

Things to notice in the church:

1. The small windows high in the North and South walls which gave light into the former musicians' gallery.
2. The board setting out the decree of Chancery (1637) relating to Richard Humfrey's bequest made almost a century before in 1547. This still benefits the parishioners as the Richard Humfrey Charity and the Richard Humfrey Educational Foundation.
3. The stained glass window by Kempe, placed in the tower in 1897, depicting the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist.
4. The memorial tablet on the North wall, replaced after it was reconstructed, which reads:

Near this place lyes the Body of Mary
The most Worthy and Virtuous Wife of
Colonell ^{Ed}Mon^d Mortimore Eldest
Daughter of S^r John Briscoe of
Bo^ughton in ^{ve} County of Northampton,
Knight, by the Lady Anne his Wife
Eldest Daughter of the Right
Honourable Nicholas Earl of Banbury,
& The Lady Isabella Eldest Daughter
Of the Right Honourable Montjoy Earl
Of Newport. Who departed this Life the
Tenth day of March 1706. Leaving
Two Sons and One Daughter by her Said
Husband, Who in kindness to her Memory
Caused this monument to be erected.

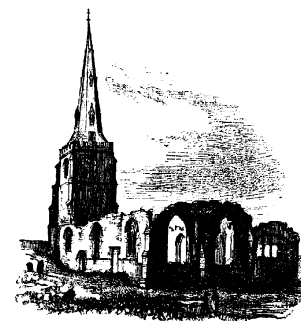
5. The designs of the hand-embroidered kneelers are based on the patterns of mediaeval tiles excavated in the old church of St John the Baptist in 1973.

The Reverend Stephen Trott MA LLM *Rector*

MMVI

BOUGHTON PARISH CHURCH

Notes for Visitors



The ancient parish church of St John the Baptist, on Boughton Green, which archaeological evidence suggests was first built as long ago as the eighth century AD, fell into disrepair and disuse in the 17th and 18th centuries, the last recorded wedding taking place in 1708. Soon after the above engraving was completed, the tower and spire fell in 1786, making further use of the building impossible. It remains however the parish church of Boughton, hence the dedication of the parish to St John, the name given by those who first founded it over the spring which rises underneath the ancient church and is to be seen welling up from an arch at the foot of the East end of the remaining ruins.

The church which is currently in use for Christian worship in Boughton is to be found in the centre of the village. It too is mediaeval in origin although little remains of the middle ages apart from part of the south wall, and the 15th century tower, which bears an inscription stating that it was repaired in 1653.



The present place of worship was originally built to serve as a chantry chapel for Boughton Hall, but became a chapel of ease for the villagers for whom it was more conveniently placed, even before the dissolution of the chantries in 1548. The Return of Chantries of 1546 describes “one chapell situat within the town of Boughton, wherein commonly the seid ii chauntry prestes do celebrate for the ease of the parishioners, for the parish church is distant iii partes of a myle from the town or any house.”



It may originally have been dedicated to St Thomas of Canterbury, if it is indeed, as seems likely, the “Chapel of St Thomas the Martyr, built of old times”, which is mentioned in the register of Bishop Burghersh of 1329, when the chapel was licensed for the administration of the sacraments for one year following. Lord Vaux had “a seate” in it which the Church Survey of 1637 found to be 4 inches too high!

By 1806 the tiny chapel had become “manifestly at present too small to contain all who would come to Church... something must be done soon to make the Church safe for the Parishioners to assemble in.” At that time it measured only 42 feet 4 inches long and fifteen feet wide. At that time there was an inscription over the South door bearing the date 1599. In 1806 Luke Kirshaw, who became Mayor of Northampton in the following year, submitted plans (which still survive) to enlarge the church by extending the North wall by 12 feet, repairing the rest of the building, and replacing the pulpit, desk, clerk’s desk, pews and singers’ gallery.

The Faculty which was granted for the work permitted use to be made of “whatever stones may be wanting to rebuild the North wall or any other walls, from the ruins of the Church situate on the Green.” The original watercolour plans still exist at the County Record Office. The work was carried out in 1807 at a cost of £345.14s.7½d. A print of c. 1830 shows the church with pointed hood moulds over its windows, which disappeared in 1846 when further restorations and enlargements took place.

A three-light East window and the vestry on the North side were created (see the date stone outside on the East wall gable) and in 1894 the church was considerably extended and equipped with its present organ. At the reopening of the church on the latter occasion the preacher was the distinguished historian Mandell Creighton, Bishop of Peterborough.

The latest refurnishing took place in 1962, when the organ was moved from the North wall of the sanctuary and placed in front of the East window, behind a tapestry screen. The influence of contemporary work at Coventry cathedral may perhaps be discerned in the reordering here.

The list of known Rectors goes back to the 13th century, the first recorded Institution being that of Philippus in 1312, although there have undoubtedly been priests serving the churches in Boughton for much longer than that. Although there are gaps in the records, 39 Rectors have been appointed here to date. The oldest Register surviving, now in the care of the Diocesan Record Office, dates from 1599 with entries from 1547 onwards copied in from “the olde book”.

The Church Rooms adjoining the church were built as a village school in 1841 by the Howard-Vyse family. Since a larger establishment was built by the County Council in Moulton Lane in 1932, these Rooms have been an invaluable resource for the parish church, and have progressively been restored during the last ten years as a meeting place for the Church and village organisations.