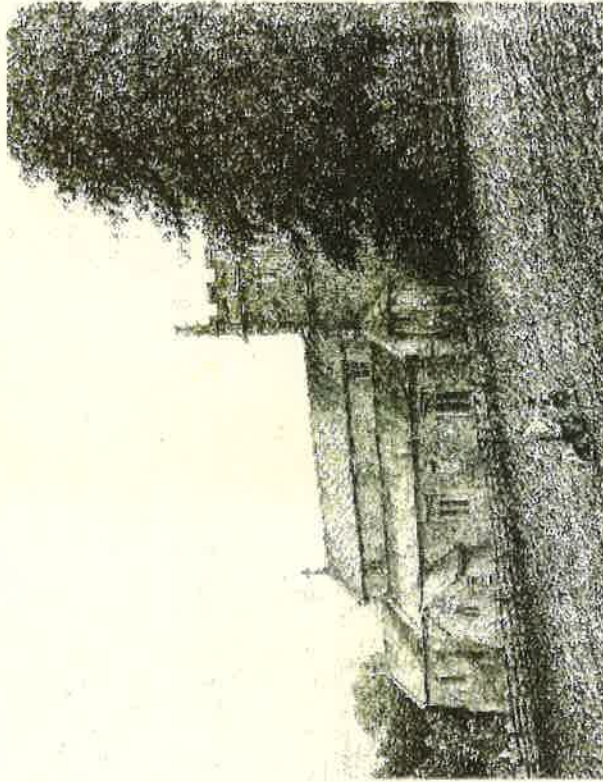


ST MARY'S TARRANT GUNVILLE



The Rector: The Reverend Dr Michael Foster MIWO SSC

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHURCH AND THE VILLAGE OF TARRANT GUNVILLE

Habitation has existed in the Tarrant Valley since the Iron Age, but the earliest evidence of a place of worship in Tarrant Gunville can be seen in the arcading set into the wall of the north aisle, which suggests a date of about A.D 1100.

By the beginning of the 19th century, the previous building to the one in which you are now standing, dating from 1503, was falling into decay and much of it was virtually demolished; and the Church in its present form was completely rebuilt. The architect T.H Wyatt followed the lines of the old building as far as possible and St Mary's was consecrated on the 2nd October 1845.

The Church comprises chancel, nave, north and south aisles and a tower at the west end of the nave, which incorporates the baptistry. The aisles are separated from the nave by arcading of five bays and the walls extend to the north and south aisle roofs to form two clerestories.

The exterior walls are 2ft (0.6m) thick, faced with knapped local flint and random rectangular Tisbury stones, some of which possibly came from the part demolition of Eastbury House in the 18th century. Bath stone has also been used, but mostly for later repairs.

THE TOWER AND BAPTISTRY

The walls of the baptistry are panelled in the Jacobean style, but the octagonal stone font is of unknown date and may possibly have come from the earlier 1503 building. It has carved emblems on the intersections of the eight sides and has an oak cover with wrought iron figuring.

On the north wall is an 18th century monument in marble dedicated to members of the Swayne family erected in 1726 by the son-in-law Wyndham Harbin of Harbins Park situated to the north west of the village.

On the north respond of the tower arch are scratched various names dating from 1768.

Above you is the ringing floor and above that is the belfry where three bells are hung, but today only the treble is in usable condition. All three bells have been cast with inscriptions as follows:

Treble: "John Turner, Thomas Saunders, churchwardens;
Clement Tosier cast me in the year 1714, N.S."

Second: "In God rejoice ever, I.W. 1623, cast by
John Wallace"

Tenor: "Cast by Thomas Mears of London in 1843"

Turn now to face the altar and look up to see two windows above the chancel arch. These correspond with two, which were in a similar position in the earlier 1503 building. The design represents Tudor Arms quartered with those of two of Henry VIII's wives, Queen Katherine Howard (who was later beheaded) and Queen Katherine Parr who survived him. Henry granted both Queens the manor and patronage of the living as part of the estate, which he settled on them at their marriages.

THE NORTH AISLE

At the east end of the aisle is a family pew, made in the Jacobean style, which belongs to the Manor House that stands a short distance from the south west corner of the Church.

As you approach the pew, look up to the right hand wall abutting the roof; there you will see the 12th century arcading mentioned in the introduction. When the church was rebuilt, these remains were placed in a position corresponding to their placing as discovered in the previous 1503 building. The arcading is made from rough Purbeck stone.

THE VESTRY

The vestry to your left is usually locked but should you be lucky enough to be allowed in, you would see a window depicting the arms of University College, Oxford, the present patrons of the living, and of Dr Radcliffe, a celebrated physician and benefactor to both the college and Oxford University.

In the top quarter-foil of the window is the cipher of John Watts the Rector at the time of the church's restoration and its 1845 consecration. The east wall exit doorway, which can be seen from the outside, incorporates materials of unknown origins.

THE CHANCEL

Returning from the vestry, walk past the pulpit over to the lectern, both of which are late 19th century, and then turn right to face the tower and look up. There you will see the royal coat of arms of Queen Victoria above which is the inscription:

Fear God, Honour the King

Move now to the chancel to view the coloured stencil wall, which was commissioned around 1910. The decoration is in the William Morris style and bears Latin inscriptions as follows:

North Wall: "Te rogamus audi nos Domine"
"We ask you, Lord, hear us"

East Wall: "Credo in Sanctum Ecclesiam Catholicam"
"I believe in the Holy Catholic Church"

South Wall: "Ut locum istum et omnes habitantes in
eo visitare et consolari digneris"
"So that you might deem this place and all
its inhabitants worthy to visit and encourage"

The arched roof frames are of Tudor shape supported on carved Corbel stones. The stained glass altar window is early 20th century by C.E.Kempe. The chair dates from 17th century and the linen chest is 18th century. The organ was commissioned in 1910

SOUTH AISLE

Cross over now from the lectern to the south aisle and you immediately encounter the Eastbury House pew belonging to the Farquharson family. Constructed in the Jacobean style it is available, by kind permission of the family, as a place for private prayer.

Beneath the east window of the south wall is an ancient 15th century brass plate. Further along the south wall is a marble tablet commemorating Thomas Wedgewood, third son of the potter Josiah Wedgewood.

Thomas Wedgewood was a pioneer in photography, and it being well known that daylight blackened silver nitrate he developed this knowledge to produce some of the earliest photography. However, he died in 1805, aged 34, before perfecting his technique. He was also a psychologist and used the manor house nursery as an observation centre. He also raised a corps of volunteers to resist Napoleon in case he ever invaded England.

The windows on the west wall of the south aisle were originally two lancet windows taken from the chancel. These depict the arms of University College, Oxford, and the arms of the resident rector at the time of the rebuilding. The windows were placed there as two memorials; firstly to the Reverend F.G.Plumtre D.D Master of University College, liberal benefactor and friend of the Rector, John Watts's. Plumtre died in November 1870. The second memorial is to John Watts's wife, who died in 1869.

THE PORCH

The entrance porch is a 14th century archway with a double-centred head of the two chamfered orders. The rest of the porch contains much of the material from the earlier church, which accounts for the absence of flintwork. Outside the porch and above you is a niche, which might have been a holy water stoop from the earlier church. To its right can be seen the weathered remains of a sundial incised into the stone.

Still further to your right on the south wall is a stone tablet recording the interment of a former rector, Sir Thomas Daccomb who died in 1567. The tablet is surmounted by the insignia of the Daccomb family, which is a chevron between three roses and three steeples, the inscription reads:

*'All fowr be but one, earth, flesh, worms and bone '
(fowr being an old style spelling of four)*

THE EXTERIOR

The oldest complete part of the church is the tower, which predates both the 16th century and 19th century church buildings and mostly originates from an even earlier 15th century building, although much of the upper part was rebuilt in the 16th century. The tower was left standing intact when the rest of the church was pulled down prior to the last rebuilding in 1845. The roofline of the nave of the 16th century church can be seen high up on the east wall of the tower.

The north side of the tower has an entrance door leading to a narrow spiral stone stairway going to the first floor and clock mechanism. The clock was given by Edwin Lucas in early 1900, He was a generous man, his memorial is inside the church, and he gave property to raise money for a trust (which still exists) to help the poor of the village. The clock was refurbished by voluntary donations and converted to auto-wind as a year 2000 Millennium project.

From the first floor of the tower an iron ladder gives access to the belfry and the turreted roof. The original binnacles of the tower were removed and these are now standing by the threshold of the main entrance porch.

Today there are very few burial plots available but the modern practice of cremation eases the problem as ashes can be interred beneath a small memorial plaque close to footings of one of the church walls.

St Mary's Church, like so many other ancient buildings, faces increasing maintenance costs. Much of these are borne by parishioners who struggle to keep the fabric in good repair to provide a place of quiet and worship for community and visitors alike.

A wall safe by the exit door is available for donations towards upkeep and these are always appreciated.

Thank you

TARRANT GUNVILLE, ITS ENVIRONS - PAST AND PRESENT

Within the parish of Tarrant Gunville, which also includes the village of Stubhampton, there are approximately twenty-three dwellings of the 18th century and five of the 19th century.

To the south west of the church lies the Manor House, which in the Salisbury Journal of March 1798, was advertised as 'newly erected'. It was built by the Chapman Family (who later bought the Manor in 1873) to replace a former Manor House belonging to the Swayne family, whose memorial is in the baptistry. Some of the materials used probably came from the demolished parts of Eastbury House, which lies, to the south-east across the valley.

The manor was later sold to Josiah Wedgewood II. It was extended during the Victorian era but was later restored to its original style during the 20th century by Major Roger Humphrys.

Due east, at the bottom of the church path, is the Old Rectory which was last used by an incumbent in 1957. This large rectangular house was built in 1815 for Francis Simpson, Rector here from 1793 until his death in 1827. The cost was paid by University College, Oxford, the patrons of the living.

Eastbury house, previously referred to, which lies across the valley, was designed by Vanburgh and completed in 1738. It was even larger than his creations at Blenheim Palace and Castle Howard. Within 50 years, however, it was partially dismantled except for the stable block which became the home and headquarters of J J Farquharson, the famous hunting Squire, whose descendants still own it.

There are medieval earthworks near the main gateway to Eastbury House, and to the south-east of Stubhampton and at Harbins Park to the north-west of Tarrant Gunville. A Roman road crosses the east side of the parish and there is an Iron Age hill fort at Bussey Stool.

Tarrant Gunville changed considerably in the latter half of the 20th century. Houses relied on wells until the early 1950's when mains water, electricity and metalled roads first appeared. The Village Shop, The Bugle Horn Public House, The School and the regular bus services finally succumbed to progress (so called perhaps) in the late eighties and nineties.

The Village Hall, originally a donated First World War army hut, was demolished at the end of its life in 1999. Early in the 1990's, very much aware of its decrepit state of repair and impending demise both **The Church** and **The Community** set to and worked together for a number of years to raise substantial funds, which together with a lottery grant of £105,000 enabled a splendid new hall to be built for a total cost of £178,000.

Additional funds and donations were subsequently raised by the community to provide furnishings etc. It is in the centre of the village and was opened during the millennium year 2000.

The hall is used for Skittles, Youth club, Bridge club, Lunch club, Mum's and Toddlers playgroup, Tarrant Troupers shows, Women's Institute meetings, W.I Xmas Pantomimes, receptions, parties etc.

To the north of the village hall is the playing field, refurbished also by fund raising, charitable donations and grants. It boasts a sports field, a public tennis court and a ring fenced enclosure with modern play equipment designed for the younger children.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Much of this history has been taken from a previous publication written by Rev. David Stephens, Rector from 1986 to 1994. And also from notes compiled by the late Mr V.H Wilmot, formerly Headmaster of Tarrant Gunville Church of England Primary School.

David Morrow: June 2004

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Lay Pastoral Assistants	- Bindy Angus - Ada Wallwork	01258 830364 01258 830388
P C C Treasurer	- Lizzie Patterson	01258 830216
	
Chairman of Village Hall	- Alan Bailey	01258 830618
Mums & Toddlers Group	- Shona Kitchen	01258 830256
Village Hall Bookings	- Jane Mottram	01258 830491
Youth Club	- Marianne Mead	01258 830476
	
Chairman of T.Gunville Parish Council	- Bill Parker	01258 830411
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