

AMPNEY CRUCIS CHURCH AND CROSS

In the "King's England" series volume on Gloucestershire, Arthur Mee describes Ampney church as "the pride of the centuries" and states that deep in the shadow of ancient trees Ampney Crucis has one of the most interesting churches in Gloucestershire as well as one of the most famous crosses in England. He describes that for 1200 years people have been laid to rest in the churchyard and wonders how long this part of Gloucestershire has been known and loved.

In the Domesday Book, "Omenie", as it was then called, was a parish with a church, mill and a manor so this infers that part of the church was of a pre-Norman date.

In the very brief accounts given by the old county historians it was thought that Ampney Crucis possessed the Mother church for the area. The Abbey of Tewkesbury was seised of the manor and rectory whilst the Abbeys of Cirencester and St Peters Gloucester took a portion of the tithe but the "*advowsen of the vicaridge did belong to the Nunnery of Clerkenwell*". No doubt the interests of these great monasteries materially conduced to the prosperity of the parish. The church has the rare dedication to the "Holy Rood or Holy Cross" - it is of a cruciform structure with a west tower, nave with south porch, transepts and chancel and was greatly restored in 1870. The earliest part of the church is the north doorway (now blocked up) and probably portions of the adjoining wall with a small Norman window. This doorway may have formed part of the church referred to in the Domesday survey.

In the later part of the 12th century, the chancel appears to have been rebuilt as evidenced by the beautiful chancel arch of this period. One hundred years later, the chancel was greatly altered and the transepts added or rebuilt. Some later decorated windows were inserted in the south wall of the nave and the main south doorway taking the place of an earlier entrance. Towards the end of the 15th century the west tower was added, a new roof provided for the nave and a new east window inserted within the containing late 13th century arch.

The porch shows a date of 1691 when some alterations were made and further renovation took place in 1871, but there are little records of what actually took place then. In the interior of the chancel, the east window is of three lights in the perpendicular style. On the south side of the chancel is a two light decorated window within a segmental-headed containing arch and hood mould. In the south east angle is a pillar piscina with bowl in the form of a large fluted capital and massive round shaft and base - this is of late Norman date. In the south wall is a plain square-headed opening for the priest's door.

There is a modern vestry on the north side of the chancel. In the wall is preserved part of a Norman string course chamfered on both sides. There was a tracing of one of the paintings found on the walls of the nave during the 1870 restorations - this has now deteriorated badly and a photograph has been taken of what remains of this tracing now in the church. The old tracing has been placed in a tubed container and a place for its safekeeping has yet to be found. The subject matter is "The Martyrdom

of St Erasmus" - a bishop of Syria who escaped without injury many attempts to put him to the most cruel tortures devised by man but who finally suffered and died in the persecution of DIOCLETIAN in the year 303. By popular belief, St Erasmus died by having his bowels unwound and coiled around a windlass as represented in the picture. He is commemorated in the Church Calendar on June 2nd.

I, myself, was fortunate enough to find one of the old tracings/water colours of a wall painting now long gone, in the Cirencester Antique Market in the Corn Hall along with two other ink drawings - one of the four faces of the churchyard cross and the other of the old Preacher's Cross at the bottom of the Church Walk. These were all dated May 29th, 1871. It is my intention, at the demise of myself and my wife, that these pictures should return to the safekeeping of Ampney Crucis church.

The Chancel Arch is of a very fine transitional Norman origin and is thought to be of the latter part of the 12th century as there are no bands below the capitals dividing them from the shafts as in earlier Norman work. On the south side of the chancel are the doorways to the rood loft. The upper portion has been filled in and the steps removed - the space being made into a small vestry which is now used to store vases etc for use by the church flower arrangers. The lower doorway has a segmental arch and there is a recessed space above the chancel arch which is partly hidden by the flat roof.

The arches opening to the transepts are late 13th century with two chamfered ribs. The south transept has been extensively renovated. On the west side is a plain Palladian window and on the east wall there are a series of plain tablets recording the hour as well as the date of the decease of members of the Pleydell family. On the north wall are remains of decorations with double masonry lines in red, forming a series of oblong compartments enclosing cinquefoils. These are of the same date as the transept. The north transept has in the north wall a three-light early decorated window with a wheel at the head containing small fragments of old glass. In the east wall near the south side is a nice piscina with a trefoiled canopy and the distinctive hood mould of the decorated period. To the north side of this, is a large recess with segmental-headed arch which it was thought to be for the altar and reredos - probably dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and which includes a remarkable series of mural paintings which will be detailed in a later chapter.

In the north east corner is a large tomb with effigies of a Knight and his lady under a canopy and figures of five sons and seven daughters on the bottom side of the monument. The Knight is dressed in armour of Shakespeare's time and his lady wife in a ruff and a paris veil. There is no remaining inscription but information from several shields identify this tomb as that of George Lloyd who was buried October 10th 1584 and Ann his wife, daughter of Richard Watkins. George was the son of Richard Lloyde of Llanfoist or Abergavenny. He owned property in Ampney Crucis which was sold to Anthony Pleydell by his son Walter in 1593. One of George Lloyd's claims was that he petitioned Queen Elizabeth I, with the result that part of the endowment of the Grammar School at Cirencester which had previously been taken away, was restored.

In 1870 the vicar at that time was responsible for removing layers of whitewash from paintings found in the transept which included large figures of the Apostles, 2 Archbishops and, on a smaller scale, representations of the Passion, Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus. Some of the colourings are not very brilliant, and until recently were thought to be impossible to identify. A recent study (which is covered later) has assisted in their identification. The date of these paintings is thought to be early fourteenth century. Unfortunately, time has taken its toll and with the north transept suffering from dampness, this has caused deterioration to these paintings. There are traces of red decoration above the arch of the nave.

On the south side of the nave above the arch of the transept are two oblong openings - the remains of clerestory windows. On the south side, within a semi-circular containing arch is a 3-lighted square headed decorated window and to the west of the doorway is another 3-lighted square headed window leaded with ogee heads to the lights and wooden lintel above. It is thought that the south wall is Norman with later windows inserted during the early part of the fourteenth century.

The north wall of the nave is the most ancient part of the church. Beside the early doorway near the west end there is a plain widely splayed semi-circular headed window. Near the east end there is a similar window of a later date. The north doorway is now walled up and square headed with a massive lintel and very large stones forming the jambs thought to be of pre-Norman date. Above the doorway is a 2-lighted square headed perpendicular window with a similar one to the east which cuts through the old Norman light and which is within the semi-circular containing arch of a former decorated window.

The nave roof is low pitched and is said to be of fifteenth century work. Some of the central tie beams retain paintings with white roses on a blue background and medallions. There are two ancient fonts - one with a plain circular bowl set on top of a more modern octagonal one which may be early Saxon or Norman. The other was found at the beginning of the twentieth century in a village garden acting as a well-head - this was restored back to the church. This last font is a large plain octagonal bowl thought to be of thirteenth century origin.

The tower arch is of lofty perpendicular design. The west window has 3 lights in the perpendicular style which have been extensively renovated. The pulpit is a stone octagonal with six paneled sides, each divided into four compartments. This is thought to have been lowered at some time by reducing the height of the stem.

Legend has it that the Squire's original pew was made into a door for the old vestry when it was first built at the end of the nave behind the pulpit. An old hour glass which was very well preserved stood on top of the pulpit - some say this was placed to limit the length of the vicar's sermon - but unfortunately this was stolen some time in December 1997. Perhaps "The Communion Service" which first appeared in the 1662 Prayer Book should have been used to curse the thieves who also stole the funeral helmet and sword which hung above the Lloyds Tomb. I understand that the

1928 version changed the word 'curse' to read "God's Anger and Judgement" but I still think that it reminds these offenders of God's promise in the Book of Deuteronomy 'to curse and punish certain evil doers'.

On the exterior of the church, the south doorway, which is covered by the south porch, has puzzled many historians because of the manner in which it was built, it has been established as being built in the early fourteenth century, but was greatly altered in the late fifteenth century with an undercut hood-mould and numerous small roll mouldings.

In the vestry stands a handsome Jacobean chest and table, together with a small (restored) reredos in oak. The plate includes a chalice and paten dated 1636, a pewter paten of 1665 and a large tankard flagon dated 1682, all mentioned in the parish registers:- "Delivered to Wm. Taylor and Ed. Whitson, Churchwardens, one silver cup with a cover, one plate of silver that holds ye bread and a putter Flagon".

MORE ABOUT AMPNEY CRUCIS CHURCH AND THE CROSS

For over 1200 years, people have been buried here in the tranquility of the churchyard - it is not surprising that such a beautiful place is so known and loved. As we approach the church, a little of the Saxon heritage is still seen in the long and short masonry in the north wall near a Norman doorway which is no longer used.

The cross in the churchyard, just outside the main entrance, was the pride and joy of the villagers just over 500 years ago and is still famous today. The base shaft of this cross stood for many years without the head as this was hidden during Cromwell's time and the Civil Wars - many blamed Cromwell for destroying it. It later came to light that because of its historic interest it had been hidden from the despoilers in the ancient rood staircase where it was discovered some 160 years ago.

The head of the cross is divided into four niches supported by richly carved Gothic buttresses containing figures sculptured in relief:

1st Face

The Virgin and Child are thought to indicate the dependency of Ampney Crucis Holy Rood to Tewkesbury Abbey, since that abbey was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and acts as a testimony of the recognition of its rights over Ampney Church and Parish.

2nd Face

Is a carving of the complete rood, namely the Crucifix with the figures of St John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary - again the Virgin symbolised the Tewkesbury Abbey of which she was the patron. So now we have the Holy Rood occupying the second large niche of the cross typifying the Abbey and its dedications and from which this parish was named.

3rd Face

This is a figure of an individual dressed in canonicals, holding a plan in his right hand and a book in his left - this is thought to be GRYALDUS . the first abbot of Tewkesbury Abbey through whose instigations the Abbey was rebuilt and refounded.

4th Face

This is an effigy of a knight in armour grasping a spear reversed in his right hand. This is undoubtedly ROBERT FITZ HAIMON whom William Rufus gave BRICTICS honour in Gloucestershire as a reward for the great perils and labours he had undergone for his father William I. In the Ancient Old Chronicle there is a quote "In the year 1102, at the persuasion of his wife, SIBYLL and of Gryaldus, the Abbot of Cranbourne, this Robert Fitz-Haimon being influenced by a spirit, new builds the church of Tewkesbury with all the offices, to the glory of God and to the honour of the Virgin Mary.

In a book written by Charles Pooley on the notes of the Cross of Ampney Holy Rood, Gloucestershire he concludes that this cross is a historic monument of no common order which was erected by Abbot Parker at the close of the 14th century and that:

- 1) It was erected as a testimony to the dependence of the church and parish of Ampney Holy Rood to the Abbey of Tewkesbury.
- 2) To authorise the title of the said church and parish,
- 3) To perpetuate the memory of Abbot Gryaldus and Robert Fitz-Haimon and pious founders of the Abbey of Tewkesbury,

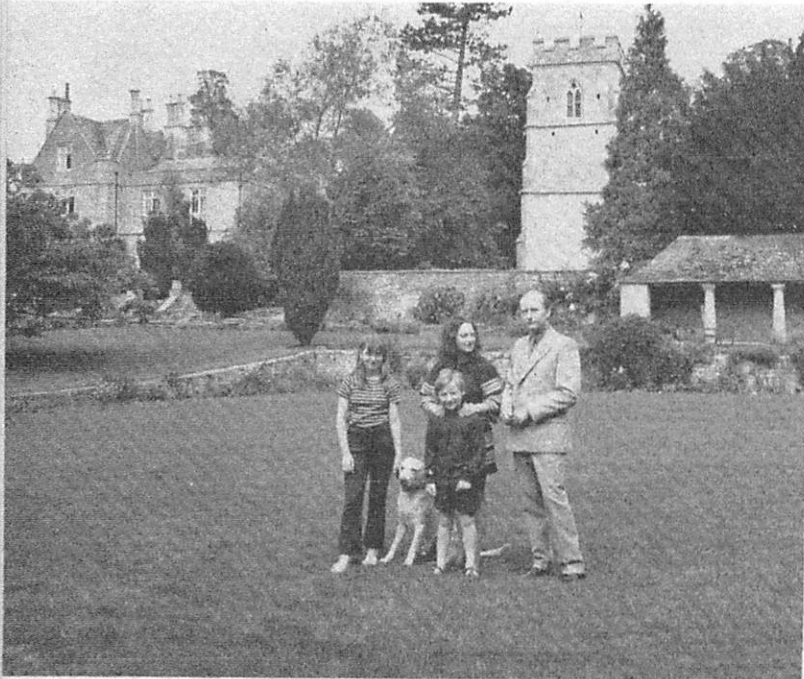


Ampney Crucis Church

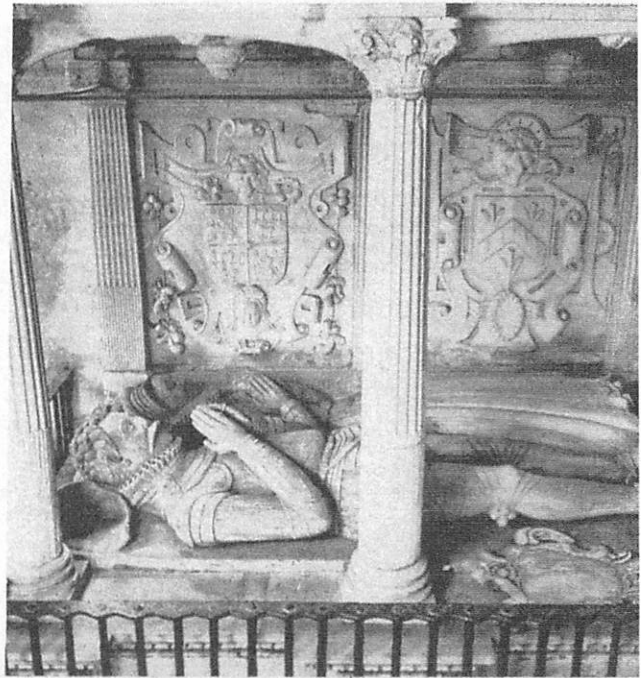


Ampney Crucis 1952. The War Memorial and cottage called "The Lodge".

below Mr. and Mrs. Brian Humphry with son and daughter Patrick and Marianne, photographed in the grounds of their home, Ampney Park, which will be open to the public during the Festival and the setting of an Evening of Entertainment on Saturday the 16th September



right Mr. Frank Barnes shows the model of a South Midland sided bow waggon, which he has made to a scale of two inches to one and which will be on show this month together with other examples of his work. His wife (far right) is prime-mover in the revival of hand ringing in the village, which will also figure prominently in Festival activities



Vicars of Ampney Crucis

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1304 Thomas de Wade | 1724 William Rogers M.A. |
| 1377 William Goldsmith | 1725 Samuel Rogers M.A. |
| 1377 Reginald Sperner | 1729 Thomas Powell M.A. |
| John Legge | 1765 Henry Dawnay M.A. |
| 1412 William Bartholomew | 1769 William Sandford D.D. |
| Richard Newe | 1783 Robert Stephens LL.B. |
| 1429 William Tolbe | 1786 Thomas Boys M.A. |
| 1432 William Owen | 1827 Edward Willis |
| 1435 Thomas Ponge | 1829 Edward A. Daubeny |
| Thomas Gauter | 1864 Edward J. Brewster |
| 1494 Richard Henn | 1869 Robert Dunn |
| 1498 Thomas Forthridge | 1874 William Dunn |
| 1511 John Mlogrich | 1876 Robert Dunn |
| 1513 John Whytmay | 1883 John H. Bluck |
| 1528 Francis Penrier | 1899 Thomas C. Johnson |
| John Rawlins | 1917 Francis H. Lawrence B.A. |
| 1540 Thomas Peychelles | 1927 Thomas C. Johnson M.A. |
| 1577 Robert Bishop | 1937 Philip Cowen M.A. |
| 1603 Henry Bishop | 1969 Peter Jeffries |
| 1637 Benedict Grace | 1994 Peter Henry Naylor |
| 1671 John Brebete | 1996 2000 No Vicar allocated |
| 1674 Charles Sergeant M.A. | 2000 Annette Woollock |
| 1681 William Harvey M.A. | |
| 1705 Isaac Dalton | |
| 1718 John Sutton M.A. | |

CHURCH MUSIC

The 18th century was the heyday of village music for church bands and choirs - the musicians were called waits in those days. The choirs and musicians were usually housed in the west gallery of the church. The west gallery which housed the Ampney Crucis band was destroyed in 1871 when a motion was put forward at a vestry meeting which was carried by seven votes to six and from what I understand was won by the chairman's casting vote.

At Christmastime it must have been very moving to have been in church when it was said the village musicians gave of their best. Not only did these musicians perform in the church but they also went around the parish singing and playing to neighbours and partaking of refreshments given at most of the houses they visited.

An old Ampney Crucis choir book is deposited now with Oxford University Faculty in St Aldates Street as well as a beautiful oboe 1780, a one-keyed flute and a six-keyed flute made in the 19th century. All these instruments were used in the church prior to the destruction of the band gallery. In 1871. My wife Peggy can remember these being displayed in a glass case in the church in her younger days.

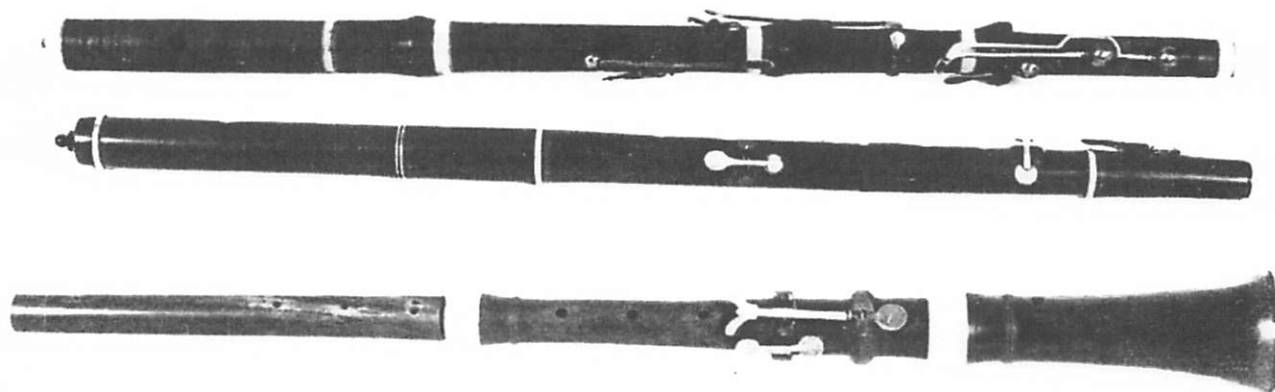
In 1782 a young German clergyman named Carl Philip Moritz attended the church at Nettlebed in Oxfordshire and during the service he noticed that there was a shuffling noise in the west gallery where the choir were seated. There was a tuning of musical instruments and as the parson stopped reading the service the parish clerk announced from the choir, "Let us praise God by singing 'Awake our hearts, awake with joy". The German priest was enthralled and said how uplifting it was to hear vocal and instrumental music in this tiny little church which was not made by hired musicians but joyfully offered up by the happy village dwellers in praise of their God. This happened in Ampney Crucis as the village possessed a choir and a band (see pictures later in this article) and it is known that at Christmastime the first hymn sung in the church was "Mortals Awake". There is evidence that a violin cello and base viola were acquired by public subscription in 1780 but these have disappeared. The church music would have been the same as that described by Thomas Hardy in "Under the Greenwood Tree".

The parish clerk in Ampney Crucis in 1861 was a Mr William Day aged 55 - an agricultural labourer (Census 1861 No 72) - the Days were an old village family dating back to the 16th century. The choir master in 1871 was a Mr John Sterry aged 48 (Item 10 Census 1871). John Sterry was the miller at Ampney Mill and his son, Robert took over when he retired. The actual mill has been converted into a private house and is still known as "Sterry's Mill" - (see article in section about 'Sterry's Mill').

In an article on music in churches produced in "Country Life" dated 1st December 1977, the following is mentioned....

'In some churches there are instruments preserved, old manuscript music books, and occasionally even a barrel-organ rotting in a corner, or in a surviving gallery. Times indeed were changing for the old bands and singers. If a parson wanted chanting there were local choral societies springing up where they could sing partsongs and ultimately Handel's *Messiah*. And the fiddlers and flautists, clarinetists and bassoonists could go on playing for dancing.'

The following picture was produced with inscription:



'18th Century oboe and two 19th century flutes formerly used by the west gallery minstrels in Ampney Crucis Church, Gloucestershire.'



Ampney Crucis Church Choir in 1880



The above picture is of the Ampney Crucis band of 1930. Starting at the back row from left to right we have – Mr & Mrs Neal (nee Cooper), Frank Day, Miss Wigmore and Mrs Stevens. In the front row we have – Bob Sterry, Fiddler day, Ted Cox (son of School master at Ampney St Peter and not a member of the band) and Mr & Mrs Neals' son (name not available).

AMPNEY CRUCIS CHURCH



Fig 2. Church Interior looking East
(Picture by *Walton Adams & Sons. Reading*)



Plate 1. (Left) General view of the west wall.
(Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)

Plate 2. (Below left) Detail of the north splay of the south window showing the figure of St Helena. *(Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)*

Plate 3. (Below right) Detail of the ornate cinquefoil niche between the windows. *(Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)*



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Plate 4. (Above left)
General view of the north
window on the west wall.
*(Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates
1997)*

Plate 5. (Above right)
Detail of the figure of St
Paul on the south splay.
Note the level of
deterioration on the lower
area. *(Photo: Tobit Curteis
Associates 1997)*



Plate 6. (Left) Detail of the
head of a figure on the
north splay. Note the
extensive delamination and
flaking of the red
background. *(Photo: Tobit
Curteis Associates 1997)*

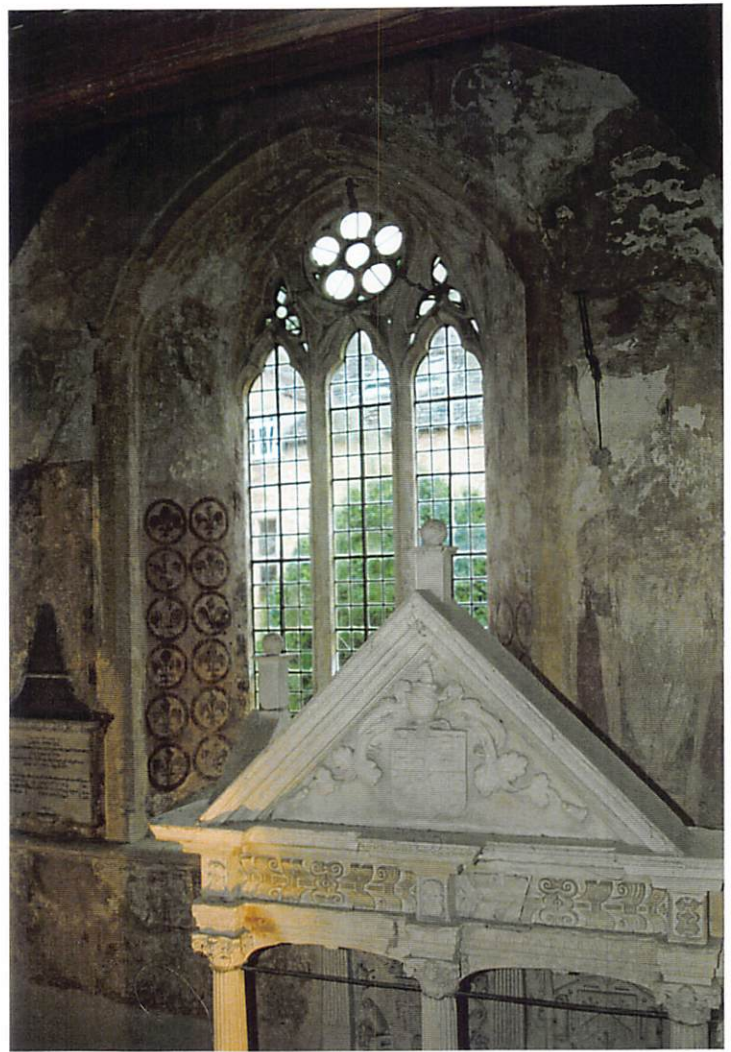


Plate 7. (Above left) Detail of the figure of St James on the extreme north side of the west wall. (Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)

Plate 8. (Above right) General view of the north wall. (Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)

Plate 9. (Left) Detail of the lower west side below the string course. The figure (a detail of which is seen in plate 33) is indicated by the arrow. (Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)



Plate 10. (Above left) Detail of the east splay on the north window showing the fleur de lys decoration. (Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)

Plate 11. (Left) Raking light detail of the previous plate showing one of the fleur de lys. Note the incision lines and the delamination of the paint layer. (Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)



Plate 12. (Above) Detail of the fleur de lys decoration on the west splay of the north window. Note the microbiological growth at the base of the window. (Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)



Plate 13. (Above left) Detail of the west side of the north wall showing the upper part of the figure in the cinquefoil niche. (Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)

Plate 14. (Above right) Detail of the east side of the north wall showing the second figure, the upper half of which is almost totally destroyed. (Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)

Plate 15. (Left) Raking light detail of the upper part of the previous plate showing the extremely serious delamination of the plaster layer. (Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)



Plate 16. (Above left) General view of the north window on the east wall, showing the damaged figure on the north splay. Note the plaster at the base which has recently fallen from the area shown in plate 15. (Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)

Plate 17. (Above right) Raking light detail of the damaged surface of the north splay of the window. (Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)



Plate 18. (Left) Detail of the lower part of the north splay of the south window on the east wall, showing the feet of a standing figure. (Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)



Plate 19. (Above) General view of the east side of the south wall.
(Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)



Plate 20. (Above right) Detail of the previous plate showing the figure of St Edward holding the ring.
(Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)



Plate 21. (Right) Raking light detail of the area around St Edward's hand showing the level of delamination. Note the mud render below the paint layer.
(Photo: Tobit Curteis Associates 1997)

CHURCH WALL PAINTINGS

Many people believe that church wall paintings were there purely for decoration but this is a fallacy. Medieval painters had two purposes when they created their paintings - the first was devotional and the second was for teaching.

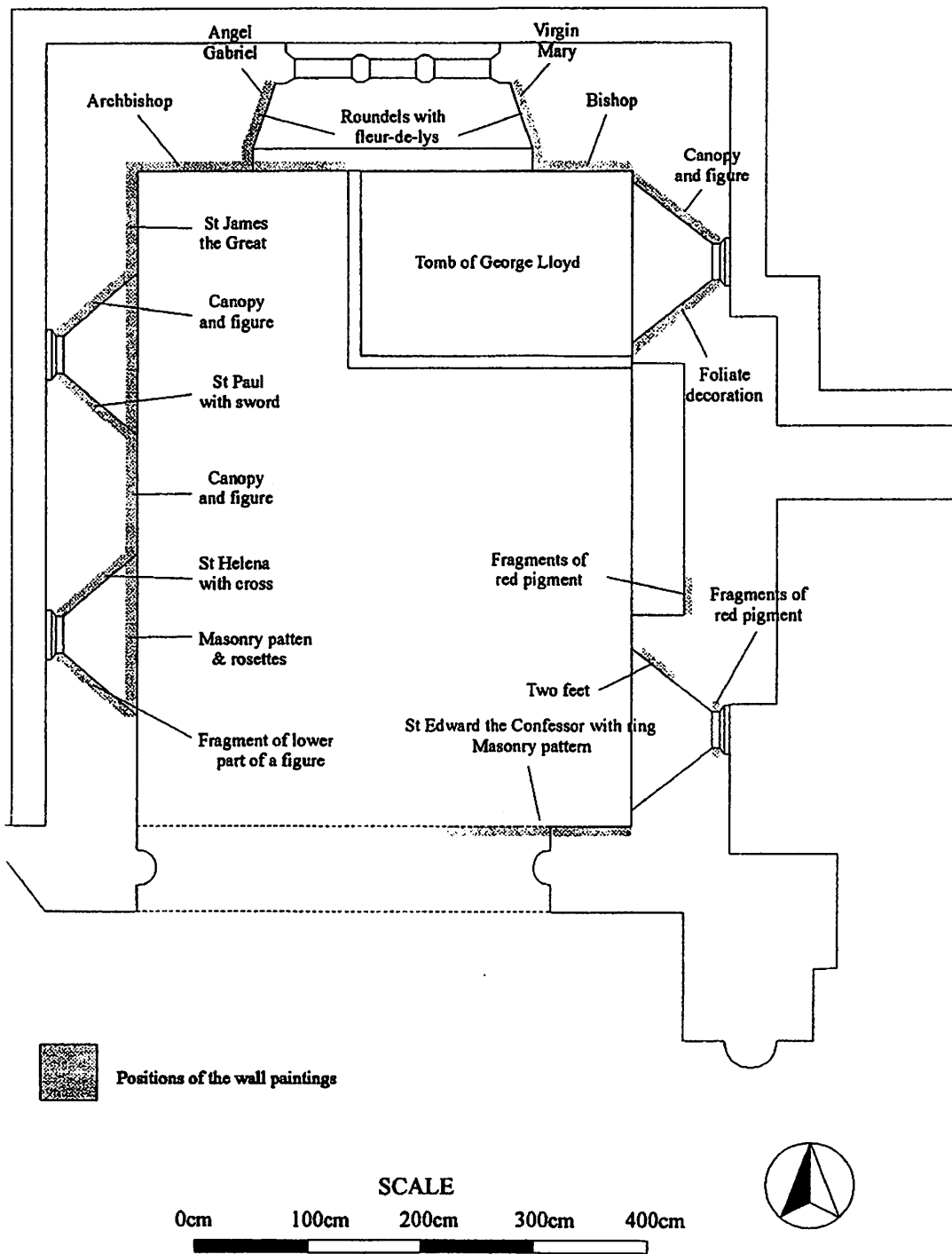
When church paintings of this nature commenced, there was only the one religion, unlike today when there are so many different faiths and sects. At the end of the fifteenth century there were no printed books. Religious books including the Bible were handwritten, very expensive and only the privileged owned and enjoyed them. They were few in number and in any case, villagers could not read because 90 per cent or more were illiterate and most of these books were written in Latin or French anyway. Many priests had little or no education and wall paintings were the only method used to teach the Gospel and moral teachings to their flocks - these were referred to as the "poor man's Bible" - very similar to what is called 'Visual Aids' today.

Paintings had to be explained by pictorial content alone. To achieve this, certain established usages or deliberate exaggeration were used and introduced. It is very important to understand otherwise wrong impressions of English medieval wall paintings can be formed. A complete code of signs and gestures were introduced for ease of recognition. Good people had haloes and evil or bad people were often deliberately caricatured with hump backs, comic hats and exaggerated clothes and large shoes with turned up toes - just like those in the painting 'The Martyrdom of St Erasmus' in Ampney Crucis church. People in these paintings were depicted in contemporary costumes depending on the times they were drawn and many different paintings were telescoped together in order to show certain moments or incidents of a story into one scene. This simple explanation may help you to understand these medieval paintings better.

It has been suggested that the paintings in the north transept date from two different periods but probably they all date from the thirteenth century and are contemporary with the structure of the building. These paintings are of a very high quality and are better than might be expected of a parish church of the size of Ampney Crucis. On the basis of the heraldry this might be due to an indirect link with the Cistercian Abbey at Hailes.

It appears that most of these paintings throughout the church were uncovered during the building restorations in 1870/1 but immediately afterwards, most areas in the nave were either destroyed or plastered over. The only exception appears to be in the south transept where it seems likely that the paintings were left uncovered until the beginning of this century. The technique of these paintings appears to be quite simple with one or two pigment layers applied on a lime wash ground, over a lime plaster or occasionally mud-render, substrate.

Diagram 1. Plan of the north transept showing the positions of the wall paintings



West Wall

On the west wall, only the paintings above the string course and in the window splays have survived. The main subjects on the wall are two standing figures of saints, supported in elaborately decorated architectural niches. The figure at the north end has been identified as St James the Great on account of his dress and the scallop shell on his wallet (now barely visible). The haloed figure between the windows cannot be identified due to the insertion of a funerary monument of 1782. The background is decorated with unusually delicate fine yellow masonry pattern, with dark cinquefoil florets in the centre of each block and fine white tendrils with trefoil leaves.

In the south window, a figure of St Helena carrying the cross is painted on the north splay. The yellow haired figure who is dressed in a dark robe and white cloak is set in a cusped niche, below a series of cinquefoil florets, which cover the soffit of the arch. On the south splay, there is a fragment of painting which is all that remains of the corresponding figure. On the south splay of the north window is a figure of St Paul dressed in a red robe with a dark cloak and holding a sword (pommel down). On the north splay is the remains of a bearded figure in a mitre. Unfortunately, like the painting between the windows, the main part of this scene has been lost behind a monument inserted in 1781.

Although, there is nothing remaining below the string course, there are records of a series of small scenes from the life of Christ, framed in quatrefoils or roundels, which ran along the lower part of the wall. Before these were destroyed in the nineteenth century church restoration, tracings of these paintings were made which are thought to have survived until the second quarter of this century.

North Wall

The scenes from the life of Christ are continued on the lower part of the north wall, below the dado on the west side. Although these paintings survive, they are extremely badly damaged and can only be made out in certain areas. The upper part of the painting consists of a series of coats of arms, including part of a lion rampant, a bend and vair (black and white fur), believed to be those of Fitzhamon of Tewkesbury. Below these are finely painted fragments of the Life of Christ. However the damage is such that no clear subject is apparent.

Above the string course on either side of the window are two mitred figures in architectural niches similar to those on the west wall which have been identified as either a bishop and archbishop or two archbishops. It has been suggested that one of the figures could have been St Thomas Becket although there is no evidence to support this theory. The condition of these figures, particularly on the east side is such that identification is very difficult. However, it is clear that like the other paintings, these are of a particularly fine quality. E.W. Tristram is understood to have made a drawing of the archbishop which was collected with his other drawings at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The lower parts of the north and south splays of the windows are decorated with pairs of roundels containing fleur-de-lis, in imitation of decorative tapestries. This type of decoration would have been quite common but few examples have survived the passage of time, making the almost complete example seen here, particularly unusual. Above these on both splays are very fragmentary remains of two figures - recorded as the Angel Gabriel (on the west) and the Virgin Mary (on the east). There are little or no surviving decoration on the soffit of the arch or on the wall above.

East Wall

Large areas on the east wall have been re-plastered but a certain amount of the original render survives in the two windows - the north window retaining most decoration. The north splay retains fragments of a haloed figure on a background of grouped red dots while on the south splay is an area of red foliate decoration. The south window has been substantially re-plastered with only a pair of feet on a red background surviving at the base of the north splay. Some red colouring also survives on alternate courses.

South Wall

The paintings on the south wall, over the nave arch appear only partially uncovered. The visible sections are situated on the east side of the wall and show part of a figure in a red tunic and white robe holding out a ring. The background is the same elaborate masonry pattern as seen on the west wall, as well as small fragments of red scroll work situated higher on the wall.

The fragmentary scene depicting St Edward the Confessor giving a ring to a pilgrim (who later turned out to be St John the Evangelist) was very popular in the thirteenth century as a result of the veneration of the saint by Henry III. Only the saint's arm and hand holding the ring are visible but it is probable that further painting is hidden under the lime wash.

Although there are a number of examples of this scene in panel painting, there is only the one other documented example in English wall painting. The early fourteenth century painting which is to be found in Faversham Church in Kent is remarkable for its similarities to the one in Ampney Crucis. The position of the figures in the spandrels (the pilgrim is not visible in Ampney Crucis), the decorated masonry pattern and even the scroll work in the band at the top are all reflected here. The rarity of the scene and the fact that it is the earliest recorded example, make this painting extremely important.

Other Areas

Although there are now no other visible wall paintings elsewhere in the church, there are various published references to paintings having existed in both the nave and the south transept. The most interesting recorded painting appears to have been situated in the nave, on the north wall, possibly adjacent to the door. This was of a scene of St Christopher and is recorded as having the inscription '*Thomas ye paintere of Malmesburie*' - this would have made it the only known example of a signed wall

painting in England. The same reference of 1883 states that the inscription was very dilapidated indicating that the painting was in existence at this date. The painting and inscription were again mentioned as late as 1941 but by this time it had unfortunately been destroyed. Opposite this, on the south wall of the nave was another interesting section of painting - later references describe it as showing a king and a queen with an ecclesiastic and a skeleton, with a large cross in the centre. Above each figure was an inscription of which only two were legible when it was uncovered - above the skeleton was the inscription '*Alive be ..To that ye be*' and above the ecclesiastic (who was pointing to the skeleton) '*ye men ye be this that ye see*'. it seems that the scene was uncovered in 1871 during the restoration of the church and was subsequently plastered over.

The copy of a wall painting earlier mentioned under AMPNEY CRUCIS CHURCH AND CROSS could have been part of this long gone painting as it does show a king and queen. I myself have the copy in my possession and it is said that the vicar of Ampney Crucis in 1871, Robert Dunn, made copies of some of the wall paintings before they were plastered over and lost to us for ever - as my copy is dated May 29th 1871, this does seem to be a feasible explanation. Fragments of masonry pattern are recorded as having existed in the south transept and this decoration is described as identical to that seen in the north transept and clearly appears to have been part of the same scheme.

There are also published references to the scene of The Martydom of St Erasmus - a badly damaged copy which is now preserved in safe keeping - a photographic copy hangs in the church. No-one seems to know where the original painting was situated. There is also evidence to suggest that there was a Doom (a picture of the Last Judgement) painted over the chancel arch. The earliest reference in 1883, refers to '*General Resurrection, part of a doom*', stating that it was of a later date than the other paintings of the series. This was later confirmed in 1936, when it was likened to the 15th century Doom at Mitcheldean Church in Gloucestershire.

In the late 19th century, two references were made to the survival of polychromy on the 15th century roof and on the wall pieces and trusses in Ampney Crucis church. The fact that this received any comment at that period of time would suggest that extensive decoration survived then, but no mention was made of any wall paintings.

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W. A. HUGHES
DOUGLAS HUGHES, O.B.E.
ALAN HUGHES

Copy

Whitechapel Bell Foundry Ltd.
(A.D. 1570)
32 & 34, Whitechapel Road.
London, E1 1DY

AH/je

17th March, 1987.

Miss Mary Bliss,
Beech Pike,
Elkstone,
Cheltenham,
Glos.
GL53 9PL

Dear Mary,

Gloucester - All Saints' Church.

Following my visit last Friday to pitch the bell, I set out below the details that I took.

The bell is 2'0 1/16" in diameter, and was cast in 1875 by John Warner & Sons of Spitalfields, London. It was cast with angular canons, and wrought iron staple, and both of these items remain intact. It has had little use in its life, as the indentation caused by the clapper is negligible on one side and very light indeed upon the other. The bell is fairly clean, and has very little corrosion. Its strike note is 760 c.p.s., which is between F# and G international pitch, and 3 1/2 cycles per second flat of F# old concert pitch.

I acknowledge with thanks the cheque to the value of £11-50 in settlement of our account associated with the visit.

Thank you very much for the courtesy and hospitality offered to Kathryn and myself when we called. We did in fact stay a little later than we should, but only arrived at our second call ten minutes late.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Hughes

*The bell is inscribed J WARNER & SONS LONDON
1875*

*The canons have been removed. The bell weighs 2cwt, 2qr 10lb
now note F*

AMPNEY CRUCIS CHURCH BELLS

The Church of The Holy Rood Ampney Crucis

The Vicar and Churchwardens
invite you to attend
a Service for the Rededication of the Bells
by the Venerable John Lewis, Archdeacon of Cheltenham
on Sunday, 22nd January, 1989
at 3.00 p.m.

Followed by Tea in the Village Hall

Western Tower Ring of 5 Bells Tenor "A" Flat
Treble Thomas Rudhall Gloucester Foundry
(SCROLL) 27 inches 3 cwt
Second Rober: Pleydell: ESQVIER: IR: IK: CHVRC=-
(WARDENS:: 1660 (Edward Neales Foundry Mark (Burford))
(25 inches after skirting 3 cwt)
Third (IONWHIT+ION FLID GENTELMAN RICERDSOVLE
(WILLIAM BVSSIP / MENNESTER / RECAST BY
(BOND BURFORD 1908)
Fourth (RECAST BY JOHN WARNER & SONS LONDON 1861)
((ROYAL ARMS) PATENT (on the other side of Bell)
(ROBERT PLAYDEL ESQVYER / IH RS CHW1630
(31¼ inches 5 cwt 2 QTRS)
Tenor (+ PROTAGE (STOP) PURA (STOP) PIA (STOP) QUOS (STOP)
(CONVOCO (STOP) VIRGO MARIA
INTERPRETATION ("HOLY MARY PROTECT ALL THOSE WHOM
I CALL TO PRAYER")
(35¼ inches after skirting 7 CWT 2 QTRS
THIS BELL IS PRE-REFORMATION CHARACTER AND IS THE OLDEST BELL
DATING FROM 15TH CENTURY

THESE ARE THE INSCRIPTIONS ON THE OLD 5 BELLS

The old Bell Frame was 18th Century made of Oak.
There were pits for four bells in Lower Tier (with the Treble in a Heath Robinson
Frame above)
Treble and Second swing East to West and remainder North to South.

This was changed for a metallic frame when a 6th Bell was added in late 1988 and the bells were rehung.

The 6th Bell was bought from All Saints Church, Gloucester and was cast in 1875 by John Warner & Sons of Spitalfields, London and is 2ft 0 1/16" inches in diameter but unfortunately, try as I might I cannot find the weight.

The Service for the Rededication of the Bells was carried out by The Venerable John Lewis, Archdeacon of Cheltenham on Sunday, 22nd January 1989 at 3,00 pm. (see invite above).

The villagers of Ampney Crucis and many others contributed to the Bells Restoration Appeal and 11 Trusts and Charities gave much financial help.

Mr Brian White and Whites of Appleton were responsible for the removal and transportation and re-hanging of the bells plus the installation of the new bell frame. The Whitechapel Foundry recast one bell and tuned all the bells.

Mr Harold Stevens and Stevens & Brain Ltd, Ampney Crucis, carried out the removal of the old bell frame plus all the building work in the tower.



Major the Rev Robert Nesham, who invoked the wrath
Of God on thieves at All Saints Church, Down Ampney
(See newspaper article)

The following two articles are from the Wilts & Glos Standard (Article 1) and The Sunday Telegraph both dated January 1981. It refers to losses due to theft from the Down Ampney church of which he was also the vicar in addition to Ampney Crucis (and other village churches).

Article 1 from the Wilts & Glos Standard – January 1981

VICAR'S CURSE OF GOD ON CHURCH THIEVES

By BRIAN SILK

A VICAR, who has placed a 'curse' on thieves who broke into his church, is expecting a "nasty accident" to overtake the unknown culprits.

Rev. Robert Nesham, 65, vicar of Down Ampney, near Cirencester, Glos, said yesterday: "They will be clobbered, probably by the civil authorities, or God may clobber them on His own. He held a Communion Service at the village's 13th Century church of All Saints after a safe and alms box were stolen. A parishioner's car had also been broken into, and a handbag and cash taken. The safe which contained only papers of no value, was discarded in a field. The vicar told police but decided to seek further assistance. He conducted His 10-minute Communion Service — an ancient method of bringing "The curse of God" down on the shoulders of sinners.

"It's up to God" Mr Nesham said: "All I have done is turn to God and say, 'It is up to you'. 'I'm not out to punish them; I know God will do that.'" The vicar said he had found the service effective in the past, he had held two after church thefts. "In both cases the culprits were caught, sentenced and punished by the civil authorities." According to Mr Nesham retribution for the latest offence could take the form of a road accident or nothing more serious than a fall downstairs and a broken collar bone.

"On the other hand", he added, "God might let them off completely. They may have jolly good reasons for stealing. "But I certainly would not like to be on the end of a Communion Service, myself." Mr Nesham said he was sure the church thieves would be very frightened if they knew about the curse. But he pointed out that any punishment they received would bring ample compensations in the next life.

Anger and Judgment

"If they are punished on this earth their souls can be redeemed," he said. "The curse will bring them to repentance."

The Communion Service first appears in the 1662 Prayer Book and in modified form in the 1923 version. It was most frequently used on the first day of Lent or whenever a church or churchyard had been desecrated.

"It reminds people of God's promises in the Book of Deuteronomy to curse and punish certain evildoers," said Mr Nesham. But he insisted that the word 'curse' was inappropriate, pointing out that he had used the 1928 version of the Prayer Book, in which the phrase 'God's anger and judgment' is substituted. The vicar emphasised that he had full confidence in the police but added: "I felt it was up to me to report the matter to God as well."

Orthodox Methods

He was, he said, merely following the practice of ancient times when such curses were commonplace. Churches were never robbed then for fear of God's wrath. Meanwhile Gloucestershire Constabulary continues its inquiries. An officer said: "We are following more orthodox methods."

(This is an interpretation of the Will on the previous page)

The Will of ROBERT BISHOP, vicar of Ampney Crucis,
made the 22nd August, 1603.
(Queen Elizabeth had died on 24th March, 1603.)

In the name of God Amen: The Two and Twentithe daie of Auguste in the firste yere of the Raigne of our soveraigne Lorde James by the grace of God Kinge over Englande, France and Irelande and over Scotlande the seven and Thirtithe; And in the yere of our Lorde god accordinge to the Computacion of the Church of Englande 1603.

I Roberte Bishopp clerke vicar of Ampney Sancte Crucis within the Dioces of Gloucester, beinge sicke in bodye, but of good and perfect remembrance, I praise Allmightie God, doe make this my laste Will and Testament in manner and (forme) followinge:

Firste I doe give and bequeath my Soule and Bodie unto almightye God, and my desire is that my bodie shoulde be buried in the Church Yarde of Ampney Crucis aforesaide.

Item I doe give and bequeath unto Isabell my wief Two of my youngest kine: All the underwood which is aboute the howse; the one half of my pigges; half the Cheese; A flock Bed; a fether Bed, Two fether bolsters; Two Pillowes; Three paire of Sheets and Keverlidges and blanckettes to the same Beddes belonginge; The saide Fether Bed and furniture thereunto belonginge to her use during her naturall lief, and after her decease, I doe give and bequeath the same fetherbed with his furniture unto my Sonne Thomas Bishopp.

Item I doe give and bequeathe unto Isabell my saide wief fowre Todde of wooll or the price therof, as I have solde it; and soe much hay as will wynter the saide kyne for this next wynter followinge.

Item I doe give and bequeathe unto her my fowre Acres of Barlei nowe in the filde; The one half of my Maulte nowe made in the howse; Three Platters A Salte; Three brase Candlestickes; The Bedsteed next to the Tableboorde in the parloure and the same Tableboord; and the great Coffe next to the Bedsteed I lye on.

Item I doe give and bequeath unto my sonne Thomas and unto my sonne Henrie Bishopp the Clifte Wood aboute my vicaridge equally to be devided betwene them in Consideracion that they shall give and pay unto my sonne George Bishopp the somme of Three poundes.

Item I doe give and bequeath unto my sonne Henrie Bishopp my Presse in my Chamber, my Maulte Mill; my Furnace in the Kytchen; The Bedsteed in the Parloure wheron I do now lie.

All the rest of my goodes and Cattell not alreadie given and bequeathed, I doe give and bequeathe unto my saide sonne Thomas Bishopp (after my debtes paide and my funerall expences performed) whom I do make my sole Executor of this my laste will.

Witnesses to this my Will, John Lloyd gent and John Watson gent.

(Probate at Gloucester, 11th January 1603/4: no Inventory extant but value of estate given as £54. 3s 4d.)



“I being sick make my last will and testarnent’

Instructions for his funeral in the Will of William Templar, Ampney, 1545.

“I give to the church of Ampney a sheep and to the vicar 12 pence. To every poor household in Ampney 4d.

I will that there be 6 priests at my burying and at my month’s end and each priest to have at either time, 6d.

I will that there be 4 Ringers and every one of them to have 4d.”

“One of the most interesting methods of raising money in the mediaeval church was that of holding a ‘Church Ale’, the wardens begging or buying the malt and brewing the liquor in the ‘Church house’ (the prototype of the parish hall.)” W. E. Tate ‘The Parish Chest’.

“The 19th day of July 1545, I Agnes Ball, widow, sick in body but whole in mind make my last will and testament in manner and form here after following: First I bequeath my soul to almighty god and my body to be buried in the churchyard of Ampney Peter, also I bequeath to the church of Ampney Mary 1 bushel of barley, also I bequeath to my parish church of Ampney Peter 1 bushel of barley.”

Thomas Nechyll was vicar of Ampney Sancte Crucis and Parson of Siddington during the reign of Philip and Mary. Queen Mary died in November 1558 by which time Thomas too was dead. His will is dated the 6th of June 1557.

“I give and bequeath to the Reparations of the Chancel of Ampney one bushell of wheat and one tother to brew sundays and festival days.” He also left a bushel of wheat to the churches of Over Siddington and Nether Siddington.

Richard Beller, parson of Harnhill, also served more than one parish as shown by his will dated 2nd September 1558.

He gave all his goods to his servant Margaret and her daughter Joanna “except 26s 8d the which my lord bishop of Gloster lately departed do owe me for serving at Hamne Mare and Hamne Peter for two years past at Michaelmas next coming.” That 26s 8d was to go to Sir Thomas Knyghtt “and he to pay for me of the same 26s 8d one tenth that I have not payd which is 11s 7d and 4d for aquittance and he to have the rest for himself which is 14s 9d.” And: “I owe Sir Thomas Marchall, if he delyvere to my executors one pece of velvete and a cappe, 7s.”

(Bishop Hooper had been burnt at the stake in Gloucester on February the 9th. 1555.)

18th April 2001

Paddy Thompson Esq
2 Durncourt Cottages
AMPNEY CRUCIS
Cirencester
Glos

Historical research
•
Collections assessment
•
Contract curatorial services
•
Landscape & heritage journalism
•
Exhibition & publication
•
Project development

Dear Mr Thompson

Holy Rood Church, Ampney Crucis

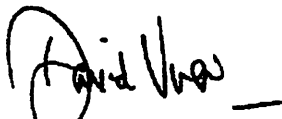
I am pleased to enclose for your interest an offprint of an article I wrote several years ago now, when I was the Curator of Museums & Arts Advisory Officer for Cotswold District Council. Since then, I have taken early retirement and am now happily engaged in a variety of consultancy and freelance projects in the museum and heritage fields.

My notes remind me that I sent you a draft of this article for information as long ago as January 1998; the wheels of archaeological publishing move very slowly, as there is only so much space in the recognised county and regional journals and an increasing demand. This report has just appeared in the *Transactions of the Bristol & Glos Archaeological Society* volume for the year 2000.

It was a fascinating and enjoyable piece of research, beginning with one surviving painting from the church which Peter Bullock drew to our attention at the Corinium Museum. After that we kindly had access to your own picture and I hope that you will enjoy seeing it reproduced as part of this study. Thank you for allowing this.

Please keep this offprint if you would like to do so; otherwise perhaps you would be kind enough to deposit it somewhere in the village or PCC archives, so that future historians don't have to go over the ground once again!

Yours sincerely


David Viner

David Viner BA FSA FHA
Linda Viner BA

Understanding, preserving and presenting the historic environment

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probably originally intended as a flushing system for the drains in the abbatial and guest quarter of the west range.

Acknowledgements

Wayne Loughlin, of Gloucester Archaeology Unit, carried out the original survey on which Figs. 2 and 3 are based. Alan Norton, clerk of works at the cathedral, took the photographs. Lowinger Maddison, cathedral librarian, advised on abbey leases.

Note

1 A study of this complex of buildings is being carried out by Rochelle Rowell as part of a Ph.D thesis at York University. In the 17th century the building on the site of number 7 Miller's Green consisted of a great timber building in a poor state of repair known as the Old Workhouse, Old Schoolhouse, and once Parliament House (Glos. R.O., D 936/E. 1. pp. 281, 274)

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CAROLYN HEIGHWAY

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. ERASMUS AND OTHER LOST WALL PAINTINGS FROM HOLY ROOD CHURCH, AMPNEY CRUCIS

Introduction

Holy Rood church at Ampney Crucis exhibits a building history from the Saxon period to the 19th century (Verey 1970, 86). Its interior is graced in the north transept by a fine group of wall paintings of late 13th-century date, i.e. soon after—if not actually contemporary with—the completion of this part, and indeed of much of the remainder of the church. A series of

figures of saints is depicted along with two archbishops, scenes from the life of Christ and other details, including the arms of FitzHamon of Tewkesbury, founder of Tewkesbury Abbey at the start of the 12th century. These paintings were revealed in the early 20th century from beneath the whitewash which concealed them and they have been discussed in some detail (Keyser 1914, 7-10; Tristram 1955, 133-4). In our own time they are once again to be subject to a programme of conservation, to be undertaken for the parochial church council following a detailed condition assessment, which described this group of paintings as 'of an unusually high quality' (Curteis 1997)

However, fine though the paintings are, they are not the only group of wall paintings which once adorned Holy Rood church. The nave, largely 15th century in date, boasted its own display of contemporary decoration, alas all now lost. However, two illustrations from the nave do survive as copies, one of which depicts the martyrdom of St. Erasmus and is the principal subject of this report.

Wall paintings in the nave

Today the nave walls are rendered, presenting a rather dour image to the visitor. By contrast, the 15th-century timber roof is a striking feature and evidence remains of painting with Tudor roses on the roof beams. Other contemporary or near-contemporary external features include the late Perpendicular ashlar parapet to the nave and a sanctus bellcot.

To this we can add a group of wall paintings discovered when the church was restored in 1870-1, but soon afterwards covered over again and since then lost from view. Indeed, are we correct in assuming that the paintings were only covered over again rather than completely destroyed, as the subsequent re-renderings might suggest? Contemporary recording of the event in the parish magazine for May and June 1871 provides a helpful reference, upon which subsequent descriptions are based, especially those by Keyser (1883, 6-7; 1914, 5-6, 12-13) and Bird (1927, 12-13). In 1921 Daubeney (pp. 133-4) had added his note of regret on the loss of the paintings, apparently irrevocably.

Particularly striking is the reference to a signed painting of St. Christopher alongside St. Lawrence on the north wall of the nave, and presumably adjacent to a door. If correct, it would be one of the few if not the only recorded signature in English wall-painting (Caiger-Smith 1963, 125). The signature is of Thomas 'ye payntre' of Malmesbury, described by Keyser (1883, 6) as being in black letters and much dilapidated. Was he referring to the contemporary record of 1870-1 or was the painting still visible at the time of his survey a decade or so later? It and the other nave paintings had certainly disappeared from view by the time of Keyser's later and more local study of the Ampney churches, published in 1914. The loss from view of these paintings is considerable enough; that of the rare evidence of a signed piece of work even more noteworthy. Keyser correctly records that the survival of this evidence perhaps would have helped considerably in tracing other works by this artist in the region, presumably working from the abbey in Malmesbury.

Keyser noted that the nave paintings appear to have been recorded, in the form of copy paintings, at the time of the 1870-1 restoration, an arrangement no doubt related to any decision to conceal them again or to destroy them. Only one recording (and the copy of another) now survives; this recording takes the form of a framed painting of the martyrdom of St. Erasmus, painted on linen and measuring 8 ft 4 ins x 5 ft. In view of its size, one wonders whether this was an attempt at a full-sized copy of the original? Presumably the original was on the south wall of the nave?

Originally hung in the vestry, itself a new addition to the church at the 1870-1 restoration, the painting has subsequently been displayed under the bell-tower. Because of its deteriorating

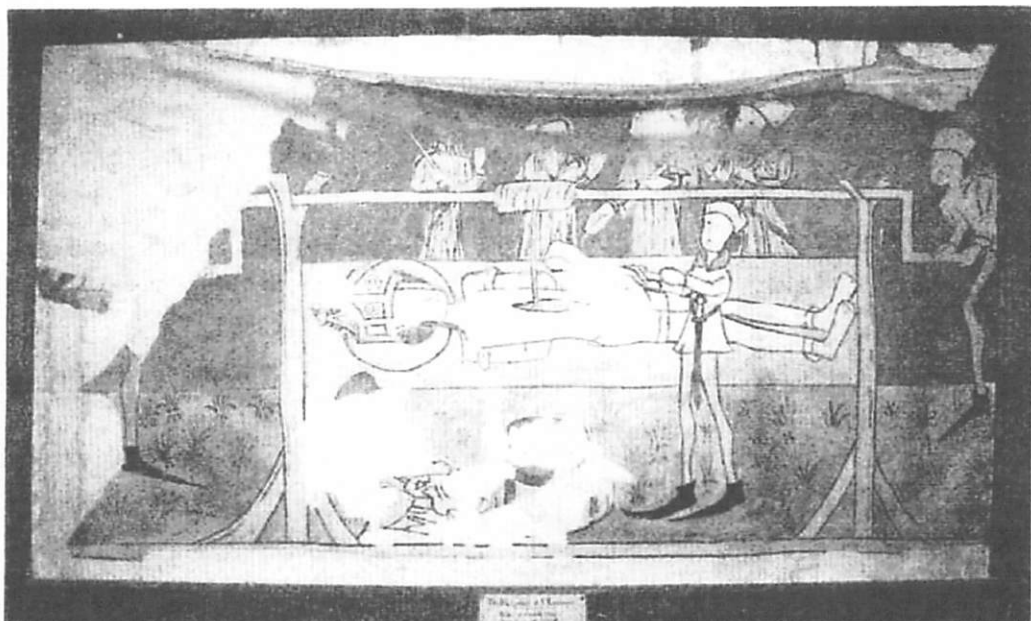


Fig. 1. The martyrdom of St. Erasmus: a representation in Holy Rood Church, Ampney Crucis (photograph by courtesy of and copyright Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England—now English Heritage).

condition, the parochial church council decided in 1997 to remove the painting from display, to undertake its basic conservation (by Gloucestershire Record Office) and to store it for posterity in the church. A modern photographic copy is displayed for the benefit of visitors. More detailed conservation and re-display remain future possibilities as and when funds are available.

The martyrdom of St. Erasmus, a bishop of Syria, is graphically represented (Fig.1). By tradition he is stated to have escaped many attempts at torture but during the persecution by Diocletian in A.D. 303 to have succumbed to being disembowelled, his intestines coiled around a windlass. He is depicted lying beneath the windlass, wearing a mitre. Around him are his executioners, including a king and a man with a sword. The figures are shown at about half-size.

Other St. Erasmus depictions

Interestingly there was a similar representation of this scene in the parish church of St. John the Baptist in nearby Cirencester. That painting, on the north wall to the left of the altar of Holy Trinity chapel on the north side of the church (Verey 1970, 164), was reproduced very clearly in *Archaeologia* 15 (1806), 405, pl. XLII. There is an accompanying and detailed inscription and the arms at the bottom of the painting are those of William Prelatte, a significant benefactor to the church, who died in 1462 and is buried in this chapel. Presumably this painting was one of his benefactions, which suggests a 15th-century date.

Very little of the Cirencester painting of St. Erasmus now survives, only vestiges of his ascension into Heaven; the lower part, depicting the martyrdom, has disappeared. This may well be

an example of changes in taste influencing survival. It is said that Lady Georgina Bathurst, sister of the 5th Earl Bathurst and whose memorial dated 1874 is also housed in the chapel, took exception to the painting and wished to have it removed (Hill 1981, 17). If so, she had an ideal opportunity to have it removed, as she was the benefactor for the substantial restoration of the chapel's reredos in 1867, itself part of George Gilbert Scott's comprehensive restoration programme during 1865-7.

Indeed, on grounds of taste, the painting surviving in Ampney Crucis may not be regarded with universal favour even today. Whether depictions of St. Erasmus' martyrdom were once more common in Cotswold church paintings is not now known. Other examples elsewhere are noted by Keyser (1914, 6) at Whitwell on the Isle of Wight and at Axmouth in Devon, although neither is specifically mentioned in the relevant Pevsner volume entry (Pevsner and Lloyd 1967 revised 1979, 775; Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 145). Kendon (1923) summarised Keyser's 1883 list of subjects in church wall paintings and found 186 references to St. Christopher compared with 10 to St. Erasmus, locations unspecified. In addition to those already noted, we might add Caiger-Smith's reference to the remains of a martyrdom of St. Erasmus at Chippenham in Cambridgeshire (1963, 135). Accessible to visitors to the Commandery in Worcester is another depiction, one of a series in the Painted Chamber and dating from around 1500. Here St. Erasmus is invoked to cure stomach illness in the medieval infirmary.

Other paintings in Ampney Crucis church

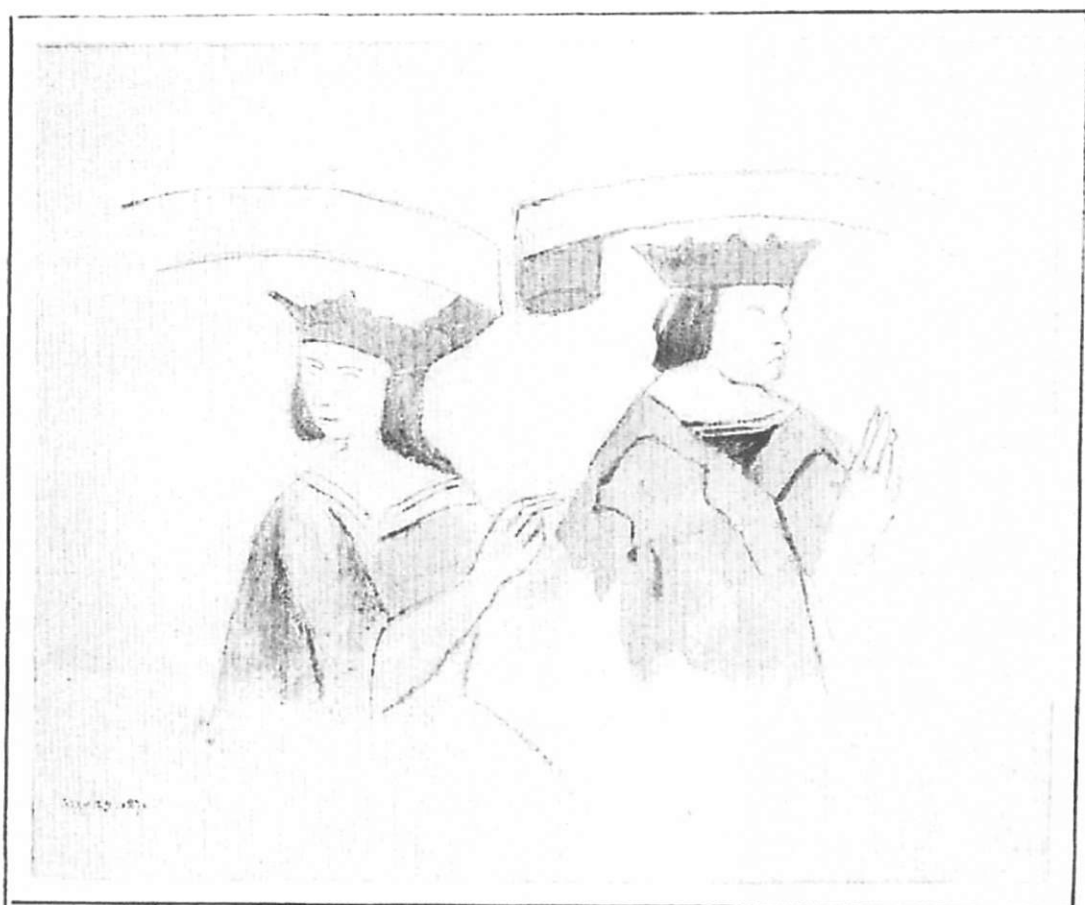
On the south wall of the nave at Ampney Crucis was a painting originally identified by Keyser as the legendary morality of the Three Kings Living and the Three Kings Dead. It was subsequently interpreted (Storck 1912, 250 and 314; Carleton-Williams 1942, 38) as showing a king and a queen with an ecclesiastic and a skeleton, a large cross in the centre, and appropriate inscriptions. Keyser (1883, 7) records that this was all painted over again in 1871. A record of part at least of this scene has survived in private possession in the village in the form of a water-colour (Fig. 2). This work is dated May 29 1871, a useful confirmation of progress with the church restoration programme then under way.

It should also be noted that there was a General Resurrection, part of a Doom, over the chancel arch, and considered at the time of its discovery to be of later date than the other nave paintings. A subsequent study confirmed its likeness to a 15th-century Doom in the church at Mitcheldean, Gloucestershire (Vallance 1936, 22).

The Ampney Crucis parish vestry book entries reveal something of the sequence of restoration activity in the church (Glos R.O., P 15/VE 2/1). In July 1870 alteration and enlargement of the chancel was approved; a year later there was a vote narrowly in favour of taking down the gallery, and subscriptions were sought for re-seating the church. By the spring of 1872 funds were available for this latter purpose, during which task, in this and the following year, a new floor of encaustic tiles was also laid. There is no specific entry in the vestry book referring to any work on the wall paintings.

Conclusion

Holy Rood church at Ampney Crucis retains a fine group of late 13th-century wall paintings. It is a great pity that it does not also retain the later work once depicted in the nave and now recorded only in part. Without the notes and recordings made at the time of the restoration of the church in the early 1870s, very little evidence would survive at all. However, assuming that the paintings have not been destroyed completely, there is enough evidence to suggest that any



Ampney Crucis Church

Fig. 2. Representation, dated 29 May 1871, of a King and Queen, forming part of a 15th century wall-painting from Holy Rood Church, Ampney Crucis (photograph by courtesy of Paddy Thomson, Ampney Crucis).

future campaign of restoration might restore some at least of this part of the life of the church at one of the high points of its architectural history

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Peter Bullock, a member of Ampney Crucis parochial church council for drawing attention to the St. Erasmus representation and to arrangements for its future care. Together with David Park of the Conservation of Wall Painting Department at the Courtauld Institute of Art, he provided much useful advice. John Edwards of Oxford similarly provided both advice and stimulation for this study. Tobit Curteis of Cambridge updated my knowledge

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DAVID VINE

REDLAND HILL HOUSE AND REDLAND CHAPEL, BRISTOL

Introduction

Redland Hill House in Bristol is the survivor of a semi-detached symmetrical pair in mid Georgian style (Figs. 1-2). At the front it has three storeys, with a semi-basement storey at the rear over arched cellars. The easternmost bays, front and rear, are canted with three windows through each storey. The walls are rendered with limestone dressings, a first-floor sill band, a bracketed

Here are two sets of notes on the Vicar Benedict Grace – this is No1

Benedict Grace

He was born in 1600, and was sent to Oriel College, Oxford, aged 15. He became a B.A. in 1620, and was ordained in 1622. The next few years he may have spent in Buckinghamshire, possibly as a curate with a licence to preach. He was given the living of Ampney Crucis in 1637, on the presentation of the Bishop of Gloucester for the King.

In spite of Ampney's campaign against him in 1640 and 1641, Grace was evidently acquitted by the puritan parliament's Grand Committee for Religion; or perhaps the case never came to a hearing. At all events, he was still acting as minister in 1646, as there was a complaint about him by Robert Coppen in that year. (*Original No 9.*)

Captain Stone, on his survey of local parishes in 1650, recorded that Grace was the minister, but by 1652 Grace had become the minister of Leafield in Oxfordshire. It seems therefore, that he must have been removed from his Ampney living at about that time. From 1650 to 1660, the years of the Commonwealth after the execution of the King, there is no findable record of who was taking the services at Ampney Crucis.

At the restoration of Charles II, 1660, Grace successfully petitioned for re-instatement to his Ampney living and, in addition was made minister of Ampney St. Mary and Ampney St. Peter, where he worked until his death in 1670.

* * *

In his article in the Wilts and Glos Standard, H.Heatley probably gives quite a fair and balanced view about the scandals surrounding Grace which have been so popular in Ampney's oral history for 350 years. Nevertheless there are one or two points in Grace's favour which may have not been stressed sufficiently. For instance, the testimony of the nut tree girls does not bear their mark, besides having been written out by John Pleydell himself.

All the other testimonies, (No's 6, 19 and 5,) were obtained not in Ampney, but in Cirencester, a full year after the alleged events. Heatley was incorrect in locating Jane Chandler in Ampney. Also the style of the testimonies is so similar in venom that they seem to have been the product of a single motivator, possibly giving a financial reward for them. The monotony with which Grace is said to have pushed his hand up womens' skirts reads like a sort of stock phrase. Considering the layers of petticoats, skirts and aprons which women wore, he had quite a job on.

Mr. Heatley may not have known that John Prettyman, who served a writ on Robert Pleydell at the same time as Grace did, was Lord of the Manor of Driffield, and very highly connected within royalist circles. It is most unlikely that he would have sullied his reputation by becoming involved in the affairs of a contemptible or scandalous parson; if such Grace really was.

(There is no trace of Prettyman's writ in the original papers, and Heatley gives no source of reference).

In 1640, Ampney Crucis was not the only congregation in the South of England which was in revolt against its ordained minister.

In some parishes, parsons were pushed into the graves over which they were reading the burial service. Their robes were cut or torn off them in church. The bells were rung while they were trying to preach, and they were subjected to barracking and heckling shouts of mockery as they read prayers.

Nearly everywhere, men were refusing to remove their hats in church, and congregations were refusing to kneel to receive the sacrament, but insisted on sitting or standing, and shouting and arguing.

End of No.1 set of notes.

This is set of Notes 2 on Vicar Benedict Grace

Benedict Grace

This one-time vicar of Ampney Crucis was born in 1600 and at the age of 15 was sent to Oriel College, Oxford to be educated. He obtained his B.A. in is ordained as a priest in 1622, Records suggest that his next few years may have been spent in Buckinghamshire, possibly as a curate with a licence to preach. He took over the living of Ampney Crucis in 1637, the value of the living reputedly being £50 a year.

Benedict Grace was a follower of William Laud (Archbishop of Canterbury during the reign of Charles I) and this brought him into direct conflict with Robert Pleydell, the Squire and occupier of Ampney Park, who was an important man in Puritan circles and identified with the Parliamentary cause. These were troubled times in 1640 prior to the first of the Civil Wars (1642 - 1646) and Ampney Crucis was not the only congregation in the South of England in revolt against its ordained minister. In some parishes, parsons were pushed into graves over which they were reading the burial service and their robes were cut or torn off them in church. Bells were rung whilst they were conducting the service and they were barracked and heckled whilst trying to preach or read prayers. Nearly everywhere, men were refusing to remove their hats in church, congregations were refusing to kneel to receive the sacrament but insisted on sitting or shouting and arguing.

Benedict was in many ways a careful and conscientious priest but inclined to be quick tempered, reckless in speech and actions, and if his enemies are to be trusted, rather too fond of his drink. These qualities might not have discredited him in the eyes of the parishioners of Ampney Crucis had he not been a follower of Laud who insisted that all parishioners should take communion three times a year and that they should receive the sacrament kneeling instead of sitting as was the usual procedure at that time. Accordingly, in 1640 two petitions were received from Robert Playdell and his son accusing him of being a common drunkard and lecher, going armed with a rapier, dagger and javelin to and from church and, most serious accusation of all, of denying the sacrament to those who will not come up to the rails of the altar for communion.

The Long Parliament for the first time on November 3rd 1640 and less than a fortnight later a new petition was received requesting the removal of Benedict Grace and bearing the names of Robert, William and John Pleydell and 58 parishioners. One third of these signed their own names with the remaining making their distinctive marks against their names. However, the Vicar was in fighting form and served a writ on Robert Pleydell, and also it is reported persuaded John Prettyman, the Lord of the Manor of Driffild to do the same.

However, in spite of the campaign against him in 1640 and 1641, Grace was acquitted by the Puritan Parliament's Grand Committee for Religion, or perhaps the case never came to a hearing.

End of Note 2.