaz was responsible for the construction and it is possible that his tomb lies under the Lady Chapel at the east end of the north aisle.



There is a Curia Regis Roll (131) dated 1211 which refers to Robert acting as Justice in a variety of land disputes in the area (then known as Kynelyngworth). The Coram Rege Roll 186 of 1382 relates how the Parson (John Chamberlayne) and his servant John encountered one Nicholas Wyseman in a field near the Church. Because of an old dispute

a fight ensued resulting in the death of Wyseman at the hand of the servant. In response to a claim of self-defence Chamberlayne obtained a Royal Pardon for his servant after evidence to the Coroner, Thomas de Quenby.

At the east end of the Chancel, adjacent to the altar, there is an ancient aumbry (a recess in the east wall) which would have been used to store the Communion vessels. This is now accessed by a small, hinged door in the carved wooden screen fixed to the east wall.



A piscina (with drain) is adjacent to the east window in the north aisle and above it is evidence of a now closed off access to a rood screen loft. A second larger piscina is to be found adjacent to it on the south wall.



The now empty niche to the left of the altar probably once held a statue of the Patron Saint and was possibly lost or destroyed when the Parliamentarian army occupied the Village when en route to defeating the King at Naseby in 1645. Evidence of the presence of troops survives in the name of The Billet (on Back Street) and was probably due to the presence of a Smithy plus abundant springs in the upper Avon valley. Victorian correspondents also commented on the fact that “the stonework was much mutilated before restoration.”

## The Victorians



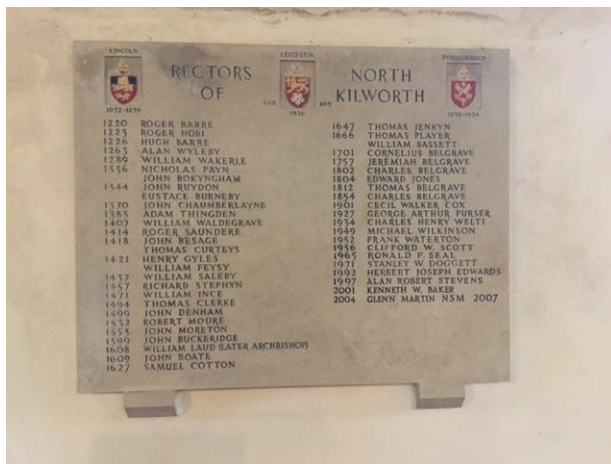
Adjacent to the porch door is a wooden painted board (found in many Churches) confirming that in 1864 the Incorporated Society for Buildings and Churches had subscribed £60 for new pews to seat 63 persons of the total 230 provided at that time. The north porch was added as part of the 1856 improvements. The Victorians also removed the Jacobean rood loft on the north side of the nave and the original primitive Norman font was placed on new ornate, carved acanthus leaved pillars.



The arcade in the Nave has piers without capitals, a feature also found at Gumley, Lilbourne and Kibworth. The south aisle restoration was undertaken by Joseph Clarke in 1864–65. This is characterised by octagonal, polychrome piers and savage foliage capitals.

## Incumbents

The list of Rectors is to be found on a tablet to the east of the main entrance starting in 1220. The name of Archbishop Laud is to be found although he was almost certainly the holder of this and other benefices and would have appointed a full time Rector.



The coats of Arms on the tablet reflect the shifting allocation of the benefice over the centuries, from Leicester to Lincoln, to Peterborough and then, finally back to Leicester Diocese. Also in evidence is the long association of the Belgrave family with the Church who also, until the establishment of the shared benefices of Guthlaxton, assumed alternating responsibility with the Bishop (then, later, the Crown) with the appointment to the Living. Cornelius Belgrave had the living from

1701 followed by an almost unbroken 200-year span with Jeremiah, Charles, Thomas and Charles serving until 1901, apart from an inter regnum of 8 years.

### **Other monuments in the Church**

Captain James Dacres Belgrave MC 1896- 1918, wounded at Loos and who then became a pioneer in the Royal Flying Corps finally achieving 18 victories against German aircraft, the last of which claimed his life.



William Belgrave 1725–1787 and his wife Maria.

James Dalrymple 1850-1922 Barrister

Thomas Pochin 1797-1831

Charles William Belgrave 1818-1901 Royal Naval Chaplain

Eleanor Belgrave 1859- 1921

Jane Belgrave 1725- 1800 (stone tablet)

Richard Gough 1787- 1864 of Kilworth House

Vincent Frederick Tufnell 1839-1911

Dacres Thomas Charles Belgrave 1930 (Stone tablet) and

Mary Ellen Tufnell 1848-1910, his wife. Mary was a daughter of the Entwistle family who purchased what is now the Kilworth House Hotel as a “hunting estate” to be closer to London. They made their fortune in the Lancashire cotton trade and were a significant source of employment in the pre-1914 Edwardian peak of the Country House.

On the south aisle wall to Admiral of the Fleet Man Dobson 1755-1847 and his wife Maria 1765- 1847.



Dobson served under Nelson as an Admiral of the White Squadron and ended his career in charge of naval Press gangs in Ireland at the time of the Napoleonic wars.



An adjacent tablet commemorates the life of his son Hyde Parker Dobson 1798- 1836 who was at the siege of Toulon fighting Napoleon and who subsequently was responsible for capturing modern day Myanmar (Burma) from dacoit Pirates. He explored and opened up the Irawaddy, claiming it for the Empire. The plaque records that he died in much pain in consequence of his wounds.

His mother Maria, is believed to have met her husband when the latter visited Sir Harry Hyde- Parker (Chief Clerk to the Lords Commissioners at the Admiralty), for whom Man Dobson served as Midshipman on the "Conqueror" in 1778 progressing to Commander in the "Queen" until October 1800. Sir Harry purchased Melford Hall in Long Melford, Suffolk, in 1786 which is now in the hands of the National Trust. Most of Man Dobson's career was focussed on the American War of Independence and, latterly, the West Indies stations. He was promoted Rear Admiral in July 1827, Vice Admiral in July 1830 and full Admiral November 1841.

Other memorials are testimony to the work of the Belgrave family to the life of the village over 1000 years. The Belgraves can lay claim to being

the oldest continuing line of residents in the Village stretching back to the Conquest with service in the Church, Army, Navy and Farming. Their name has close associations across the County- most notably at Belgrave Gate in the city of Leicester. Their tombs lie under the Chancel as well as in the Churchyard.

## **The Pulpit**

Fortunately, the Victorian “improvements” (which were commenced again in 1868 at a cost of £2,000) did not extend to replacement of the Pulpit which is of Jacobean origin and made from Spanish oak. Known locally as the “Armada Pulpit” there is no proven record of its origin, or even whether it was retrieved intact or merely assembled from war booty. The pulpit is perpendicular in style with a wine glass design. Painted in the 1980’s the whole was restored to plain oak condition in 2006.



## The Windows

The larger south window in the Chancel has an unusual horizontal mullion in stone in the lower portion and is 14<sup>th</sup> Century. According to an account by Miss V. Belgrave in the early 1900's this unusual pattern may reflect the use of the window to pass the sacrament to villagers outside when suffering infectious diseases.

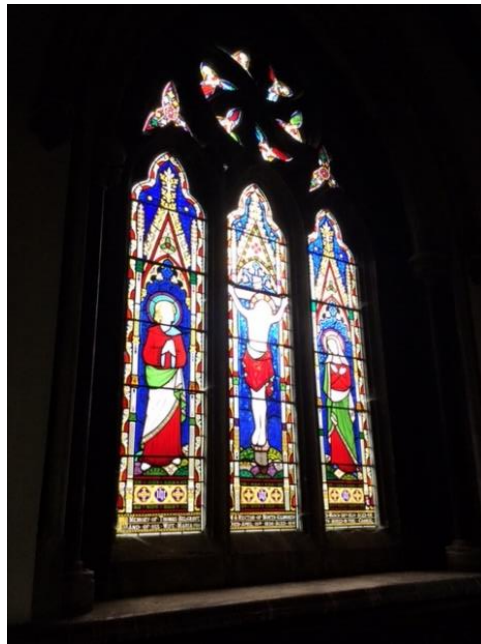
Once there would have been a corresponding east window comprising a mere 5 lights but this was removed during the Victorian "modernisations" when the existing memorial window was installed. All windows here have detached nook shafts and shaft rings are evidenced on the lower transom window.



The windows in the north aisle still contain fragments of medieval glass in diamond shape (or “quarries”) as well as bearing evidence of inscriptions from craftsmen and visitors over the years.

Particularly prolific was “B (Benjamin) Drake, Plumber, Lutterworth and late of Burton Latimer” whose inscription appears on a number of diamonds dated 1887- presumed to be the last time they were re-worked. Others refer to R. Weston, North Kilworth 1884, R. Gadsby, Leicester 1888.

The quatrefoil clerestory lights on the North aisle are original 14<sup>th</sup> Century. Adjacent to the altar is a framed example of an etched glass panel reading: Fear God and Honour ye King, He who giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord, William Belgrave 1665” (north Chancel)



The glass in the east window is said to have been contemporary with early examples of the Victorian revival of the art (Signed by Holland of Warwick and dated 1856 according to Pevsner) and as such it is thought to be a poor example. It was installed at a cost of £400 and is dedicated to Thomas Belgrave 1788-1854 and his wife, Maria 1785-1826.



The west window is by Hardman dated 1869 and the south aisle plainer windows are dated 1878.



The Victorians also added the south aisle thus explaining the sharp contrast between the plain medieval glazing on the north and the ornate, coloured examples on the south and west elevations.

## The Organ



The organ is generally thought to have been built by George Holdich (b 1816). His father was Rector of Maidwell. He was a pupil at Uppingham School and was initially destined to study medicine. However, he became apprenticed to the well-known firm of Bishop and set up on his own account at 12 Greek Street, Soho in 1837. His output was prolific, including a commission for Lichfield Cathedral in 1860. There are a few similar examples in Northamptonshire and Norfolk- one installed at Harleston, Norfolk cost £155 in 1859.

## **The Church Silver**

The Church silver is of strong historic interest, most notably the small Elizabethan Communion cup which is a rare survivor. This has two bands of contemporary engraving and it was probably used by the Priest in pre-Reformation times when congregations did not partake of wine. Additionally, there is a paten and matching flagon, both inscribed “North Kilworth 1724. The gift of Hannah Willis, widow of William Willis Esq., daughter of Dr. Cotton who was formerly a loyal and suffering Rector of ye Church.”

There is also a silver chalice and matching paten “Given in 1901 by the late Mrs. Belgrave in memory of her husband Charles W Belgrave, Rector of this Parish for 46 years.” These items are now in safe storage within the Diocese.

## **The Bell Tower and Clock**

The Bell Tower (early 14<sup>th</sup> Century) contains a peal of 5 Bells and has additional space for a sixth Tenor. The recessed spire was rebuilt and heightened in 1862 with battlements at the base. The present bell frame was installed by Taylors of Loughborough in 1906 and was overhauled in 1934. The 5 bells ring in the Minor mode.



The treble bears an impression of a coin from the reign of John V of Portugal .... a link to the Armada Pulpit perhaps? “Richard Banbury, Joseph Hipwell Churchwardens 1764. William Hunt, Sexton.

No. 2 is impressed with an early George III shilling dated 1764. This also carries the names above of Churchwardens and Sexton.

No. 3 is dated 1647 “HIS Nazarevms Rex: Ivdeorvm:Fili: Miserere 1647”

No.4 is dated 1853. T. Whiteman C. Warden Taylors of Loughborough.

The tenor has part of the alphabet inscribed but is not dated. “ABCDE FGHIK LMNO” which suggest unused blanks for an inscription.

In 2001 the PCC invested speculatively in a second hand sixth new tenor in the hope of being able to install it in the spare place in the frame. Unfortunately, this proved prohibitively expensive and after a decade of

storage it was sold to the PCC of Wem church in Shropshire where it now has a “voice “.

In the early 20th century, the “Rising Bell” was rung regularly at 0500 hours and the “Dinner Bell “at 1300 hours. There was also a “Pancake Bell” rung on Shrove Tuesday. A local Team regularly ensure the bearing and ropes are exercised and the ringing chamber bears witness to changes being rung by villagers- notably Dennis Allsopp and Gwilym Price. The Pebody (Peabody) family rang continuously for 200 years and their presence is to be seen in the graveyard.

The church clock is by Smiths of Derby and faces west and north. It is in running order and the faces were restored in 1995.

### **Church Records and the Churchyard**

The first record in the Church Register (now in County Archives) is 1555 and the graveyard bears testimony many families whose descendants still grace the lists of the Church and/ or Market Harborough Electoral Rolls (grave plots)

Ball (15) Belgrave (17), Cook, Maddison (6) Price, Weston (5) Whiteman (10) ....

As well as others who came and went – Berridge (26), Dunckley (5), Hill, Peabody (or Pebody) (6) Johnson (3), Watts (6)

1700- 1800 Letts, Payley, Kilborn (7), Sawbridge (9),

1800-1900 Bennett (17) Entwistles (3) Jesson (7) Phillips (6).



For those with time the Churchyard contains some interesting and sometimes poignant headstones, of which the following are examples of the laconic rhyming couplets popular hereabouts in the period 1750 to 1850 .....

John Sawbridge 1754-1837 & Jane Sawbridge 1764-1837 “Alas, alas and are their spirits fled, and are our friends now numbered with the dead, We shall no more social converse share, The sweet endearments of their friendly care”

John Smeeton 1753-1836 & Susannah Smeeton 1764- 1815 “Mortals be dumb what creature dare, Dispute His awful will, ask no account of his affairs, but tremble and be still.”

Fanny Hill 1851-1855 “Weep not dear parents-be content, For I to you was only lent, The Lord has only had his due, and very soon will call for you.”

Isaac Watts (18 weeks) and Frances Watts (9) 1792 “Ye parents dear forbear to weep, no more let grief invade, the babes are sweetly gone to sleep, upward their souls have winged in flight, no more on earth they bless our flight, and sing to Christ’s redeeming love,”

William Hill 1804-1869 “Affliction sore long time I bore, Physicians were in vain, Till God did please to call me home, and ease me of my pain.”

Simon Burdett 1690-1779 “Beneath this stone concealed from human eye, the mouldering reliques of their bodies lie, from cares released from troubles unoppressed, in this cold grave their peaceful ashes rest, in peace they rest until that tremendous day, when stars shall fade and earth dissolve away.”

In July 1962, the Church Commissioners joined the benefices of North and South Kilworth. A new Rectory was built adjacent to the Church in North Kilworth and the two old Rectories sold off. The two patrons were the Lord Chancellor and the Trustees of Colonel H.D. Belgrave. Latterly the Parish is now part of the Guthlaxton Deanery and operates under the auspices of a Team Ministry involving 11 Parishes in South Leicestershire. These now comprise the Avon Swift Group.

The Church Registers are now held in the County Archives Office in Wigston. One of the earliest entries from those of the earliest year, 1555, reads as follows.....” Doctor Mead’s certain cure for ye bite from a mad dog is as follows- Let ye patient be blooded in ye arm of 9 or 10 ounces. Take of ye herb called ash coloured ground Liverwort, clean’d, dryad, and powdered half an ounce; of black pepper powdered two drachms. Mix these well together and divide the powder into four doses, one of which must be taken every morning, fasting for four mornings successively, in half a pint of cow’s milk warm; after these four doses are

taken , the patient must go into ye cold bath or cold spring, or river, every morning fasting for a month ;he must be dipd all over , but not stay in, (with his head above water ) longer than half a minute if the water be very cold; after this he must go in three times a week for a fortnight longer. n.b. the Liverwort is a very common herb and grows generally in barren and sandy soils all over England. The right time to gather it is in ye months of October and November. “

### **The Village Bier**



In the south aisle is to be found the Village Bier. This was used to carry coffins to the church in days before motorised hearses. The brass hub cap covers are stored for security reason but they bear the inscription “T. Clarke North Kilworth “and are undated. It is probably c 1880.

## The War Memorial



North Kilworth War Memorial on the Village Green is unusual in that it lists the names of 9 who died in the Great War alongside an additional 59 names of the men and one woman who returned home together with the names of 4 who fell in the 1939-1945 conflict. In the Church in the South aisle one can see the names of those who died with the flags of St Andrew's Cross and the Union Jack. Most notable is that of Paul A. Kenna who won his VC at Omdurman in 1898, finally falling to a sniper's bullet at Gallipoli. Victor Ball (in 1918) and Billy Hornby (1941) died as Prisoners of war –Billy whilst attempting to escape. His cousin, Mike Hornby DFC,

was killed after retrieving what was a live torpedo or mine whilst swimming in Egypt in 1942. Bert Coaton was also captured (at Anzio), surviving the war but dying prematurely of his injuries. Archibald Bartley was lost in the single explosion which destroyed HMS Hood in 1941.



## SOURCES

Churches and Chapels around Market Harborough G K Brandwood 1987

Notes by Miss V. Belgrave and successive PCC Records. (from 1900)

“In Grateful Memory” Dennis Edensor 2009 ISBN 0-9548400-1-1

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