

A Short History of St Andrew's Church, Witham on the Hill

By

Dave Mainwaring



Printed & Published by
Witham-on-the-Hill Historical Society

Welcome to St Andrews, we hope you enjoy your visit today

Each and every church is a living community and in earlier times was at the very centre of village life. This book, therefore, is not just about St Andrews Church as a building but also explores it as a community, weaving some stories into the walk around.

Naturally, a large amount of the more ancient history of any church building must be based on judgement and conjecture, as records of changes to buildings many centuries ago have either been lost or indeed never existed. This building certainly has some tempting little puzzles. However, the more recent events, for example the significant 1873 restoration, are well documented.

We have looked at documents going back to 1555 and reference to some of these is made in this book.

Introduction to the Church Building

The earliest record of a church at Witham on the Hill is in the Domesday Book of 1086, in which it is recorded as being owned by the Norman Lord Gilbert of Ghent (or de Gand). It was probably a Saxon building, although no trace of it exists, as the earliest part of the current church is Norman of the late 12th century.

Gilbert of Ghent was a compatriot of William the Conqueror and helped him in the laying waste of Yorkshire and was, for a time, commander of the garrison of York. For his service he was awarded 157 manors throughout the land and became Baron of Folkingham.

We are simply told that at Witham there was a “church and a priest”. We know nothing about the church that existed, but we can surmise that it was probably a Saxon church.

There are some clues to the history of the church in the various styles of architecture to be seen walking around the building. Like most old churches, changes have been made over time and as with so many, culminated in a substantial Victorian restoration. In the case of St Andrew’s this took place in 1873/4 and was carried out by George Gilbert Scott Jr.

The current layout of the church is cruciform (i.e. in the shape of a cross) consisting of nave, north and south aisles, north and south transepts, a chancel and a tower that stands in an unusual though not rare position at the end of the south transept.

Just before we take a walk around the church, we can have an educated guess as to what we think could have been the sequence of building of this church.

- The original building was a two cell structure with a nave and a chancel.
- The south aisle was added very shortly after the initial building was constructed, say within 5 years.
- The north and south transepts were added. We also know that the tower that fell down in 1736 was on the south transept, but we do not know the date of that tower.
- The north aisle was added
- The west wall was rebuilt from the Norman original in the second half of the 14th century and the perpendicular window put in.
- The clerestory was added in the 15th century.
- There was a building at the north side of the chancel which I suspect existed before the 14th century.

The Exterior

The Porch

We start our walk around the church with the porch and this was much more important in years gone by than today, because many important events took place here. Penitents received absolution here before entering the church. Those breaking marriage vows stood in a white sheet on three consecutive Sundays asking for the prayers of those who entered. Women knelt to be “churched” (purified and blessed) after the birth of a child, and that part of the marriage ceremony involving the placing of the ring on the finger took place in the porch. Civil business was also conducted in the porch, many legal matters were dealt with here and executors of wills paid out legacies.

The porch that we see today is a much more modern ashlar stone work structure than the Norman doorway of the church. The outer doorway of the porch is modelled on the Norman original, but is of a much later date, although certainly some of the stones used seem to be from an old structure. The rebuilding which formed the current structure took place around 1859. The figure of the patron saint in the niche over the doorway was done by William Hilliam of Stamford.

The porch had been rebuilt before this date at least once, indicated by the re-used stone on the eastern side that has the words “1691 John Ansell, William Pell” (slightly obscured by ageing). These men were the church wardens at the time of that reconstruction. Another interesting stone on the east side is part of the old mass scratch dial, formerly, of course, on the south front.



In the first of our stories about the church we will meet a lady called Agnes Lee who would, we are sure, have liked to enter the porch on her way into church. However, we learn from a document of 1572 that she was excommunicated, although her family were seeking to have this rescinded. The document states:

“May it please your worshippes to understand that accordinge to your commandment I have excommunicated Agnes Lee this 8 daye of Aprill before the hoole congregation who is very poore bodye and haithe been grevealye visited being a leper in veye deede and haithe not comed abroode sense the feaste of All Saintes but haithe upon the devotion of good people having in maner no clothes to her backe whereby she maye cover her nakedness neither is she, neither yet anye of hers able to bye anye, and as I am by the enhabitors of the towne whose hands are set to this present as a true testymonye, crediblye enformed she is not able to travel at all but rather lyke to dye and then standing excommunicate wee know not where to burye her. Wee therefore the enhabitors of the towne of Witham being already charged with her bye reason of her poverty doe earnestelye requyre youre worshippes good will in adjoining her, what penance you shall think good if that it please God ever hereafter to make her able to do and wee earnestly wish and require the same for feare that bye her death wee shalle be troubled thus restinge upon your curtesee wee leave of to trouble you from Witham 8 of April.”

Unfortunately we do not know the outcome as the reply is damaged and unreadable but it would be nice to think that she was restored to the church before her death.

However, let's continue around the church. Unlike much of the church the south wall immediately to the west of the porch does not have any buttresses. The building here is Norman in origin of the late 12th century and one of the oldest parts of the church and the walls required little or no buttressing because they were not originally pierced with large windows. Most Norman churches only had a number of narrow lights and would have been very dark and cold inside. The window you see on this part of the building is of a later date, being 14th century square headed.

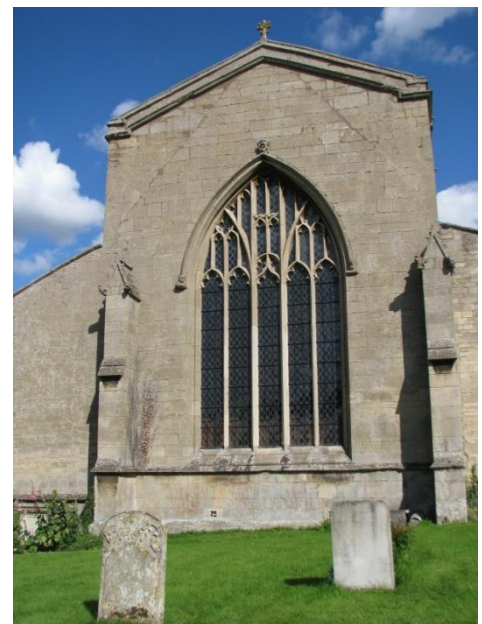
The West End

As we turn the corner we see a Norman window at the right hand end, rediscovered and re-opened in 1874. From this you can imagine how dark the interior of a Norman church would have been. There would have been very few of these windows in the church as there was no glass in them and they let in the cold. Norman churches were dark, cold and damp.

Turning the corner to look at the west wall, an earlier roof line of the church is clearly visible showing that before the clerestory was added the building had a steeply pitched roof.

Looking at the west end of the church there are buttresses that date from the 14th century. The large west window dates from the same period with Perpendicular features. Buttresses became necessary as church walls got thinner in relation to their size and were pierced with ever larger window openings. At the west corner of the north side are two buttresses at right angles known as rectangular buttresses.

The west window has five lights with foil heads and panel tracery, with a hood mould with human head stops. The four mullions of this window were repaired in the 1873 restoration. This window, because it is plain glass, allows an enormous amount of light into the church.



The North Side

Either side of the north door are windows dating from the early 14th century featuring reticulated tracery typical of the Decorated period but the glass is of course much later. Also on this wall between the west end and the north transept are two further buttresses dating from the 15th century. We believe that this indicates that the clerestory was added in the 15th century when these buttresses were built. The west end already had adequate buttressing.



To the east side of the north door is a small niche with a triangular head and hood and a small cross inscribed below, probably 14th century. This is a holy water stoop.

The North Transept

The end of the north transept features a four-light 15th century window of panel tracery with two slim clasping corner buttresses supporting the wall. In the Lincolnshire volume of the “Buildings of England” series¹, Pevsner speculates that these are possibly Norman but we believe that the north transept has been refaced at its north end and that the buttresses are probably 15th century.

The west side of the north transept shows some evidence of alterations at some period as a distinct line is visible near the nave end of the wall and the stonework around this area is not original. The transept roof has also been raised, this being evidenced by the different stone at the top of the wall.

At the east side of the north transept is a three-light window of the 15th century, repaired as part of the 1873 restoration. As on the west side it is clear that the roof line of the north transept has been raised and this was done as part of the same restoration so that the new roof would fit to the old weathering in the main roof. There is a stairway leading down to an underground chamber where the church heating system is located. The interior of the chamber is part brick and part stone. The brickwork is generally of English bond indicating that it is probably Victorian. It was cut in the 19th century. Work in this chamber would also have taken place as part of the underpinning of the transept at the same time.



The chancel north wall is one of the most interesting puzzles in the church and it is evident that it also has been increased in height at some stage - the buttresses would suggest sometime in the 14th century. The buttresses would have been necessary as the wall was pierced to accommodate larger windows.

Next to the window on the north side of the chancel there is a doorway that has been blocked up in the past. This doorway seems to have a round arch at the top suggesting that it could be of Norman origin. From the infilling stonework it is evident that this doorway precedes the addition of the window and therefore must be older than the 14th century.

There is another blocked up doorway in the chancel wall that is more evident from the interior. What was its purpose? Are there any clues to there being a building here?

Well there is an interesting clue. Look at the stringer course. It is cut square at the end of the east wall and does not continue around to the north wall as would have been expected. This indicates the presence of a structure on the north wall of the chancel. If we look further we can see three stone bases aligned with the outer end of the north transept and a stone projecting from the church wall, clear evidence of a building, and it was probably a chantry chapel.

As we proceed to the east wall of the chancel we are faced with a 14th century Perpendicular panel tracery window opening but with a 19th century window. This window opening would probably be concurrent with the chancel rebuilding. Again on the top right hand corner there is evidence of the heightening of the chancel and a hint of the original roof line. The buttresses are of the 14th century.

The South Wall

Continuing our walk around the outside of the church, we come to the south wall at the chancel end. The windows on this side of the chancel are Victorian and replaced an earlier single window as part of the 1873 restoration. An interesting note in the specification by G Gilbert Scott concerning the south wall of the chancel says “remove the two classic pilasters”. This term was used by Victorian architects to describe post 16th century work. When the wall was expected to stand the additional stress of two relatively large window openings it was decided to construct a new and much sturdier buttress



The Tower

As we approach the tower we are left in no doubt as to its origin regardless of the seeming dates of various parts of it. Above the clock it clearly states “Rev Mr Rob’t Alanson A.M. Vic’r, J Hidson, R Wearhers, Ch. Wns 1738. Quite a nice touch and a good historical detail to have the tower so precisely dated.



As to the detail of the tower, it is best left to Pevsner for a quote,

“The strangeness is the S. tower, an essay in medievalism of 1737/8 (by *George Portwood a well known Stamford architect*). Below, the style is unmistakable see for example the south window with its Gibbs surround, the cruciform shape round the clock, and the urns instead of pinnacles. But the bell openings have round openings and Y tracery, and there is a recessed spire with two tiers of lucarnes, which is certainly more serious than the date would suggest. Is there a touch here of the Vanbrugh – Hawksmoor medievalism via Grimsthorpe?”

“George Portwood of Stamford was probably the most prominent of the master masons that had their yards in that town in the first half of the eighteenth century.”

Again another interesting clue to Witham’s relative wealth is that they used such a prominent mason.

In 1737 he was paid 5 guineas by the churchwardens of Witham on the Hill, Lincs
“for Drawing Several designs for the rebuilding of there (*sic*) Church Steeple”, which were carried out in the following year in Ketton stone by Messrs Jackson & Chaplin for £318 (bill and accounts in Parish Records).

In connection with the old tower The Stamford Mercury relates a story that is told to the effect “that one Christmas eve, the ringers for the purpose of taking refreshment, left the bells “standing” and adjourned to a tavern that stood opposite. One of their number, a little more thirsty than the rest, insisted that before going back to ring they should have another pitcher of ale, and this being at length agreed to by his companions, the party remained to drain the last draught. This extra mug of beer saved their lives for while they were drinking it the steeple fell.” Whether this is merely a tapster’s tale or the sober statement of a remarkable incident, we are not in a position to confirm.”



The south transept which was wrecked by the fall was rebuilt at the same time as the new tower, which may account for the imitation Norman window, possibly suggesting its origins. There is a clear building line visible on the south wall where the new south transept was joined to the original building.

St Andrews has possessed a clock for over 400 years and this is a very early instance in a parish church, dating back before the invention of the pendulum. We know that the first clock already existed in 1555 from a note in the church account book for that year which refers to a payment “for keeping ye clock 2s-8d”.

Again, this points to the wealth of Witham.

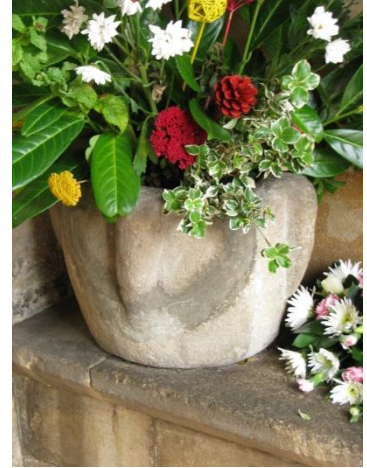
The tower contains a ring of 6 bells, recast from bells taken from Peterborough Cathedral, the Tenor weighing 13 cwt. They were recast and put up by William Dobson of Downham in Norfolk in 1831 at a cost of £359-1s-9d less the £144-9s-9d that was recovered from the sale of the old bells.

Returning towards the porch, the south wall has a four-light 14th century window with flowing tracery and hood mould.

The Interior

We now enter the church by the south porch.

First note the very old bowl shaped stone with four chamfered “beaks” carved into it, used today for flowers. This was thought by Canon Cooley (whose brass is in the chancel) to be the original Norman holy water stoop bowl that stood beside the south door. If it is, then it must have stood on a low pedestal. It is made of Barnack rag, the stone of which much of the ancient part of the church is made. However, other opinion is that it could be a domestic mortar vessel and not of religious significance and origin at all.



Canon Cooley records in the parish magazine in 1932 that “the record of its removal [a holy water bowl] is still preserved. The two churchwardens, Richard Walpull and John Ashewell in the year 1559, recorded that they sold a “holliwater stocke of stone” to John Gylbert of Witham, “which was put to profane use”.”



This is indeed true, however, there is no direct evidence that the vessel we are looking at is that one. The artefact seen today was returned to the church in 1932 from a garden opposite.

We enter the church through a simple but beautiful Norman doorway. The door itself is of a later date, part of the restoration of 1873 with attractive ironwork of the same date. Above this arch is a niche containing a carved figure, thought by Pevsner to be 12th century, but possibly a little too dynamic for this period and may be as late as 14th century, but the head is lost. It is probably a representation of the patron saint of the church.

Once inside we go down three steps and this is evidence that the floor of the church has at some stage been lowered. The position of the Norman entrance arch and the massive rectangular bases of the Norman arcade support this conclusion.

When inside, take several steps forward then turn to face the door and admire the arcade on the south aisle. The south side is the oldest part of the church. This arcade is late or Transitional Norman style, erected in the late 12th century. The pillars are circular in shape with water leaf capitals rising from bold square bases and supporting semi-circular arches. Also note the Norman lancet window near the font, which was discussed on the exterior walk around the church. From the interior, the rise to a semi-circular arch can be truly appreciated.





There is an octagonal font of about 1660 sitting on a 19th century base. The carving on it seems to have no great religious significance. Two faces are marked with chevrons, one with a patriarchal cross motif and the remaining five with floral motifs.

The ornate 19th century cover is later and was a gift from Edenham Church in 1919. The cover was made for Edenham Church in 1851. It is claimed to be a copy of the beautiful 15th century canopy in Frieston church near Boston.

Beneath the west window, behind the font is a parish chest in which important documents were kept. It is clearly dated 1683 and has three padlocks which was normal for this type of chest. The chest could only be opened in the presence of the incumbent and the two church wardens who would each have had a key to one of the padlocks. There is also another chest in rather poor condition which is undated and possibly earlier.

Turning to face the north side the fine arcade here is 13th century Early English with double chamfered arches. This arcade was created when the north aisle was added to the church.

Having taken in the interior try to imagine the church without any pews (the current ones were installed in 1907 to the plans of Mr A N Prentice Architect of London) as it would have been originally, a large open space where people stood to worship completely free of obstruction. Incidentally benches in churches did not become usual until the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.



The advent of pews soon became a matter of status as you normally got the best pew if you were of the highest rank and this brings us to an interesting little story.

There is a Bishop's Faculty (the document needed to make changes in a church) of 1638 on this subject. It is about complaints being made to the highest authority regarding the allocation of seating in the church resulting in an edict from no less than William Laud Archbishop of Canterbury Primate and Metropolitan of all England, instructing the local Vicar and Churchwardens to do something about it. Part of it deals with the gentleman who complains about his pew being too small for his rank and status.

How surprising that a Bishop’s faculty on an obscure subject in a little village in Lincolnshire turns out to reveal a matter of much greater import in the history of the Church of England.

It says:

“...Reverend Father John Bishop of Lincoln before his suspension from all and singular ecclesiastical and spiritual offices and benefices.....”

It was amazing to read this and we investigated. It turns out that before this faculty was written, the Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud became involved in a dispute with John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln and had him suspended and imprisoned in the Tower of London for four years. He had upset the very catholic leaning Laud with his lenient opposite views and paid dearly for it. Interestingly John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln was also the last Bishop to be Keeper of the Great Seal, that is Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The upshot of it was that the Vicar and churchwardens met and dismissed the gentleman’s plea to have a bigger pew but said that they would ask the occupier of the adjoining pew if he would give up a little room. We don’t know the outcome of that request.

While we are thinking about pews and the congregation, some interesting insights come from the church accounts book. Churches today often have dedicated projects, typically collecting things or money to help other churches located overseas in the developing world. Perhaps you might think this is a modern idea, but not so. In the accounts book for 1678 we learn that the parish collected 16s – 1d towards the rebuilding of St Paul’s Cathedral. In 1680 they collected 16s – 9d for the relief of the slaves in Algiers. In 1682 they collected 9s – 0d for the relief of French Protestants. There are many more instances of collections for causes at home and abroad.

Think about the change that the congregation would have seen in the late 1550’s when national turmoil descended on Witham on the Hill.

We tend to think that national events pass a village church by, but that is not always true. There is a document in existence that shows this clearly. It is a folio from a book called “Inventorum Monumentorum Superstitionis” and it listed all the artefacts that were considered superstitious at the Reformation. These were precious things that were deemed to be too Roman Catholic for the New Church in England. Below is a transcript of the document and you will see what was destroyed or sold.

“The inventorie of all suche copes vestments and other monuments of superstition as remained in the parishe church of Witham. At any time sens (*since*) the deathe of the late queen Marye made by Richard Walpull John Ashwell churchwardens the eighteenth daye of March anno 1569

Imprimis the image of the Rode (<i>Rood</i>) Mary and John and all other Latten (<i>Latin</i>) books	Which were burned in the vicarage in anno 1559 by Richard Walpull and John Ashwell churchwardens
Item ii vestments three albes three amises and Stoles <i>Alb a white linen garment reaching from the neck to the ankles worn by Ministers at Eucharist</i>	Which was sold by Richard Walpull and John Ashwell in anno 1559 to divers persons which be broken and defaced and part of the money put into the poore mans boxe the residue to the repair of the church and mendinge of the highe ways

<i>Amice a square or oblong cloth worn around the neck by the priest when celebrating at Eucharist</i>	
Item a cope a vestment of white sarsenet <i>Sarsenet a very fine soft silk material made both plain and twilled in various colours now used chiefly for linings</i>	Which were sold by the above named church wardens in anno 1559 to Master Harrington which he hath defaced
Item a cross a pair of censures a Crismatory two candlesticks two handbells <i>Crismatory a small vessel for keeping the three kinds of holy oil viz, oil of the catechumens, oil of the sick and crism oil</i>	Which were sold by the above named church wardens in anno 1559 to Martin Smythe a pewterer dwelling in Stamford
Item ii two surples	which remain still in the church
Item iii banner staves iii banner clothes and a cross cloth Grales pressions masse bookes <i>Grale probably a kind of book</i>	Which were made away by the above named church wardens in anno 1559 so that there remaineth no parcel of them but are defaced
Item a pix a cruet (a holliwater stocke – crossed out and written as the next item) <i>Cruet vessels of glass or precious metal in which the wine and water are brought to the altar</i>	Sold by the above named church wardens in anno 1559 to whom they were sold we know not
Item a holliwater stocke of stone	Sold to John Gylbert of Witham by the above named church wardens anno 1559 which was put to profane use.
Item the Rod (Rood) Loft ** ** We know from the Church Accounts that the Rood loft was sold in 1555	Taken down by the said church wardens and sold to Mr John Harrington before the reign of queen Marye
Item on(e?) linnen clothe a velvet quassin (cushion?) and a chalice	Which now remaine in the church and are occupied about the communion table ther(e)

Item one paxe defaced and made away

Pax Breda (also Pax or Osculatorum) A small plate made of ivory, metal or wood with a representation of some religious subject on the face and a projecting handle on the back. Kissed by the celebrant and then by others who received it in turn

Item iii altar stones lying in our church at this point unpaved two of them which shall be broken and one lieth at Mr Harrington's fier back

One sacringe bell broken and defaced

Nicholas Bishop of Linciln
George Monson gen.
18th March 1565"

John Aelmer Archdeacon of Lincoln
Martin Hollingworth

Resuming our walk around we come to the window next to the north door which is dedicated to Thomas and Louisa Moxon, who owned Palace Farm. The date of the glass is Edwardian. This window representing the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin was unveiled in 1911. The approximate cost was £55 and was paid for by the children, relatives and friends of the late Mrs Moxon of Palace Farm in whose memory it was provided. The window was from the studio of Messrs Burlison & Grylls of Gt Ormond Street London, a very well known glass making company, another little clue to wealth. Towards the top of the window can be seen some older fragments of glass and these are probably medieval.



Up to the time that the clerestory was built, the nave had a high pitched roof, the line of which as we have discovered can clearly be seen outside the church over the great west window, but in the 15th century, a clerestory was added in the Perpendicular style, with the two-fold object of increasing the dignity of the church by adding to its height and also to afford additional light from the eight clerestory windows. You will note that the two windows over the transepts are only of half height. This is to accommodate the raised transept roof line.



Looking upwards at the roof of the nave, it is of Crown Post construction with trusses enclosed by the flat ceiling, this ceiling having been installed in 1818 along with a complete re-roofing of the church. The grotesque heads upon which the great beams of the nave roof rest are 15th century and are the result of the humour of the local mason of the period. It is suggested that these grim and grinning monsters were intended to scare away the evil spirits. The corbels are the only part of the roof known to be original, although some of the original timbers may have been re-used in the re-roofing of 1818.

The north transept contains an item of interest hanging on the wall, this being two panels from the old rood screen dating from the 15th century that were restored to the church after being found in Lincoln in 1941. They depict St Veronica & St Laurence. These panels are unusual in a Lincolnshire church as they are in the East Anglian tradition; that is they are panels depicting pictures of saints.

There is a squint or hagioscope on the east side of the north transept, the purpose of which was to enable persons in the transept to see the high altar when Mass was being said, or if there was more than one priest officiating in the Mass that the first priest could be synchronised with the priest offering mass in the chancel.

In the 1873 restoration, the north transept contained two rows of children's seats with a capacity of some 50 children, three rows of adult seats and a harmonium.





Interestingly the harmonium still exists in the church to this day, located near the south doorway. If the lid is lifted, on it is a small round badge with the inscription “Exposition Universelle de 1855 Paris. Medaille d’Honneur. Alexandre Pere et Fils”. This dates the harmonium as no earlier than 1855, but it is still an old instrument, manufactured by one of the largest manufacturers in the world at that time.

In the south transept is the organ which is modern, fitted in 1946 at a cost of £1050 plus Purchase Tax and manufactured by Peter Conacher & Co of

Huddersfield, Yorkshire. This replaced the organ installed in 1874 following the removal of a gallery as part of the 1873 restoration, presumably with the installation of the organ in mind. Whilst on the subject of the organ an interesting piece which appeared in the Parish Magazine sheds yet more light on Witham’s influential contacts. It says:

“The present organ (*since replaced*) dates from about 1874, but the vicar can find no record of its cost or installation. In those days a two manual organ in a village church was something of a rarity. Though old fashioned in construction, our organ is wonderfully efficient for its size, and is capable of a great range and sweetness of tone, from the softest echo to a volume of sound sufficient to fill a cathedral. Those who heard Sir Walford Davies playing it the other day will have realised this.”

Sir Walford Davies was a very famous organist and composer and he was knighted in 1922 and in 1934 was appointed master of the Kings Musick. Witham on the Hill was honoured indeed!

Behind the organ is the bell tower. In the chamber is a plaque that refers to a peal of 5040 changes rung on Friday January 17th 1890 together with details of the bell ringers and a notice detailing the current bells.



As we move towards the chancel there is an Edwardian screen with rood and figures of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St John dedicated to Augustus Charles Johnson who died on the 24th October 1910. He was the last of the Johnson family to own the Witham Estate and he sold it after getting into financial difficulties. He is buried in the churchyard.

The high arch to the chancel is shown on Scott’s plans. This must have replaced the Norman arch that was some six feet narrower. What a shame to have lost the Norman treasure.



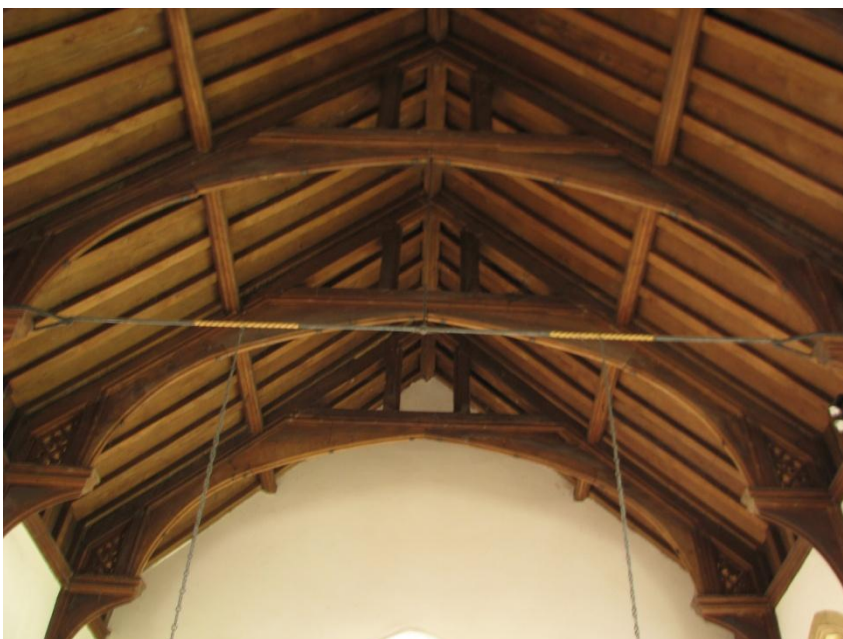
Immediately behind the screen on both sides are seats and these were installed as part of the 1873 restoration and replaced a much larger block of seats that were there for the Rector. The seats that exist now on the left of the chancel as we look west were for the Rector's family and those on the right for the Rector's servants. How times have changed!

In the north wall of the chancel we can see the blocked up 13th century door that was discussed on the exterior walk around.

Also on this wall is a brass plate of 1558 commemorating two of the Harrington family who owned Witham during the 16th century.

The plaque is in Latin but in English it reads,

“Here lies Robert Harrington esquire and Alice his wife. Robert died 4 January in the year of our Lord 1558 and in the first year of the reign of Elizabeth, Queen of England, France and Scotland, defender of the faith, etc. Alice died 23 November in the year of our Lord 1565, the eighth year of the said Queen's reign.”



Looking upwards we see a Victorian roof that is of hammer beam construction with a deal of additional decorative work.

On the floor is a good commemorative brass in memory of Leonard Henry Cooley M.A. a former vicar of St Andrew's Church who died in 1953. The brass is of good quality and orientated with the head of the canon facing east which is correct for a member of the clergy.



Approaching the altar, the piscina in the east chancel wall is noticeable as is the portion of an Early English pillar let into the same wall, and utilised possibly as a bracket for the statue of the Patron Saint beside the high altar. The upper part is damaged but the cause is unknown.

There are two sacring bells in front of the Altar and a processional cross is to be found in the chancel.

Finally we look at the Victorian east window that portrays scenes of the nativity, the crucifixion and the Ascension of Christ.



We hope that you have enjoyed your visit to this very pleasant church and will come back again in the future.

¹ The Buildings of England - Lincolnshire by Nikolaus Pevsner and John Harris, published in 1964, revised by Nicholas Antram in 1989.

Glossary of terms used in this guide:

Ashlar	Stone cut into smooth rectangular blocks, laid with fine joints in regular courses.
Crown Post	A vertical timber standing centrally on a tie beam and supporting a collar purlin. Longitudinal braces usually rise from the crown post to the collar purlin. When the truss is open, lateral braces generally rise to the collar beam, and when the truss is closed they go down to the tie beam. (<i>As at Witham</i>)
Decorated	Of the period 1280 to 1380
Early English	Sometimes referred to as English Gothic. Covering the period from 1190 to 1250
Gibbs surround	18 th century treatment of a door or window surround, seen particularly in the work of James Gibbs (1682 – 1754).
Hammer beam	Horizontal brackets projecting at wall plate level on opposite sides of the wall like a tie beam with the centre cut away. The inner ends carry vertical timbers called hammer posts and braces to a collar beam.
Lucarnes	A small gabled opening in a roof or spire.
Norman	Sometimes referred to as Romanesque which was current in the 11 th and 12 th centuries and preceded Early English style.
Piscina	A basin with a drain used for washing the sacred vessels. The consecrated remains were drained into the earth outside the church which was sacred ground. In the 10 th century Pope Leo VI decreed that a drain should be made near every altar for the disposal of the water in which the sacred vessels were washed.
Perpendicular	Of the period 1350 to 1550
Sacring bells	Sacring was the consecration of the bread and wine in the mass. The Sacring bell was rung at the sacring and at the elevations to focus the congregation's attention. The ringing of this bell dates from the 12 th century.
Tracery	Intersecting rib work in the upper part of a window. There are many forms.
Transitional Norman	Of the period 1150 to 1200

Information from the Lincolnshire County Archives & Other Sources

1086

Lincolnshire Domesday Book

Section 24,32 Land of Gilbert of Ghent

“In Witham on the Hill, Manthorpe, Toft and Lound 8 carucates of land and the third part of 1 carucate. Land for as many ploughs. 45 Freemen and 10 smallholders have 10 ploughs.

A church; meadow 40 acres.....”

1555

Partial transcription of the Church accounts for 1555

(.....) of all the (.....) belonging to the Churche) of Witham made anno domini 1555 as followeth

(.....) Robert Harington (...)(.....)(.....).....	2s	4d
(.....) Thomas Clerke.....	7s	6d
(.....) John (.....).....	7s	4d
(.....) Thomas Hogeson.....	4s	
(.....) Richard (.....).....	3s	
(.....) William Fowle.....	12s	

Lound

(.....) Thomas Awyer.....	4s	
(.....) William Lenton.....	3s	
(.....) Thomas Waters.....	5s	8d

Toft

(.....) William East	21s	
(.....) Jeffrey Waters.....	8s	4d
(.....) Jeffrey Baker.....	6s	4d
(.....) (.....) (.....) (...)(.....).....	6s	
(.....) payd for ye Rood loft by Mr Harington.....	10s	

Manthorpe

(.....) Robert Harington (.....).....	20s	
---------------------------------------	-----	--

Reddit resolut (Revenue paid)

Several payments where the writer lapses into Latin

Item to Folkingham.....	2s 4d
Item for keeping the clocke.....	2s 8d
Item for washing of ye clothes.....	8d
Item for keeping of ye bells.....	4d

The document then reverts to Latin

1555

See also 1928 – Church clock

“for keeping ye clock” 2s 8d

Source: Church accounts book Witham on the Hill PAR/7

Researcher’s note: This gives an early date at which a clock was present in the church

1555

“paid for ye Rood loft by Mr Harrington” 10s

Source: Church accounts book Witham on the Hill PAR/7

Researcher’s note: This would seem to indicate that Mr Harrington bought the Rood loft after it was dismantled. This would be not unexpected at this time of religious turmoil. Confirmed by 1559 document below

1559

Inventorum Monumentorum Superstitionis Folio 95 Witham 1559

The inventorie of all suche copes vestments and other monuments of superstition as remained in the parishe church of Witham. At any time sens (*since*) the deathe of the late queen Marye made by Richard Walpull John Ashwell churchwardens the eighteenth daye of March anno 1569

<p>Imprimis the image of the Rode (<i>Rood</i>) Mary and John and all other Latten (<i>Latin</i>) books</p>	<p>Which were burned in the vicarage in anno 1559 by Richard Walpull and John Ashwell churchwardens</p>
<p>Item ii vestments three albes three amises and Stoles</p> <p><i>Alb a white linen garment reaching from the neck to the ankles worn by Ministers at Eucharist</i></p> <p><i>Amice a square or oblong cloth worn around the neck by the priest when celebrating at Eucharist</i></p>	<p>Which was sold by Richard Walpull and John Ashwell in anno 1559 to divers persons which be broken and defaced and part of the money put into the poore mans boxe the residue to the repair of the churche and mendinge of the high ways</p>
<p>Item a cope a vestment of white sarsenet</p> <p><i>Sarcenet a very fine soft silk material made both plain and twilled in various colours now used chiefly for linings</i></p>	<p>Which were sold by the above named churche wardens in anno 1559 to Master Harrington which he haith defaced</p>
<p>Item a cross a pair of sensures a Crismatory two candlesticks two handbells</p> <p><i>Chrismatory a small vessel for keeping the three kinds of holy oil viz, oil of the catechumens, oil of the sick and chrisim oil</i></p>	<p>Which were sold by the above named churche wardens in anno 1559 to Martin Smythe a pewterer dwellinge in Stamford</p>
<p>Item ii two surples</p>	<p>which remayne still in the churche</p>
<p>Item iiiii banner staffes iiiii banner clothes and a cross clothe Grales pressioners masse bookes</p> <p><i>Grale probably a kind of book</i></p>	<p>Which were made away by the above named churche wardens in anno 1559 so that there remayneth no parcel of them but are defaced</p>
<p>Item a pix a cruet (a holliwater stocke – crossed out and written as the next item)</p> <p><i>Cruet vessels of glass or precious metal in which the wine and water are brought to the altar</i></p>	<p>Sold by the above named churche wardens in anno 1559 to whom they were sold we know not</p>
<p>Item a holliwater stocke of stone</p>	<p>Sold to John Gylbert of Witham by the above named churche wardens anno 1559 which was put to profane use.</p>
<p>Item the Rod (Rood) Loft **</p> <p><i>** We know from the Church Accounts that the Rood loft was sold in 1555</i></p>	<p>Taken down by the said churche wardens and sold to Mr John Harrington before the reigne of queen Marye</p>
<p>Item on(e?) lynnyn clothe a velvet quassin (cushion?) and a chalice</p>	<p>Which now remaine in the churche and are occupied about the communion table ther(e)</p>

Item one paxe defaced and made away

Pax Breda (also Pax or Osculatorum) A small plate made of ivory metal or wood with a representation of some religious subject on the face and a projecting handle on the back. Kissed by the celebrant and then by others who received it in turn

Item iii altar stones lying in our church at this point unpaved two of them which shall be broken and one lieth at Mr Harrington's fier back

One sacringe bell broken and defaced

Nicholas Bishop of Linciln
John Aelmer Archdeacon of Lincoln
George Monson gen.
Martin Hollingworth
18th March 1565

Source: DIOC/FUR/2 Inventorum Monumentum Superstitionis Folio 95 Witham Also transcription of above Edward Peacock – “Church Furniture” - 1866

Researcher's note: This document is of some importance in understanding the life of the church in a time of ever changing opinion and great turmoil. This is brought home by the reference in the item about the taking down of the Rood loft where the churchwardens made clear that this was done before the reign of Queen Mary who of course wanted all these things restored and they have crossed out the date they were going to put because the churchwardens had already sold it, so they made a statement about the reign of Queen Mary to keep themselves in the clear

1559

See 1932 “recovery of an interesting relic” and 1559 above

1561 onwards

Extracts from the Parish Registers and Bishop's Transcripts

- 1561 Nov 16th Katerina daughter of John Harrington died
- 1562 Jun 9th William son of John Harrington was born
- 1563 Aug 3rd Helena daughter of John Harrington Esq was born
- 1565 Nov 22nd Alicia Harrington gentry died
- 1566 July 23rd Maria daughter of John Harrington Esq was born
- 1586 Jun 21st Richard Worslei Esq & Maria Harrington married
- 1587 Dec 19th Susanna Harrington daughter of Robert buried

- 1588 Sep 24th Richard Conye & Elenor Harrington married
- 1590 Jun 28th John Connye son of Richard gen' baptised
- 1592 Aug 13th Bridgett Conye dau. of Richard Conye gentleman baptised
- 1593 Nov 22nd William Conye son of Richard Conye baptised
- 1593 Dec 5th William Conye son of Richard Conye buried
- 1595 Jan 20th Will'm Fowke gen' & Anna Harington gen' married
- 1597 Sep 7th Johne Harington Esquire bur.
- 1598 Apr 18th Edwardus Fowke son of Gulielmi gen. bap
- 1598 Sep 12th John Everitt & Bridget Pancke m.
- 1597 – 8 Everit entries
- 1601 Eland entries
- 1601 Oct 31st Rob'tus Harington sep. (buried)
- 1602 Aug 24th Thomas Revell et Elizabetha Presgrave nupt. (married)
- 1602 Nov 28th Ric. Wakernes & Margaret Watson m.
- 1606 Sep 22nd Henry Briggs & Jane Dove m.
- 1608 Oct 4th Willi'mus Harington son of Willimi bap.
- 1612 Nov 24th Rogerus Haddon et Amia Buckbery nupte.
- 1613 – 14 Jan 11th Robertus Harington filius Willemi bap
- 1614 Dec 29th Henricus Harington filius Willemi Harington armiger (Esq) bap.
- 1616 Jul 30th Oliverus Harington filius Willemi armiger sep.
- 1616 – 17 Mar 14th James Garsett (Garside?) Clericus sep.
- 1617 May 4th Maria Harington filia Willemi Harington bap.
- 1618 Jul 28th Franciscus filius Willemi Harington armiger bap.
- 1621 Oct 21st Jacobus filius Willemi harington armiger bap.
- 1621 Nov 2nd Henr: filius Roberti Darvell gen' sep.
- 1621 Nov 8th Elizabetha uxor (wife) Joh'is Pinchbeck gen' sep.
- 1621 – 2 Jan 22nd Willemus Wilson armiger sep.
- 1622 Dec 19th Franciscus Darell filius Roberti sep.
- 1623 Jul 9th Theodosia filia Willimi Harington armiger bap.
- 1623 Nov 9th Danael filius Jordani Hopkins Clerici bap.
- 1623 Dec 22nd Jacobus filius Roberti Darrell bap.

- 1623 Jun 13th Johannes filius Willimi Harington armigeri sep.
- 1624 Nov 18th Devereux filius Willimi harington armigeri bap.
1624 – 5 Feb... Temperantia Roane filia Edwardi Roane armigeri sep.
- 1625 May 2nd Anna filia Robert Darrell bap.
1625 – 6 Jan 10th Willimus filius Jordani Hopkins Clerici bap.
- 1626 Jun 3rd Anna filia Willemi Harington arm' sep.
1626 Dec 22nd Willimus Harington armig' sep.
- 1627 Jun 13th Anna filia Wm'i Harington arm' nupere defunct bap.
1627 Jun 26th Margarita filia Edmundi Hall armig' bap.
1627 May 21st Willimus filius Jordanus Hopkins Clerici sep.
- 1628 Apr 3rd Anna filia Jordani Hopkins Clerici bap.
1629 Oct 4th Sarah filia Rob'ti Waple gen' bur.
1629 Nov 23rd Tho: Nicholson and Anna Conie nupt.
- 1631 Apr... Edmundus filius Jacobi Mallet gen' bap.
1631 Sep 29th Richardus filius Joh'is Clerck gen' bap.
1631 Sep 29th Alicea filia Willemi Waple sep.
- 1632 Sep 8th Henricus filius Jacobi Mallet gen' bap.
1632 Dec 5th Matheus filius Joh'is Clerck gen' bap.
1632 Jun 21st Elizabetha filia Rob'ti Darell gen' sep.
1632 – 3 Feb 17th Joh'es Waters et Elizabetha Waple nupt.
- 1634 June 11th Henricus Emeley gen' sep.
1634 – 5 Feb 3rd Theophilus filius Jordani Hopkins Clerici bur.
- 1635 Thomas Hopkins filius Jordani Hopkins Clerici sepelie bat'n
1635 – 6 Jan 20th Jordani Hopkins Clerici sep.
- 1638 Oct 15th Jacobus Mallet filius Jacobi Mallet gen: et Rachel uxoris bap.
- 1639 – 40 Maria Clercke filia Johanni Clercke gen' et Elinere uxor (wife) bap.
- 1672 Nov 21st Charles Twickton Clerk bur.
1672 Nov 21st Mary dau. of Charles Twickton bur.
- 1674 May 4th Francis son of Mr Andrew Corney bap.
- 1675 July 27th Christopher son of Mr Andrew Corney bap.
- 1676 Dec 7th Elizabeth dau. of Mt Andrew Corney gent. bap.
1676 May 5th Andrew Smith Cler' & Mrs Jane Smithson mar.
- 1679 Robert Butcher clerk & Miss Mary Wigmore mar.

- 1680 Robert son of Andrew Corney bap.
- 1681 Sep 5th Thomas son of Thomas Troop clerk bap. bur. 11th Jan 1681 – 2
- 1682 Dec 18th Abigail dau. of Thomas Troop clerk bap.
- 1684 Sep 28th Thomas son of Thomas Troop clerk bap.
1684 – 5 Feb 8th Mr Andrew Corney bur.
- 1685 Nov 19th Ann dau. of Thomas Troop clerk bap.
1685 – 6 Mar 1st Thomas son of Thomas Troop clerk bur.
- 1686 Oct 18th Grace dau of Thomas Troop clerk bap.
- 1687 Oct 29th George son of Thomas Troop clerk bap
- 1688 – 9 Mar 21st harby dau of Thomas Troop clerk bap.
1688 Sep 19th Ann dau of Thomas Troop clerk bur.
1688 Sep 30th Grace daughter of Thomas Troop clerk bur.
- 1696 Aug 30th Hannah Corney widow Bur.
- 1697 Sep 16th Mr William Ashton & Martha King mar.
- 1742 July 30th John Hyde & Anne Hussey each of Bourne m.

**Source: FL/Transcripts/N/7 No 303 & FL/Transcripts/M/26 No 111 Bishop's
Transcripts and Extracts from the Parish Register**

1572

Petition regarding a leper who was excommunicated

May it please your worshippes to understand that accordinge to your commandment I have excommunicated Agnes Lee this 8 daye of Aprill before the hoole congregation who is very poore bodye and haithe been grevealye visited being a leper in verye deede and haithe not comed abroode sense the feaste of All Saintes but haithe upon the devotion of good people having in maner no clothes to her backe whereby she maye cover her nakedness neither is she neither yet anye of hers able to bye anye and as I am by the enhabitors of the towne whose hands are set to this present as a true testymonye crediblye enformed she is not able to travel at all but rather lyke to dye and then standing excommunicate wee know not where to burye her. Wee therefore the enhabitors of the towne of Witham being already charged with her bye reason of her poverty doe earnestelye requyre youre worshippes good will in adjoining her what penance you shall think good if that it please God ever hereafter to make her able to do these and wee earnestly wish and require the same for feare that bye her death wee shall be troubled thus restinge upon your curtesee wee leave of to trouble you from Witham this 8 of April.

John Harrington
Robert Crosdale Vicar

Richard Wapoole	his marke
Robert Jamson.....	his marke
Richard Maxse	his marke
William Pancke	his marke
Jhone Younge	his marke
William Gunbye	his marke
Jhone Gilbert	his marke

Researcher's note: The reply is not complete in the archives and not discernible

Source: DIOC/CP/Box64/1/10

1584

Regarding the church clock

“for keeping the clock” 2s-0d

Source: Church accounts book Witham on the Hill PAR/7

Transcription of the Bishop's Faculty

William by the providence of God, Lord Archbishop of Canterburie, Primate and Metropolitan of all England to whom all Spiritual and Ecclesiastical jurisdiction which did belong unto the Reverend Father John, Lord Bishop of Lincoln before his suspension from all and singular ecclesiastical and spiritual offices & benefices (he being now suspended and during his suspension doth belong to our well beloved in Christ Mr Jordane Hopkins, clerk, Vicar of Witham upon the Hill, Mr Richard Titley, clerk, Vicar Bourne, Mr William Cammock, parson of St Michael's in Stamford, Mr Thomas Baguley, clerk, parson of Carlby, John Frane and William Pancke churchwardens of the parish of Witham aforesaid.) Greetings in our Lord God everlasting. Whereas wee are informed that the parishioners in your said parish are not seated and rancked according to their qualities and degrees soe that some disturbance or disorder in the church was (*caused*) ??. These are therefore to require and authorise you or any foure of you upon a certaine day signified before and to the parishioners of Witham aforesaid to meet att the church of Witham aforesaid and after you shall have examined the severall qualities, conditions and estates of the parishioners there to allot and assign to all and singular the parishioners of the said parish such pewes seates and stalls and places in the church of Witham aforesaid as in your discretions you shall think to be fitt to their severall estates and degrees and to admonish all and singular. The parishioners duly to observe the orders and appointments there and in any case any person or persons shall be refractory to certifie him or them unto our commissary or surrogate with all convenient speed. And of your doings and proceedings herein you are to certifie us or our commissary at or before the last day of October next coming together with those presents. Given att Bourne under the seal of the said commissary and delegate general the sixth day of September in the year of our Lord God 1638.

Local church response (Researcher's note)

In obedience to the authority of this commission we whose names are herunder written did meete at the parish church of Witham above assigned the 17th day this instant October and being complained unto by John Clerke, gent that his pew was too little we found that it is decently seated according to his rancke & degree only it is not bigger than will conteyne places for above 3 or 4 at the most but can find no other place in the said church that with decency & convenience will redresse that streightness but by by obteyning leave of a pew adjoining for a little enlargement.

Jordane Hopkins

Thomas Baguley

William Pancke

John Frane

Source; Witham on the Hill FAC/1/7

Researcher's Note; John Williams was Bishop of Lincoln from 1621 to 1641 but due to his liberal attitudes to the Puritans and the Archbishop of Canterbury's (William Laud) catholic views, he was suspended from his benefices by the Star Chamber, fined and imprisoned in the Tower from 1636 until 1640. William Laud is the William mentioned in the faculty. He was at the time Keeper of the Great Seal, in our terms Chancellor of the Exchequer and the last Bishop to hold this office.

This explains the pre-amble to the faculty above.

1678

The Clerk is allowed 13-4d wages for keeping the clock

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/1

1678 (Nov)

16s 1d collected in the parish towards the rebuilding of St Paul's Cathedral

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/1

1680 (August)

The parish collected 16s-9d towards the relief of slaves in Algiers.

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/1

1682 (May)

The parish collected nine shillings for the relief of French Protestants.

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/1

1683 (Sept/Oct)

The parish collected (unspecified amount) for the brief of Wapping.

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/1

1686 (June)

The parish collected £1-13-2d for the relief of French Protestants.

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/1

1686 (July)

The parish collected 13s-11d for the brief of Whitechapel & Stepney

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/1

1688 (May)

The parish collected 14s for the relief of French Protestants.

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/1

1689 (July)

The parish collected £1-18-6d for the brief granted for the dispossessed Irish Protestants

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/1

1689 (Nov)

The parish collected 11s-9d for the brief of Bungay in Suffolk

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/1

1690 (April)

The parish collected (sum indistinct) for the brief of New Alesford in Hampshire

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/1

1690 (April)

The parish collected 6s-7d for the brief of East Smithfield in Middlesex.

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/1

1691

See 1943 – Church Porch

1698

“All timber and board for the South Isle not then accounted for and therefore is still due to John Ansell and likewise for bringing home the new lead.”

Researcher's note; I think it can be assumed from this entry in the church accounts that the south aisle was re-roofed in 1698.

Source: **Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/1**

1699

Repairs were made to the south aisle as there is a cost still to be paid to John Ansell for timber & board and for bringing new lead.

Source: **Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/1**

1700

Mr Berry (glazier) to be paid £1 for his salary for keeping the windows. (Other sums were paid to him over and above the general maintenance.

Source: **Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/1**

1717

Bishop's Visitation 1717

Good Brother

The practice of transmitting Queries to the Clergy, which was begun by my Pious and learned Predecessor is of such great and apparent Use that I should think myself much wanting, not only to myself but to my Successors if I did not continue it; especially having found the manifold Advantages of it by my own Experience.

The particular Queries which I send you, are the same that you have usually receiv'd in order to the General Visitations; and I doubt not but you will return your particular Answers at the Time of my Visitation, with the same Exactness that you have hitherto done; particularly upon those Heads, which relate to the place of your Residence, and to the Times of performing Divine Service in the Church.

I must further intreat you, not to reckon yourselves unconcerned in the Presentments of your Churchwardens, but to urge them to serious perusal of the Articles of Enquiry; which I have drawn into as narrow a Compass as I could, In hope that the Questions are, the more exact and particular their answers will be. To this end, I beseech you not only to press upon them, the Obligation to their Oath, and to assist them in framing their Presentments; but also to point out to them the particular Persons and Things in

your Church or Parish, which you observe to fall under the respective Articles, and which they in consequence are bound to Present.

I am aware that the work of Visitation hath been usually accompani'd with the Work of Confirmation. But an ill State of Health which I have labour'd under for some Months past, hath made it hazardous if not impracticable for me to undertake both these together; especially in this hot season, to which the long Session of Parliament hath driven the time of the Visitation. For these reasons, I have determin'd, not to Confirm in the course of my Visitation; but to come again to you, on purpose to perform that Work, when I find that I have no other upon my hands, nor any need of being attended by the Officers of my Court. And as the Separations of the Order and Solemnity of both, so will it give me greater leisure at both times, to make my own Enquiries and Observations, and to attend to such Questions and Representations as the Clergy may have occasion to offer. In the mean time I take the Opportunity to declare, that when I come to Confirm I shall not be willing to admit any who are under the Age of fourteen Years.

I commend you, and your Pastoral Labours to the Blessing of Almighty God and am

SIR

Your very Affectionate friend and Brother

Edm' Lincoln

i What number of Families have you in your Parish? Of these How many are Dissenters? And of what sort are they?

We have about 95 families where 2 persons only are Dissenters, viz father and son of a Witham family and they Quakers

ii Have you any Licens'd or other Meeting-House in your Parish? How many? Of what sort? How often do they assemble? In what Numbers? Who teaches in them?

Answer

No meeting house

iii Is there any Publick or Charity School endowed or otherwise maintained, in your Parish? What Numbers of Children are taught in it? And what care is taken to instruct them in the Principles of the Christian Religion according to the Doctrines of the Church of England and bring them duly to Church as the Canon requires?

Answer

We have a Charity School endowed with 8 pounds; 4 pounds from Feoffees of ye Church; 4 pounds from one Mr Thompson of Ropley. The scholars are only taught ye Church Catechism. The Schoolmaster brings them not to Church on ye L'd's Day. The stubbornness of ye parents is laid in the blame.

iv Is there in your Parish any Alms-House, Hospital or other Charitable Endowment? Have any Lands or Tenements been left for the Repair of your Church; or to any other pious use? Who has the direction of such Benefactions? How are they managed? Do you know of or have you heard of any Abuses or Frauds committed in the Management of them?

Answer

We have an house for ye Poor but not endowed, we have an Estate in Parish belonging to ye Church of 26 pounds, 13 shillings and 4 pence under the Direction of Feoffees by virtue of a Deed recorded in Chancery. The Minister of Witham for ye time but ye Feoffees has a negative vote. I know of no abuses in ye Management of these matters.

v Do you Reside Personally upon your Cure, and in your Parsonage-House? If not, Where do you Reside? And what is the Reason of your Non-residence?

Answer

I reside upon my Cure

vi Have you a Residing Curate? What is his Name? How long hath he been Curate? Is he Licensed according to the Canons in that behalf? Doth he live in your Parsonage-House? What Allowance do you make him?

Answer

No

vii Do you know of any who come to Church in your Parish who are not baptized?

Answer

I know of none who come to Church unbaptized. Several that are baptized are not confirmed.

viii How often is the Publick Service read in your Church? Is it duly perform'd twice every lord's day? If not, how often and at what Times, is it perform'd? And how comes it not to be twice perform'd, as the Act of Uniformity and the Canons of the Church, require?

Answer

Publick service is read constantly upon ye Sunday, but one sermon and that in the forenoon.

ix How often and at what Times, do you catechize in your Church? Do your Parishioners duly send their Children and Servants to be Catechized and Instructed? Do they learn any longer Catechism, for the better understanding of the Church? What Catechism do they learn for that Purpose?

We catechize in only; the people cannot be persuaded to send their children or at any other time of ye year.

x How often is the Sacrement of the Lord's Supper administer'd in your Church? What Number of Communicants have you in your Parish? How many of them usually receive? Particularly, did communicate at Easter last?

Answer

The sacrament of ye L'd's Supper is administered 4 time in ye year at Xtmas, East'r, Whitsuntide and Michaelmas.

At East'r last were about 14 ch'n communicants.

xi Do you give open, and timely Warning of the Sacrement before it is administer'd? Do your Parishioners send in their names to you as required? Have you refused the Sacrement to anyone? For what reason? And how has the Person so refused behav'd himself since that Time?

Answer

I do give timely notice of Sacram't. Few of ye that communicate send in their names as required.

xii Have any Publick Penences been performed in your Church since my last Visitation? Do you know of any Commutation of Penance made by any of your Parish, within the same time? By whom was it done? And for what Money?

Answer

No publick penences not commutations of penences that I know of in ye Parish since the last Visitation.

There is one last paragraph

**If you have any particular Difficulties, in the Discharge of your Duty;
If you have observed any particular Defects in the present Canons or Discipline of the Church;
If you have discovered any Neglect, Corruption or Abuses of any kind, in any Ecclesiastical Officers, or others concern'd in the Execution of the same;
If you have any Advice to give or Proposals to make, by which the Glory of God, and the Honour and Interest of the Church, may be promoted or the Government of this Diocese be better ordered;**

I desire you freely to communicate your Thoughts to me; and be assur'd that a proper Use shall be made of what you suggest, in order to the Attaining of the Ends proposed.

FINIS

The document is not signed

Researcher's note: The vicar was Nathan Cronkshaw

1735

Witham on the Hill Augmentation

To the Honourable Governors of the Royal Bounty of Queen Ann

My Lords and Gentlemen

Whereas Nathan Cronkshaw late Vicar of Witham on the Hill in the County of Lincoln did without Entering as should have been done into a Sufficiently careful & Minute Estimate of the Value of the said Vicarage too Implicitly or unthinkingly return the same at £58 – 11s – 10d tho' the present Vicar and Incumb't Rob't Alanson does not make more than £49 per Annum of all the Rights (Except only out of this sum the Church Yard garden House and ab't 2 Acres of Glebe Land yearly value fifteen shillings) belonging thereto As the truth of this has been sufficiently proved to us from sight of a Seale at this time subsisting between the present Vicar and John Ansell Enter'd into at Lady Day 1734 without latent Condition Reserve or Collusion as the Partys profess themselves ready if required to attest upon Oath As the same is further Confirmed to us from Certificates hereunto annexed of the late Incumbents Widow & Sons as well as one of the Clark of the Parish assuring that no account of Neat Profits was ever kept by himself or any other During his Incumbency and by Consequence he could not possibly be so precise as is given In, In Calculating the Exact Value of Witham and also by the other Certificate underwritten of Thomas Ansell of Witham aforesaid whereby it appears that he has rented the said Vicarial Tythes of the Rev'd N Quarles formerly Vicar of Witham at the yearly rent of Forty Pounds and also that he now does and has rented the Impropropriators two Parts at one hundred pounds per Annum (notwithstanding the Impropropriator has a Right of Choosing first which is a great Advantage) above Twenty Years last past and that the Impropropriator pays the Land Tax for the same And being ourselves satisfied of the truth of the above Relations and moreover fully persuaded that tho' the Income of Witham be so slender & strait yet the Service must be laborious and hard by reason of three Hamlets besides two large Farms call'd with us Inships Consisting of 120 Familys (none of w'ch are Dissenters a Circumstance so uncommon that we could not on this Occasion forebear to mention it) all which Familys do however parish to Witham and are equally the Vicars charge We having been duly ascertained of these particulars could not judge it unbecoming us as neighbours to Relate the hardship of the Vicars Case and moreover to join with him in an humble petition to the Governors of the Bounty of Queen Ann for the Augmentition of the Maintainence of the Poor Clergy that he may not by a former Indescretion be precluded from all Benefit of the s'd Bounty but that as his Case is we are well satisfied Equally Compassionable with others whose Livings are Discharged and having £200 ready to this good purpose he may not (if it should seem meet in your great Wisdom) be forever defeated in the Design by too Incurious a Return of the Value of his Living a Case so singularly circumstanced does we Humbly Conceive deserve your Compassionate Notice and Regard and Justify Dispensing discretionally with a Rule that in this instance may not be needed from will be an Obstacle to the Intended Charity and prove to the future as well as present Detriment of the Church since the intended Charity will be applied to no other Parish. Your Petitioner therefore will be duly thankful for any favourable Resolution taken hereon and we Attestors to the truth of the above Narrative shall also heartily take part in any Obligation laid upon.

Your Honours most Humble Servants

..... Minister of Edenham. Chaplain to His Grace the Duke of Ancaster
..... Vicar of Bourne

..... Fisher Vicar of Thurlby

E Lafarque Rector of Greatford

C M Berke A M Rector of Uffington

This is to certify whom it Concerns that no punctual and exact Acc't was ever kept by the late Mr Nathan Cronkshaw of the Annual Amount of the Dues and Profits of the Vicarage of Witham on the Hill in the County of Lincoln During his Incumbency either by himself or any other to the certain knowledge of us.

Elizabeth Cronkshaw
Nathan Cronkshaw
John Cronkshaw

I John Ansell of Witham on the Hill in the County of Lincoln, Farmer Do hereby Certify that I now Rent the Vicarial Tythes of the said Parish of Witham on the Hill of Robert Alanson the present Vicar thereof at forty five pounds a Year (the Vicarage Houses gardens and two Acres of Glebe excepted) and am to hold the same by Contract for Three Years from Lady Day 1734 And do further Certify that the same or not of a greater value than forty five pounds a Year. Witness my Hand this Eighteenth day of April 1735.

John Ansell

I Thomas Ansell of Witham on the Hill in the County of Lincoln , Farmer Do hereby Certify that I rented the Vicarial Tythes of William Quarles who was Vicar of the said Parish of Witham on the Hill at the yearly Rent of forty pounds And I further Certify that the Tythes of the said Parish are Yearly Divided into Three parts and that Two parts thereof belong to William Johnson Esq the Impropiator and the other belongs to the Vicar. And that the Impropiator or his Tenants have the Right of Choosing first (which is a very great Advantage to the Impropiator's Two Parts) And I do further Certify that I have Rented the Impropiators Two Parts for above twenty years last past at the Yearly rent of One Hundred Pounds And that the Impropiator pays the Land Tax for the same. Witness my Hand this Eighteenth day of April 1735

Thomas Ansell

This is to certify that I John Sewell of Witham on the Hill have been Clark of the s'd parish of Witham this nine & twenty years last past some part of that time during the Incumbency of the Rev'd Mr Quarles and the remaining part during the whole incumbency of the Rev'd Mr Cronkshaw the late Vicar and the Present the Rev'd Mr Alanson And I further Certify that during seventeen years of the late Mr Cronkshaw's Incumbency I gather'd the Tithes and sold them out for his use and I further attest that neither he nor myself or any other kept any manner of Account of the Value of the

same or that he ever received (to the best of my knowledge) any Money that was advanced by the Sale of them but that it was constantly paid into the hands of his wife Mrs Eliz. Cronkshaw. And I further Certify (as I am willing to testify upon Oath) that I and Mr Anthony Ansell of this Parish were present when the Value of the Living of Witham was given in to ye Commissioners at Grantham and that when Mr Cronkshaw was required to give in the Values he declined it alledging (In ye Presence of several Clergymen) that he did not really know its value having never kept any account at all of its value but had committed the Management of it entirely to others all his time. And I declare that when he was further press'd to give it in as well as he could (since he was told that he was obliged to fix some certain Value upon it) that he was assured by the Rev'd Mr Cawthorne the Rector of Carby within a mile of this place as well as some other Clergymen, unknown to me, that there c'd be no detriment accrue to him, if he gave it in, anywhere within about ten Poundsof the real Value. And I further testify that he still declined giving it in for the reason above and as he afterward frequently declared to his Sons and many others as well as myself (as I am willing and I doubt not that they are to attest upon Oath) for fear he should by a mistake be guilty of Perjury. And therefore I further Avey that he committed the return of the Value to myself and Mr Anthony Ansell above mentioned and now living to give it in as we pleased (tho' we had neither of us ever kept any account at all or knew the value thereof) for Mr Cronkshaw said he w'd have nothing to do with it. And to the best of my knowledge we accordingly gave it in exactly £58.(common fame generally calling it thereabouts) Mr Cronkshaw not in the least interposing. Witness my hand this eighteenth day of April 1735.

John Sewell Clark of Witham

Source: DIOC/BEN/9/33 Witham on the Hill Augmentations 1735

1737

“A Bill for the parishioners of Witham on the Hill March 31st 1737

Being for drawing several designs for the refurbishing of there (sic) church steeple also for several journeys over with them, the whole charge of £5-5-0.

Rec'd Dec 22nd 1737 the full contents of this bill and all demands by me, George Portwood”

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/1

1738

The whole charge for the rebuilding of the steeple is £365 16-08 ³/₄

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/1

Tower rebuilt by Messrs Jackson & Chaplin, Stonemasons

Source: A biographical dictionary of British architects – 1600 – 1840 by Howard Calvin

1750

Faculty to appropriate a seat

John Taylor Doctor of Laws Vicar general and Official principal of the Right Rev Father in God John by Divine permission Lord Bishop of Lincoln lawfully constituted to all and singular Clerks and literate persons wheresoever in and throughout the whole Diocese of Lincoln, greetings.

Whereas it hath been represented unto us by William Nixon of Witham on the Hill in the County and Diocese of Lincoln, Farmer that he now occupies and for many years last past has occupied a large farm within the parish of Witham on the Hill aforesaid known by the name of Bowthorpe Park Farm, that during all this time that he has occupied the said farm he has had a seat or pew situated in the middle Isle of this parish church of Witham on the Hill aforesaid to sit sat and and kneel and hear Divine Service in belonging and appertaining to this said farmer which said seat or pew is about twelve feet in length and about eight feet in width adjoining to the middle Alley South a seat belonging to Manthorpe Farm North, a seat in the chancel belonging to (Mr Johnson) [*crossed out*] or occupied by Mr Johnson East and the Vicar's seat West and that the said seat or pew has constantly belonged to the said Bowthorpe Park Farm and has been constantly used occupied and enjoyed therewith to hear Divine Service in by the said William Nixon and all others who have occupied the said farm for these ten twenty thirty forty fifty and sixty years last past and before and since and for time beyond the memory of man without interruption wherefore the said William Nixon hath prayed that we would grant him our Licence Faculty to sit and hear Divine Service in the said seat or pew within the said parish Church of Witham on the Hill and of these Dimensions and Boundaries aforesaid exclusive of all others. We do therefore perfectly charge and strictly enjoin command ye and every of ye jointly and severally that ye cite or cause to be cited the Minister and Inhabitants of the said parish of Witham on the Hill in special and all others in general having or claiming any Right Title or Interest in or to the said seat or pew by reading their presents or causing the same to be read in the parish Church of Witham on the Hill aforesaid on some Sunday before the Return hereof during the time of Divine Service that they or some of them appear before us our Surrogate or some other competent Judge in this behalf in the Consistory Court of the said Lord Bishop situate within the Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Lincoln on Tuesday the Twelfth day of September instant between the hours of nine and twelve in the forenoon of the same day then and there to show cause [if any they know] why our Licence or Faculty should not be committed and granted to the said William Nixon to sit and hear Divine Service in the said seat or pew within the parish Church of Witham on the Hill as aforesaid. Moreover ye are to intimate or cause to be intimated to the said Minister and Inhabitants in special and all others in general that if they or some of them do not appear or appearing show not good and sufficient cause to the contrary we our Surrogate or some other competent Judge in this behalf do intend and will proceed to the granting such our Licence or Faculty to the said Wm Nixon for the purpose aforesaid their absence or contumacy in anywise were notwithstanding.

And whatsoever ye shall do or cause to be done in the premises ye shall duly certify to us our Surrogate or some other competent Judge in this behalf together with these presents given &c.

The within written Citation was openly and publickly read in the parish Church of Witham on the Hill within mentioned on Sunday this [*left blank*] day of September in the year of our Lord 1750.

[By me]

Source: Bishop's faculty 11/79 1750

1758

Faculty regarding appropriation of a seat

John Taylor Doctor of law Vicar general and official principal of the Right Reverend Father in God John by Divine permission Lord Bishop of Lincoln lawfully constituted to all Christian People to whom those presents shall come greetings. Whereas the Reverend Richard Ward Clerk Master of our Surrogate rightly and duly providing in a certain cause or (.....) of granting as Licence or Faculty for appropriating and confirming a certain seat or pew lately depending before us in judgement between William Nixon of the parish of Witham on the Hill in the county and diocese of Lincoln the party agent and promoting the said business on the one part and the Minister, Churchwardens, Parishioners and inhabitants of the said parish in special and all others in general and Mrs Jane Johnson intervening for her interest in this behalf the parties against whom the said business was promoted on the other part the proctor of the said Jane Johnson having on her behalf set forth and alleged that the pew or seat mentioned and described in the Citation with intimation issued forth in this cause containing in length about 10 feet and in breadth about 8 feet adjoining to the middle alley south and the Vicar's seat West hath for time immemorial to a certain Capital messuage or tenement called Manthorpe Hall farm in the Parish of Witham on the Hill aforesaid, the proprietors owners tenants and occupiers whereof had from time to time sat in the said seat exclusive of all others and that she this the said Jane Johnson is the proprietor and owner of the said messuage or tenement and is Lady of this Manor and besides having a large estate is the principal person or figure and fortune in the said parish and hath lately built a new handsom house upon her estate in the said parish as the place or seat of residence for herself and family and that she and her family and constant resorted to hear Divine Service when performed in the said parish Church other than the seat or pew aforesaid and that therefore she the said Jane Johnson by her said proctor humbly prayed our licence or faculty for appropriating and confirming the said seat or pew to her the said Jane Johnson and her family to sit stand or kneel to hear divine service and sermons when performed in the said parish church and the proprietor owners and occupiers of the said House by her newly erected exclusive of all others and because that upon the due execution and return of the said citation with intimation no others either in special or general appearing they were pronounced to be in contempt of the proctor of the said William Nixon having confessed the allegation exhibited on the part and behalf of the said Jane Johnson as by her Desired Justice so requiring as in and by the proceedings thereupon had and

now remaining in the Registry of our Consistory and Episcopal Court may more fully appear.

Know ye therefore that too the Vicar General and official Principal aforesaid in pursuance of the said Decree and as far as by the Ecclesiastical laws of the Realm and temporal laws of the same we may or can do by virtue of our power Ordinary and Episcopal by these presents give and grant our Leave and Licence or Faculty for appropriating and confirming the said seat or pew in the parish Church of Witham on the Hill aforesaid containing in length about ten feet and in breadth about eight feet and adjoining to the middle alley south and the Vicar's seat west to her the said Jane Johnson and her family and the possessors owners and occupiers of the house or family seat by her newly erected and their families to sit stand and kneel in and hear Divine Service and Sermons when performed in the said parish Church of Witham on the Hill exclusive of all others.

In testimony whereof we have caused the seal of our office to be affixed to these presents Dated the twenty fourth day of November in the year of our Lord 1758.

Source: FAC Book 1/195

1874

This village is one of the prettiest in South Lincolnshire and its elevated church and churchyard command a charmingly picturesque prospect. The venerable and interesting church dedicated in honour of St Andrew consists of some ancient features, but none of these belonged to the first church known to have existed here before the Conquest. The oldest relic is the font, having an octagonal bowl, on one panel of which a patriarchal cross: this of the early Norman period. The next feature is the fine old late Norman or Transitional arcade of four bays, the pillars of which are circular and rise from grand square sub bases. The capitals are ornamented with widely spread foliated features characteristic of the period. The aisle into which the arcade opens probably represents the original one of which the little semi circular light at the west end is a remaining feature. The porch arch with its peculiarly foliated caps and the doorway within are believed to be of the same period although a little more developed in style. An arch towards the east end of this aisle and spanning it, is of the same character and shows that there was a south transept before the erection of the present tower. Next comes the north arcade of the Decorated period (circa 1310); this consists of four bays having low octagonal pillars, standing upon unusually large circular bench-tables and high pointed arches of two chamfered orders. The windows and door of this aisle are coeval and formerly extended to the east end of the nave before the erection of the later transept, known as the Toft transept. In one of the side windows are the remains of the original painted glass and shield of arms dimidiated according to old custom. There are however some traces of earlier work in the chancel viz, buttresses of the east end and the beautiful foliated cap at the east end indicating the existence of a south aisle, and that it had a corresponding north aisle has been ascertained from evident traces exposed during the restoration. The piscine in the east wall on the south side of the altar is of the same period. During the Perpendicular period, some considerable alterations were made in this church. Then the beautiful

west window was added, the crocketed buttresses against the west wall and probably the transept. After this the clerestory was added, which has occasioned the unpleasing wall space and low pitch of the gable at the west end, which mars its otherwise fine effect. When the chancel arcades were destroyed is not precisely known, but probably in the first quarter of the 15th century. It is not known where the original tower stood but perhaps it occupied the site of the present steeple, which was built in 1737. (In connection with the old tower a story is told to the effect that one Christmas eve, the ringers for the purpose of taking refreshment, left the bells “standing” and adjourned to a tavern that stood opposite. One of their number, a little more thirsty than the rest, insisted that before going back to ring they should have another pitcher of ale, and this being at length agreed to by his companions, the party remained to drain the last draught. This extra mug of beer saved their lives for while they were drinking it the steeple fell. Whether this is merely a tapster’s tale or the sober statement of a remarkable incident, we are not in a position to confirm.) Between the Toft transept and the chancel is a hagioscope, a jamb of which seems to have served as the head of a Norman light. The nave and chancel are remarkable for their most unusual width, in which respect the fine large modern chancel arch responds, intended obviously for the future erection of a light screen, which whilst it would evidently add to the beauty of the internal appearance of the church, would not in the least obstruct the view eastward. There is a small memorial brass to a member of the Harrington family and his wife. The east window of the chancel contains stained glass placed there by public subscription as a tribute to General William Augustus Johnson, who died in 1863. About 15 years ago the church underwent partial restoration, at which time the porch received attention, a new figure of St Andrew being then placed in the nich of the gable and a weather beaten fragment of its prototype removed from the apex and inserted in a recess over the inner doorway. The present restoration is extensive: almost all the chancel has been rebuilt and an elegant roof replaces the old one; several new windows have been put in different parts of the church, and others have received unsparing attention; and the chastely designed pulpit, the reading desk and the whole of the doors are new; the latter are remarkable for the tasteful character and delicacy of their ironwork, which is worthy of study. The work was carried out under the surerintendance of Mr Scott (son of Sir Gilbert Scott) and the contractors were Messrs Franklin of Deddington, Oxfordshire. The cost of the chancel is £800, exclusive of architects charges, and this is borne by the impropiator A C Johnson Esq; the restoration of the other parts of the fabric costs about £1300, which we believe will be defrayed out of the church estate. But further work remains to be done, which will be undertaken by a future generation. The reopening services were held on Tuesday. Shortly after 11 o’clock when the church was crowded, a procession of the clergy in surplice, hood and stole entered, the choir singing a suitable hymn; amongst those present were the Bishop of Lincoln, the Ven Archdeacon Trollope, the Very Rev the Dean of Stamford, The Rev Preb Young, Rural Dean the Rev Prebendary Gilbert, The Revs J Clark, Rector of Little Bytham, J Dodsworth, Vicar of Bourn, F Carroll, Vicar of Tallington, J P Sharp of Edenham, C Farebrother, Rector of Irnham, J Mirehouse, Rector of Colsterworth, C Knipe, Rector of Swayfield, A Garfit, Rector of Easton, B S C Kennedy, Rector of Stainsby, G V Thorpe, Vicar of Thurlby, F W H Courtier, Curate in charge of Swinstead, T A Parmenter, H Prior, Vicar of Baston, Booth, Curate of Bourn, W H Johnson, Vicar of the Parish &c. The prayers were read by the Vicar, the first lesson by the Rev J P Sharp, the second lesson by the Rev A Garfit and the epistle and gospel by Prebendaries Young and Gilbert. The sermon was preached by the Bishop who took for his text Mark xvi, 19, “So then after the Lord

had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God.” The discourse of the venerable Bishop was very appropriate to the occasion and was delivered with an earnestness and solemnity befitting the high character of his trust. At the close a collection was made on behalf of a fund for providing an organ for the church. This was followed by the holy communion, the Bishop and his chaplain, The Dean of Stamford and the Rural Dean being the administrators. At the service in the evening the Rev C Knipe preached. A large number of the ladies and gentlemen were entertained at the hall by A C Johnson Esq. and in the neat little schoolroom by the Vicar and his lady. Tuesday being a “field day” of the ringers of the district the Witham campanologists were reinforced by experts from Maxey, Bourn and Ginton, and the church possessing a really fine peal of bells, their melodious music was borne on the breeze to the distant to the distant heights of Carlby and Essendine.

Source: Newspaper cutting (probably from the Stamford Mercury) in Johnson/1/7

1893 (Fri Sept 29th)

Addition to the churchyard was consecrated by the Bishop of Lincoln. The ground is a generous gift of Mr A C Johnson Lord of the Manor.

At 8 o'clock the following morning the Bishop celebrated the Holy Eucharist. At this service was consecrated a set of handsome alter vessels and cruets in silver gilt (*sic*), the gift of Miss Johnson & Mr & Mrs Johnson. A new altar nine feet long was used for the first time, handsomely vested and furnished in place of a small one which was totally inadequate for this large and stately church.

Source: Newspaper cutting loose in the old 1548 onwards Church Account Book PAR7/1, probably from the Stamford Mercury.

1901

Insurance values

£1200	On church including porch, tower but excluding chancel
£ 100	Pulpit, furniture, lectern, chairs, lamps and fixtures
£ 250	Organ
£ 270	Bells
£ 80	Clock, dial and case
£ 150	Stain Glass window in N transept

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/2

1907

Edward by Divine Permission Lord Bishop of Lincoln To all Christian People to whom all these presents shall come greeting Whereas a petition has been filed in our Episcopal and Consistorial Court of Lincoln on the part and behalf of the Reverend Leonard Henry Cooley, Clerk, M A Vicar of the Vicarage and Parish Church of Witham on the Hill in the County and Diocese of Lincoln and Thomas Pick and Charles Bradshaw the Churchwardens and other Inhabitants of the said Parish Alleging that it is proposed by our Petitioners to remove the chairs with which the Church is at present seated and to insert in the place thereof Oak Benches according to the plans of Mr A N Prentice of London an experienced Architect tracings of which have been filed in the Registry of our said Court. That the seating accommodation is at present for 144 adults and under the new arrangement will be for 180 That the cost of the said works has been estimated at the sum of four hundred and fifty six pounds of which the sum of Two hundred and twelve pounds has been subscribed by W L Fenwick Esq of Witham Hall the remainder to be provided in part by a grant from the Trustees of the Witham on the Hill Church Estate and our petitioner the Reverend Leonard Henry Cooley under takes and agrees that he will make himself personally responsible for any deficiency or such other sum as may be required to complete the said works Our Petitioners therefore pray that our Licence or Faculty may be granted to the said Vicar and Churchwardens of the said Parish for the time being to enable them to reseat the said Church as aforesaid to sell any materials not required in carrying out the said works and to devote the proceeds arising therefrom towards defraying the expenses of the said works And our said Court being inclined to grant the same unless sufficient cause was shown to the contrary hath caused all and singular the Parishioners and Inhabitants of the said Parish of Witham on the Hill in special and all others in general having or pretending to have any right title or interest in the premises to be cited or enter an appearance within a certain time to them prefixed and now elapsed then and there to shew cause if they had or knew any why a Licence or Faculty should not be granted to the said Vicar and Churchwardens of the said Parish for the time being for the purposes by them desired with Intimation that if they some or one of them did not enter an appearance within the time aforesaid or having so entered an appearance did not show good and sufficient cause to the contrary our said Court our Surrogate or some other competent Judge in this behalf did intend and would proceed to grant a Licence or Faculty to the said Vicar and Churchwardens and to the Vicar and Churchwardens of the said Parish for the time being for the purpose aforesaid in their absence or contumacy in anywise notwithstanding And whereas upon the due execution and return of the said Citation and Intimation no person entered an appearance within the time aforesaid and therefore a Licence or Faculty was decreed to be granted by our said Court to the said Vicar and Churchwardens and to the Vicar and Churchwardens of the said Parish for the time being for the purposes aforesaid Justice as requiring We therefore the said Edward Lord Bishop of Lincoln in pursuance and confirmation of the said decree do as far as by the Ecclesiastical Laws of theis Realm and the Temporal laws of the same we may or can give and grant a Licence or Faculty to the said Vicar and Churchwardens of the said Parish for the time being to enable them to reseat the said Parish Church of Witham on the Hill as aforesaid according to the said plans to sell such old materials as may not be required in carrying out the intended works and to devote the proceeds arising from such sale toward defraying the expenses of the said works they the said Vicar and Churchwardens and the Vicar and Churchwardens for the time being

rendering and passing a just and true account of their doings and transactions herin when lawfully required In testimony whereof we have caused the Seal of our said Court to be hereunto affixed this twenty fourth day of July in the year of our Lord One thousand nine hundred and seven

Source: Bishop's faculty FB12/13 Witham on the Hill 1907

1907

“The nave of the church was fitted with oak seats, a new wood block floor laid, the centre pillar in the south arcade underpinned, the organ was moved back into the south transept and a vestry was made in the N.W. corner of the church.

The above work was dedicated on its completion by the Bishop of Grantham on 20th March 1908.”

Moving organ	£ 7-0-0
Constructing new vestry (curtains and rods)	£ 8-6-0
Underpinning pillar	£ 24-18-6
Wood block floor (nave £15, chapel £4	£ 19-0-0
Oak seats – nave	£ 250-0-0
West block	£ 78-10-0
West pew & canopy	£ 117-5-0
Total	£ 445-15-0
Faculty for above	£ 3-7-0
Expenditure met by church estate	£ 143-18-6
Church account	£ 11-13-0
Anon	£ 100-0-0
Walter Fenwick Esq	£ 252-15-0

The architects fee was defrayed by Walter Fenwick Esq

The architect was Mr A N Prentice of London

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/2 & FAC Plan 1907/19

1911

A window representing the Annunciation of the B.V. was placed in the N side of the nave and was unveiled on the 29th October 1911.

The approximate cost was £55 which was subscribed by the children, relatives and friends of the late Mrs Moxon of Palace Farm in whose memory it was provided.

The window was from the studio of Messrs Burlison & Grylls of Gt Ormond Street London.

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/2

1912

The Rood Screen was dedicated on Thursday 29th Feb 1912 by the Lord Bishop of Grantham. It was erected by subscription in memory of the late Mr A C Johnson at a total cost of £184-5-6 raised as follows

Private subscription	£163-11-6
Collection at dedication service	£ 3-5-0
Church Estate	£ 17-11-10
Total	£184-5-6

Detail of cost

Screen	£175-11-6
Cutting inscription	£ 3-5-0
New stone step and alteration to floor	£ 4-2-6
Printing	£ 16-6
Stamps	£ 10-0
Total	£184-5-6

The rood beam is morticed for the addition of the central cross and the brackets for the attendant figures of SS Mary & John which addition is estimated at about £60.

The work was executed by Messrs J Thompson & Co of Peterborough.

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/2

1912

The brass tablet mounted upon slab of Clipsham Stone with overhanging cornice was erected in June 1912 in memory of Ernest Jackson as a tribute of affection from parishioners and friends.

Subscription (Over 200)	£13-16-11
-------------------------	-----------

Costs

Jones & Willis brass tablet	£11-13-6
R Tinkler (Castle Bytham), stone panel with cornice & fixing	£ 1-17-0
Sundries (carting etc)	£ 6-5
Total	£13-16-11

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/2

1913

New chiming apparatus

This was added to the church clock by the makers Messrs G F Cope and Co of Nottingham at a cost of £45. The chimes were first set going Nov 1st (All Saints Day) 1913

The cost was met as follows

Cheque from Mr Walter Fenwick	£30-14-0
Donation from W L Fenwick Esq	£10-0-0
Contribution from church account	£ 4-6-0

Mr Fenwick supplied his own joiners to help the makers in erection, thus saving the Churchwardens all expenses. He also undertook that his men should winf the chiming apparatus daily.

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/2

1916

In April 1916 (*Wartime*)

An insurance against damage from anti-aircraft has been effected upon the church, and as an additional precaution the chimes are silenced at night.

Source: Parish News – By Rev Cooley

1918 (*Wartime*)

Special expense incurred in screening church windows in accordance with lighting regulations

J E Noble – distemping windows	£ 4-5-10
T B Measures – curtains (4 windows)	£ 3-8-1
Total	£ 7-13-11

The cost was defrayed by a grant of £7-13-11 from Church Estate 27/3/1918.

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/2

1919 (May 31st)

The font cover was given to the church by Edenham Church.

The canopy was made for Edenham Church in 1851 by W & J Pitt joiners of Edenham. It is found to be a copy of the beautiful 15th century canopy in Frieston church near Boston.

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/2

1919

The Rood & figures were provided by a legacy left for the purpose by Mrs A C Johnson. Designed by Mr C G Hope and executed by Messrs J Thompson and Sons of Peterborough. They were blessed by Bishop Hine on 31st Oct 1919.

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/2

1919

The Chancel gates were made by J Dick, Blacksmiths of Barholm and fixed in December 1919

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/2

1920

The churchyard cross was erected as a war memorial, designed by Mr A N Prentice and executed by Messrs M Tuttel of Lincoln. Blessed by Bishop Hine 29th March 1920. Cost defrayed by subscription of practically every household in the parish.

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/2

1926 (Oct)

New furnishings for high altar

Gilded ash riddle posts with rods

From special fund	£12-0-0
From general fund	£ 5-5-0
Total	£17-5-0
Blue dasal?? And riddles (Given by Vicar)	£ 5-10-0
Total	£22-15-0

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/2

1928 (August)

The church clock quarter chimes have been on strike lately and have been causing some confusion to those who rely on them. The cause of the trouble is difficult to trace but we hope to have them put right by a clock maker. These chimes were added to the clock by the Vicar and Churchwardens in 1913. The present clock was made in 1870, and is as good today as when it was new. It is interesting to note that there has been a church clock here for some 400 years, for it is referred to in our old church account book, in the year 1548. (*Researcher's note: The actual note referred to in the church accounts is in the year 1555 and not 1548 as stated by Canon Cooley*) An expert, commenting recently on this curious fact wrote "Witham on the Hill must have been a place where important people lived. In those days a church clock was an extreme rarity, for the pendulum had not then been invented. This invention we owe to Galileo, the great Italian astronomer, and was first applied to clocks about fifty years later."

Source: Parish News – By Rev Cooley

1931 (July)

Proceed of fete July 11th towards fund for wiring the church for electric light £20-5-0

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/2

1931 (Oct)

Churchyard flagstaff erected

Special account	£12-14-0
Cost of staff and erection	£ 6-6-2
Cost of flag	£ 1-17-0
This left a balance of £ 4-11-10	

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/2

1931/2

The church was wired for electric light

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/2

1932 (June)

“Recovery of an interesting relic. Through the kindness of Miss Tiptaft, an ancient stone bowl has been placed in the porch of the church. This bowl is almost certainly the original holy water stoop which once stood beside the South door. (The one by the North door, though defaced, is still in place. The bowl is of the same date as the Norman South doorway. It is circular in shape, and has four chamfered “beaks” on its outer side. It obviously once stood on a low pedestal. It is cut out of Barnack rag, the stone of which much of the earliest part of the church is built. As the quarries at barnack have been exhausted for some 400 years, this alone proves its antiquity. The record of its removal is still preserved. The two churchwardens, Richard Walpull and John Ashewell in the year 1559, recorded that they sold a “holliwater stocke of stone” to John Gilbert of Witham, “which was put to profane use”. Probably it was taken across the road, and has been there ever since. It is gratifying to know that after nearly 400 years it is once more restored to the church”.

Source: Parish News – By Rev Cooley

Researcher’s comment: Other expert opinion has commented on the vessel in question and given an opinion that the vessel in question is no more than a domestic mortar and of no religious significance. There seems to be no direct evidence linking the vessel in question to a statement in the church accounts of 1559. Therefore the provenance of the artefact remains doubtful.

Researcher’s note: it is not clear where the recorded statement of the churchwarden’s can be found. It is not in the church accounts book for that period.

1933 (3rd Nov)

Painting flagstaff £1-9-0

Source: Church Accounts Book Witham on the Hill PAR/7/2

1934 (August)

The history of the church clock. First, this church has possessed a clock longer than almost any other parish church in the kingdom. As long ago as 1548, (*the first recorded note is actually in the church accounts book for 1555*) payments are mentioned in our old church account book, to the clerk "for keeping the clock" In those days, church clocks were exceedingly rare, and were to be found only in churches of great importance, such as cathedrals. How long this clock was in existence we do not know, but the fall of the steeple in 1736 must have destroyed it or its successor. In 1775, the sum of £29-9-0 was paid to one William Bird for a new clock, which must have been a poor affair at the price! Again in 1862, still another clock was provided by Joseph Farrin, for which he was paid £141-6-9. This struck the quarters on two bells. For some reason or another this proved unsatisfactory, and in 1870, the present clock, made by messrs G & F Cope, of Nottingham was put in its place at a cost of £55, and the old clock taken in exchange. Lastly in 1913, the chiming apparatus was added to the clock by the same firm, the cost being £45-0-0. the repairs just completed are costing us £12. The clock bears the following inscription:- 1870, The Rev. W H Johnson, Vicar. S Smith, H M Ansell, Churchwardens."

Source: Parish News – By Rev Cooley

1935 (October)

"The organ. The present organ (since replaced) dates from about 1874, but the vicar can find no record of its cost or installation. In those days a two manual organ in a village church was something of a rarity. Though old fashioned in construction, our organ is wonderfully efficient for its size, and is capable of a great range and sweetness of tone, from the softest echo to a volume of sound sufficient to fill a cathedral. Those who heard Sir Walford Davies playing it the other day will have realised this."

Source: Parish News – By Rev Cooley

Researcher's note.

Sir Walford Davies was a very famous organist and composer and he was knighted in 1922 and in 1934 was appointed master of the Kings Musick. Witham on the Hill was honoured indeed!

1935 (Nov)

"The church roof. The roof was replaced some 125 years ago. In May 1818, the work was commenced. It consisted of removing the whole roof and replacing it with a new one. The total cost came to the sum of £736-17-2, in addition to the old lead and timbers. We have arrived at this figure by adding up the various payments made to the contractors during that and following years. Messrs Smith, Dale and Sandy were the joiners, and the lead work was done by John Waters of Bourne, who supplied new lead in exchange for the old, in proportion of 112cwt for 120 cwt. The joiners further erected the plaster ceiling below the roof. This apparently did not exist before.

Incongruous as it appears to visitors, we are sometimes grateful to it for helping to render the church both lighter and warmer. But it *does* want a new coat of white-wash!”

Source: Parish News – By Rev Cooley

1943 (July)

“The church porch. There was a very interesting note recently in the local press on this subject explaining why churches so often possessed large porches, and the many uses to which they were put in olden days, as for instance, places where courts were held, inquests conducted, and certain religious ceremonies took place. Our own church porch has seen many vicissitudes. It was rebuilt in the year 1691, and again in 1862, using many of the old stones. The cost of rebuilding was £136. The somewhat crude figure of the patron saint over the entrance was carved by a certain William Hilliam at a cost of £2-2-0 and the architect's name was Edward Browning. His fee was £6-10-6. The old mutilated figure of St Andrew was preserved within the porch, and a new one erected in its place outside. This caused much offence at the time, when a few old-fashioned folk regarded it as idolatrous! One old lady almost feared to enter the church, lest the “graven image” should fall on her as “judgement”!

Two interesting stones may be seen in east outside wall of the porch. One bears the names of the churchwardens who were in office at the time of the earlier restoration in 1691. They are John Ansell and William Pell. The other stone is part of the old “Mass dial”, formerly of course on the south front.

Two massive oak gates once enclosed the porch. These were somewhat out of keeping with the ancient stone work, and we removed them about ten years ago. They are now to be seen to better advantage in Mr Banks’ garden, opposite to the Hall drive.”

Source: Parish News – By Rev Cooley

Researcher’s note

Edward Browning practised in Stamford and was the son of his more famous father Bryan Browning and he took over the practice when his father died in 1856.

Source: A biographical dictionary of British architects 1600 – 1840 by Howard Calvin, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art.

Researcher’s note

William Hilliam practised in Stamford and was responsible for the Ostler memorial in Bourne. This memorial was also designed by William Browning.

Source:- Rex Needle Bourne Website