CHAPTER 1

The Church Building:
Changes through Time

By Maureen L. Ille PhD

Springthorpe Church has been built on the highest ground of the village. Indeed, it appears to stand on a mound that today is surrounded by a stone wall. Early churches were often located on pre-Christian sites of spiritual significance, such as burial grounds, taking advantage of people's existing devotion to (or awe of) a particular place. It is possible that this location in Springthorpe was originally an ancient pagan burial mound[1].

SAXON

The first parish churches in England were not built by the Church itself, but by local lords. They were essentially owned and operated by that lord. Before the Norman invasion one of the accepted ways of becoming a thegn, or nobleman, thereby rising in status, was to build a church, especially one with a tower. The physical evidence suggests that the original church at Springthorpe was built in the late Anglo-Saxon period, 10th-11th century. Like many other English churches, it has bits and pieces of rough-hewn Saxon stones contained within its walls. Many churches also have Saxon foundations supporting a newer structure, and usually the oldest surviving elements of the church are in the masonry of the tower. Springthorpe Church is no exception.

[1] See Semple p.120

The Tower (fig. 1): Towers have, throughout history, been erected as lookout posts, their height allowing a broad view of the surrounding land. Bells hung in these towers could also warn of attack. In England during the 9th and 10th centuries, the Saxons developed them as additions to the west end of their churches, partly to carry bells, but at the same time as a defensive refuge and a lookout in times of danger. In times of attack they might be the only refuges for villagers. As such they were built without a staircase at the base. Instead, a retractable wooden ladder was lowered from a trapdoor leading to the upper level. Such appears to have been the arrangement at Springthorpe.

Towers can also be seen, and their bells heard, from a great distance, and this served the Church's purpose, too. Thus the tower became a tradition in church architecture. In Springthorpe's tower there are a number of features that suggest a pre-Norman origin. The whole tower is about 43ft high, but only about 35ft shows surviving medieval work.[2]

Herringbone masonry: Low on the exterior south wall of the tower is an area of herringbone masonry (fig. 2b), and a single course is just visible at the base of the north wall. Inside the tower the herringbone stonework is more extensive and can be seen more clearly on both the north and south walls (fig. 2a). None of it, however, is visible at a higher level. Usually this kind of masonry is considered to be Anglo-Saxon in origin, although it may be early Norman, but pre-dating the Norman Conquest (early 11th century, before 1066).

[2] The top 8ft of the tower is Victorian rebuilding in a Neo-Norman style.

Fig.1 Tower of Springthorpe Church

Fig. 2a Internal herringbone masonry, north tower wall.

Fig. 2b External herringbone masonry, south tower wall

Fig.3 Saxon Tower Window

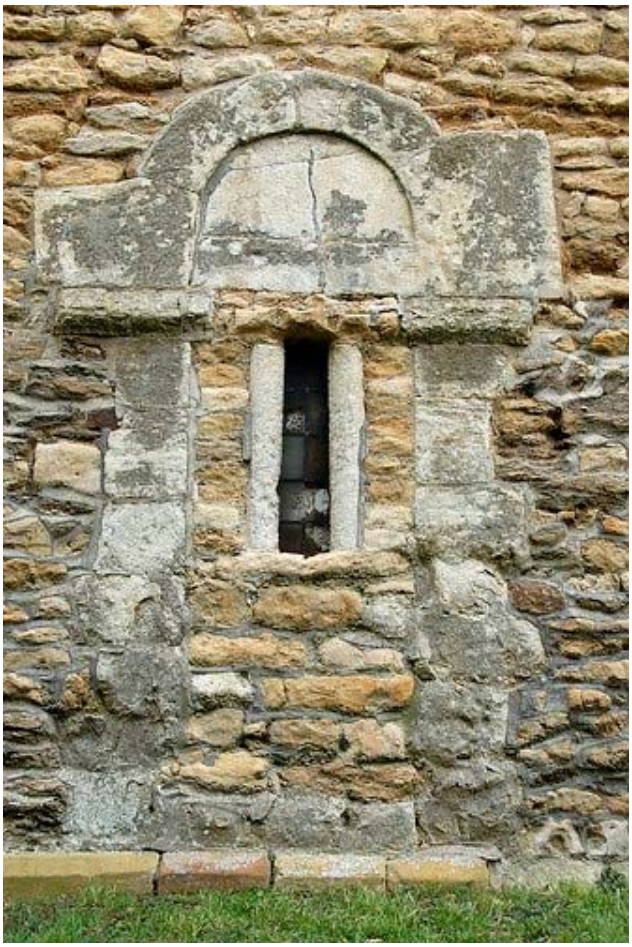

Fig.4 Bocked Saxon West Door of the Tower

Saxon Window: Set into the south wall is a small window, a narrow opening having a simple semi-circular top with an integral hood moulding (fig. 3). At one time this head would have been a single stone (monolith) but long ago it fractured and weathered, and appears to have then been deliberately carved to make a triangular top to the window opening. There are two interesting circular perforations symmetrically placed one at each side, the function of which is unclear. Two rectangular stones that appear to have been reused are probably Norman, and these form most of the side jambs. This is considered by authorities in the field to be an original window and its style again suggests Saxon origin, although the window has been repositioned, probably during Norman re-building of the tower.

Saxon Tower Door: In the west wall is a blocked-in west door, of narrow dimensions (Fig.4). A distinctive arch surmounts the jambs. At first glance this arch appears to be basically semi-circular, but with unequal stones at either side of the tympanum. Closer examination, however, reveals that apart from four irregular-sized *voussoirs*[3] at the top creating the arch, the remaining lintel and tympanum have been carved out of a single stone that has been identified as the base of an ancient stone coffin.[4] This stone has cracked almost vertically but is supported by stones that were inserted when the door was blocked in. This blocking-in seems to have utilised certain stones from other architectural features, notably two cylindrical shafts that may once have been the jambs of the small Saxon south window of the tower described above.

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[3] *Voussoirs* = wedge-shaped stones used in constructing an arch
[4] Blenkinsopp in Notes & Queries V.2, (1891) p.28; and Stocker & Everson, p.255.

These now form the jambs of a small window that has been inserted into the blocked doorway to admit a little light into the lower room of the tower. It is not known in which period this door was blocked in, although the stones seem ancient. The jambs of the doorway itself are built of much-weathered, squared blocks of stone and these are considered to be in their original positions.[5]

NORMAN

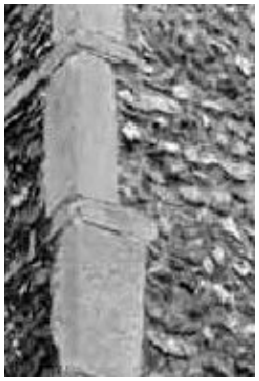
Fig.5 Saxon long-and-short work

Despite the Saxon features described above, the tower at Springthorpe Church also has distinctly Norman features suggesting that it was rebuilt by Norman masons. The quoins (cut corner stones) are definitely not the so-called "long-and-short-work" of Saxon architecture (fig.5). Instead, they are of the distinctly Norman style of squared blocks laid 'side-alternately' (fig.6). The quoins are also set slightly forward of the walling suggesting that the walls were intended to be cement rendered, as were most early stone churches. The tower of nearby Heapham Church gives us an idea of how such rendering may have looked.


Fig.6: Quoins of Springthorpe

The Nave: Although Saxon church towers were built sturdily of stone, the rest of the church was often built of wood with a thatched roof. It would have consisted of no more than a rectangular Nave in which the congregation would stand, and a Chancel for the officiating clergy. According to the Rev. E.L.Blenkinsopp, at Springthorpe "*the Nave of the*

[5] Stocker & Everson, p.255.

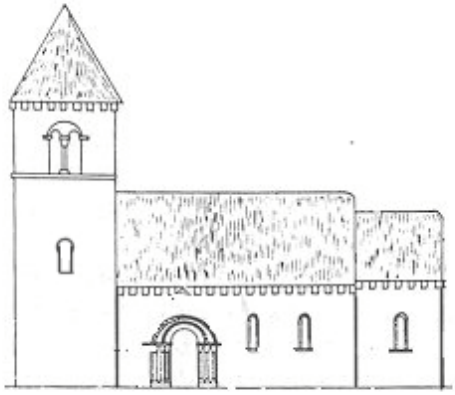

Fig. 7a Appearance of the Norman church c.1150 probably with thatched roof.

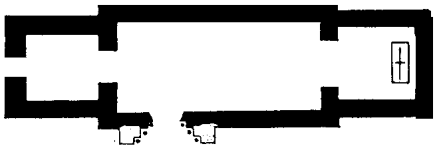

Fig.7b Plan c.1150 with Norman south portal in its original position.

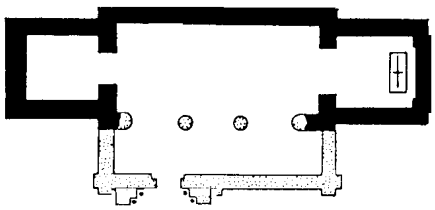

Fig.7c Plan c.1225 with south aisle extension and relocated Norman doorway

Fig.8a Norman South Doorway

Fig.8b Door Column Details

church was burnt by Knut".[6] However, the idea seems inconsistant with the fact that Canute (c.985–1035) was a Christian king. Furthermore, from the 9th century Lincolnshire was at the heart of the Danelaw – that part of the country dominated and ruled by the Danes.

The Normans rebuilt the church in stone, as they did with many other Saxon churches, "in the process destroying much of the regional differences in favour of a more unified Norman 'look'"[7]. The style we call Norman in England is known as the Romanesque throughout the rest of Europe. It was based on the ancient Roman style of architecture that utilised the semi-circular arch (see Fig.7a). The plan of the nave was a simple narrow rectangle, with the square tower at the west end and the chancel at the east (see Fig.7b)

The Norman Doorway is the only feature of the Norman Nave that survives at Springthorpe Church today. This south portal is a splendid example of Norman stonework (Fig.8a). It is a fairly elaborate portal for a simple parish church, and presumably the Nave would have been similarly decorated, with narrow rounded-arched windows and probably a semi-circular Chancel arch. The Norman doorway consists of three concentric semi-circular arches, stepping back to the door itself. Each arch is carved with a zig-zag chevron design. The two outer arches are mounted on carved capitols above narrow columns. We can see typical Norman masonry patterns such as chequerboard, chevron and cuvilinear volutes (Fig.8b). This fine doorway was preserved and completely relocated during the 13th century, when the Nave was extended by the building of the south aisle (see Fig.7c).

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[6] Notes & Queries v.2 (1891), p.28. Blenkinsopp does not cite a source for this information.
[7] www.britainexpress.com

GOTHIC

The South Aisle had probably been built during the 13th century when processions became a feature of worship requiring a circular route round the church. In addition, before the Great Plague of 1348-50 growing congregations had to be accommodated. By this time a new architectural style was developing, imported from France, one based on the lancet, or pointed arch, and known today as the Gothic. In England, this so-called Gothic period lasted from about 1200 to 1500 and over such a long time span had three main phases. In its first phase it is called Early English.

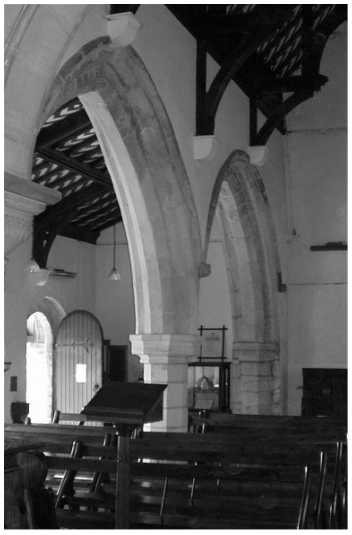


Fig.9: Gothic Arches between south aisle & nave.

Still surviving in Springthorpe Church from this period is the south arcade of two simple pointed arches springing from octagonal piers against the east and west walls of the nave, joining at a central octagonal column (Fig.9). These arches may have had some medieval decorative patternwork at one time, but during a later restoration all the decaying stonework was scraped down (see below).

Early English Window: In the north wall of the Nave there is a single surviving Early English window, with tracery creating an upper central quatrefoil (Fig.10). Beneath the pointed arch the window is divided into two sections with trefoil tracery. The lack of severe weathering of the stone on the outside indicates that parts of the window have been restored, perhaps when the Victorian stained glass was installed. There is no surviving evidence of any medieval stained glass in Springthorpe Church.

Neglect: Documentary evidence indicates the sad state of neglect that parts of the church had fallen into, even at this early date. An Archdeacon's Visitation in about the year 1300 set out a list of defects in the structure of the building.[8] In Modern English the list reads:

- The rain penetrates the top of the Church and the window in the gable of the Chancel needs partial glazing.
- Two windows in the Church should be glazed.
- The rain penetrates into the Tower of the Church on the North side

We do not know how long this neglect lasted, but there is certainly some documentary evidence of upgrading in the period around 1300-1350. The two south facing windows of the south aisle were of the second phase of English Gothic architecture. This is called the Decorated Gothic, with increasingly elaborate tracery. At Springthorpe, two pointed south windows were each divided by two mullions, forming three sections with typical curvilinear tracery at the top. These must have been inserted in the early 14th century, perhaps soon after the unfavourable Archdeacon's report.

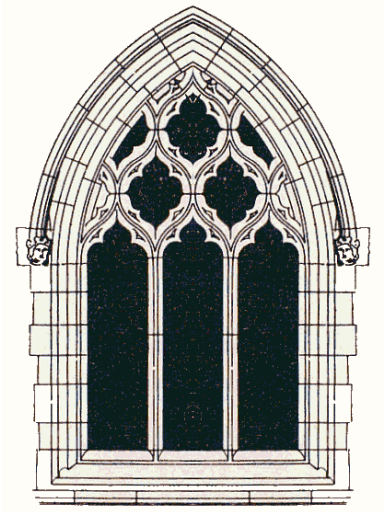


Fig. 13 A Typical Decorated Gothic Window

Tudor Windows: There must have been another phase of improvements to the Nave during the late 15th or early 16th century, because Springthorpe Church has two surviving examples of Late Gothic windows. They are of the so-called 'Perpendicular' style characterised

[8] Oxoniensis The History of Heapham, Pilham and Springthorpe (1905) p.16.

Fig.10. Early English north window

Fig.11 Tudor Gothic north window

Fig.12 Tudor south-east window

by an emphasis on vertical lines. The smaller of these, like the Early English window, is in the north wall of the Nave. Although it, too, has tracery based on trefoils, the overall shape of the window is rectangular (Fig.11).

The second window of this same period is much larger and more impressive. It has a flattened, low, wide arch known as a Tudor arch (Fig. 12). The window is divided into three sections by two stone mullions. Again the trefoil tracery is evident. Today, this window is set into the east wall of the Victorian south vestry. However, Nattes' drawing again proves useful in showing that it was originally set in the east wall of the south aisle.

One of the most noticeable differences between the church as we see it today and Nattes' drawing, is the appearance of the Tower. It was topped by crennelations (battlements), and at each corner was an ornate Gothic pinnacle giving it added height. Much less noticeable is the South Porch, a small, solid and simple stone structure, hiding from view that splendid Norman doorway (but also protecting it from the elements).

What was the function of a south porch on a church? In ancient times, apparently, it was where the weapons of the people were stored prior to entering into the sanctuary. It was also used for settling various money transactions, such as paying dowries or rents. Consequently, it would have been furnished with benches on both sides. Before the Reformation, though, the Porch had another function. It was where the sacrament of marriage was carried out. A wedding was a relatively informal affair, it seems, consent between the parties being witnessed by the priest. A nuptial mass was sometimes, but not always, performed afterwards inside

the church. After the Reformation, however, the ecclesiastical authorities took more control. They formalised marriage with a public ceremony, performed by the priest before a congregation inside the church, and informal weddings in the porch were no longer tolerated.

Despite the religious upheaval of the Reformation, the Tudor period saw the end of the great church-building era. Thereafter, little was done to most existing parish churches to change their appearance, and nothing, it seems, was done at Springthorpe. The next great changes here occurred in the nineteenth century, during the so-called 'Gothic Revival'.

The Eighteenth Century

We are fortunate in having a drawing of Springthorpe Church from the 18th century, thanks to John Claude Nattes. Nattes was commissioned by Sir Joseph Banks in 1789 to record the buildings of Lincolnshire. This project resulted in more than 700 drawings and watercolours that are now in Lincoln Central Library. Nattes' drawing of Springthorpe Church (1793), seen from the southeast, reveals further interesting features of the medieval architecture, some of which no longer exist (see Fig.14).

Fig.14: John Claude Nattes' drawing of Springthorpe Church, 1793

It is also clear from the drawing that these windows in the Nave were more elaborate than those of the Chancel, which looks quite dilapidated. This is a very interesting point, because in English parish churches the Nave was the financial responsibility of the parishioners, whereas the upkeep of the Chancel was the responsibility of the incumbent clergy. In Springthorpe the parishioners, presumably including one or two wealthy benefactors, appear to have upgraded the Nave, whilst successive rectors neglected the Chancel. Looking at the Chancel in Nattes drawing, we can see two simple lancet windows of the earliest Gothic style, and these appear to be blocked in.

VICTORIAN RESTORATION

The documentary evidence that describes the appearance of the church in the 19th century is contained in the returns of the Rural Deans following the Visitations of 1845, 1850, 1851 and 1852. These, too, indicate great neglect, but they also tell us of improvements that began in the middle of the 19th century.[9]

1845:

> ***Springthorpe*** *- This Church Saint George, like its neighbour [Heapham], is much out of repair and it is a question of whether much good can be done to such buildings, without a thorough re-edification. Much earth has accumulated round the foundations to the height of two feet above the floor of the church. The roof is in bad repair, and all the windows want reglazing. The Chancel has suffered all the abominations of modern repairs – tiled roof and plaster ceiling . . .*

[9] Stonehouse, W.B. A Stow Visitation (1940) pp.68,87, 92 and 95.

1850:

Springthorpe – *The floor and the pews of this Church are in a very bad state. The lead on the roof has been repaired.*

1851:

Heapham *and* ***Springthorpe*** *are in a state very discreditable to the parishioners.*

1852:

Springthorpe – *This Church has been greatly improved since my last visit by an outlay of about 70£. The floor has been relaid, a new prayer book has been provided. The Church is now well pewed. Sir Thos. Becket has liberally contributed towards the repairs of the Church and has presented the parish with a new Com[munion] T[able] cover, and has promised to place a better fence round the Churchyard.*

Fig.15: Architect's drawing of the church in 1864,
before the first Victorian restoration

The Restoration of 1865:

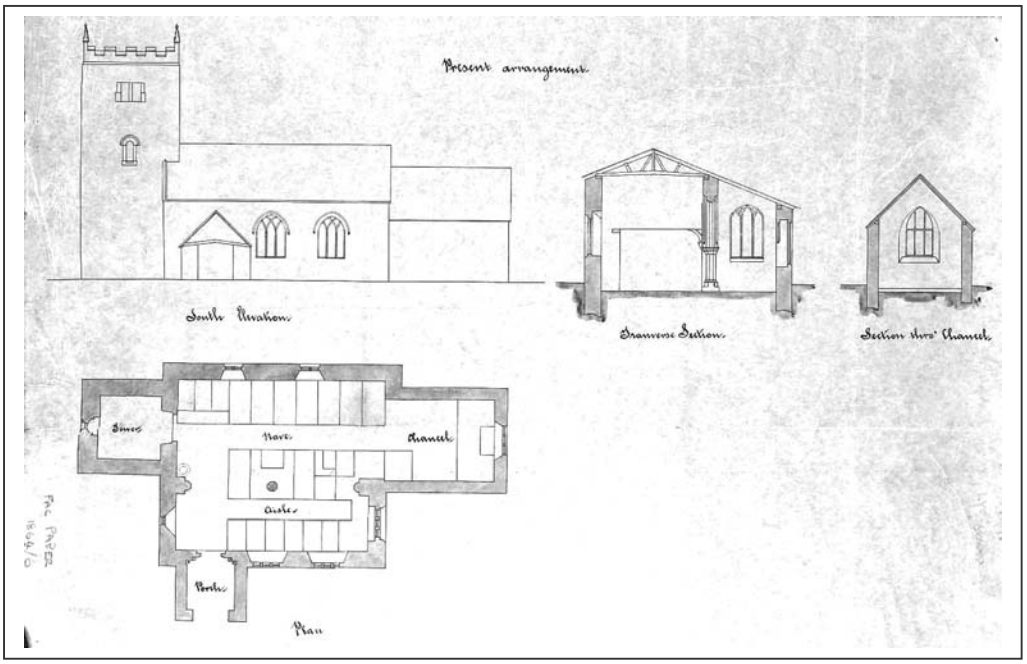


Fig.15 Architest's Drawing: The Church before restoration ,1864.

Despite this effort of 1852, by the time Rev. E.C.L. Blenkinsopp was appointed Rector of Springthorpe in 1863 the church must have been in a poor state of repair. Under his long Rectory (1863-91) much building was done to improve the church at Springthorpe, particularly the Chancel.

The initial Petition to make improvements was signed by the Rector E.C.L.Blenkinsopp, as well as by Ben Milburn (Churchwarden), and villagers Toyne Booth, Henry Charles Cook and John George Stephenson, on May 9th 1864. The documents relating to this restoration are now stored in the Lincolnshire Archives.[10]

From these we know that the contractor had to "*take down the Porch, North and East walls of Chancel, the East end of the Nave, the whole of the roofs, and the seats and pews*". The drawings by the architect, Henry Goddard of Lincoln, show the appearance of the church before restoration (fig. 15) and the planned changes in the appearance of both the interior and exterior of Springthorpe church (fig.16).

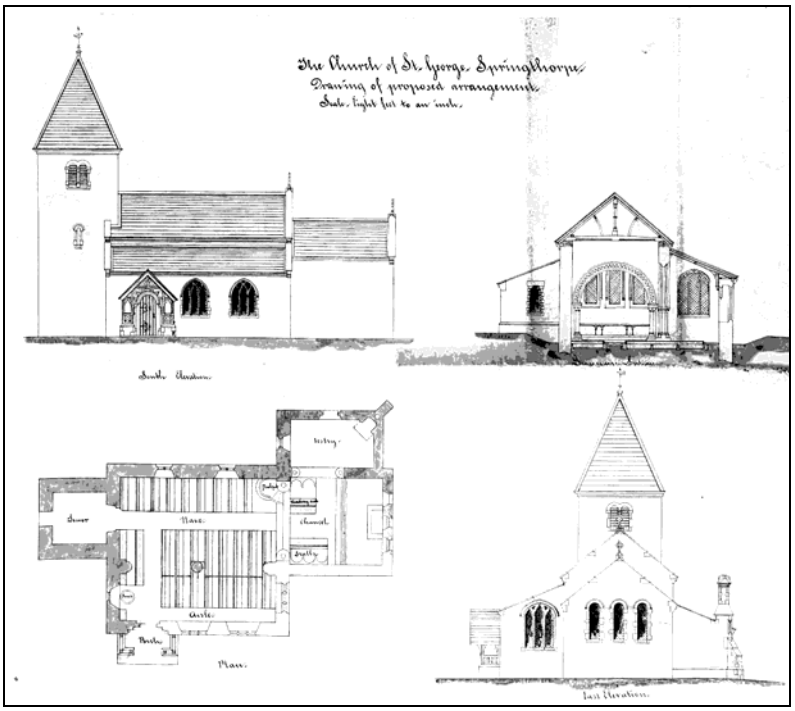


Fig.16: Architect's Drawings of the Restoration of Springthorpe Church 1864/65

In addition to the rebuilding of the Chancel there was to be a completely new Vestry, built onto the north wall of the Chancel. A sum of £2 was

[10] Lincolnshire Archives: FAC. PAPERS 1864/6

included specifically for "*a firegrate, chimney piece, and hearth stone in the Vestry*".

There are two distinctive features of the drawings that are not in evidence today. The most noticeable is the square, hipped Tower roof, forming a low steeple. This was to be topped by a weather vane, for which the seemingly disproportionate amount of £8 had been allocated. Was this roof ever built? The other feature was the new south porch, an open-sided wooden structure that was to replace the existing stone one. The stone one we have today must have been preferred.

The interior of the church today still has the large semi-circular Neo-Norman chancel arch surmounted on cylindrical piers, built during this 1865 restoration. A similar semi-circular arch leads to the north Vestry. The Chancel's east wall was rebuilt and the triple arched window installed. All of the medieval stone of the piers and arches of the south aisle, as well as the stonework of the old windows, was "*thoroughly scraped and cleansed so that every portion of colourwashing or plastering*" was removed. In addition, "*every portion which may be decayed, defaced or cut away*" was "*neatly restored and made good*".

The floor of the Aisles, Tower and Chancel were "*to be paved with six inch Staffordshire tiles alternately black and red laid diagonally on dry rubbish*". The re-roofing is described in great detail, and the drawings show that the Nave roof was now separated from that of the south aisle and was of a steeper pitch. There is no mention of any decorative painting of the ceiling or walls. The cost of this restoration was estimated at £600 (already raised by subscription and grants), plus a further £100 for the tower (intended to be raised by Voluntary Subscription).

A later Rector of Springthorpe, Rev. Benjamin Davies (from 1910-37), recorded some of those benefactors who contributed to the cost of this restoration, which he said amounted to almost £1,000 in total[11]:

- Sir Thomas Beckett of Somerby, the principal benefactor
- Sir Hickman Bacon, Bart.
- Rev. Joseph Cox, Headmaster of the Grammar School
- Right Rev. John Wordsworth D.D.
- Mr. Brackenbury,

Rev. Davies also tells us of the generosity of the parishioners – "*Nothing could exceed the hearty manner in which the whole Parish and neighbourhood came forward to help in the great work*." Other sources, however, suggest that it was not unusual for churchwardens and parishioners to be opposed to spending money on restoration. The Rev. Blenkinsopp himself had stated that at Springthorpe it was only thanks to "*the greatest landowner in the place coming forward to give money*" that the restoration was done at all. He reported that the parishioners had said "*Oh, it has lasted our father's time, it will last ours, and we think you had better let things alone.*"[12]

Restoration of 1888:

To return to the church building itself, it is clear that at least one later project accounts for other changes in the appearance of the church. The Lincolnshire Archives also has plans for building work associated with the Chancel in 1888, again at the instigation of Rev. E.C.L. Blenkinsopp, and again designed by the architects Goddard & Son of Lincoln (see fig.17). This project was an extension on the south side of the Chancel (see fig.18a). On the architect's drawings it is called the New Vestry, but it was also referred to as the Organ Chamber.

[11] Appendix p.?
[12] Obelkevitch, p.111

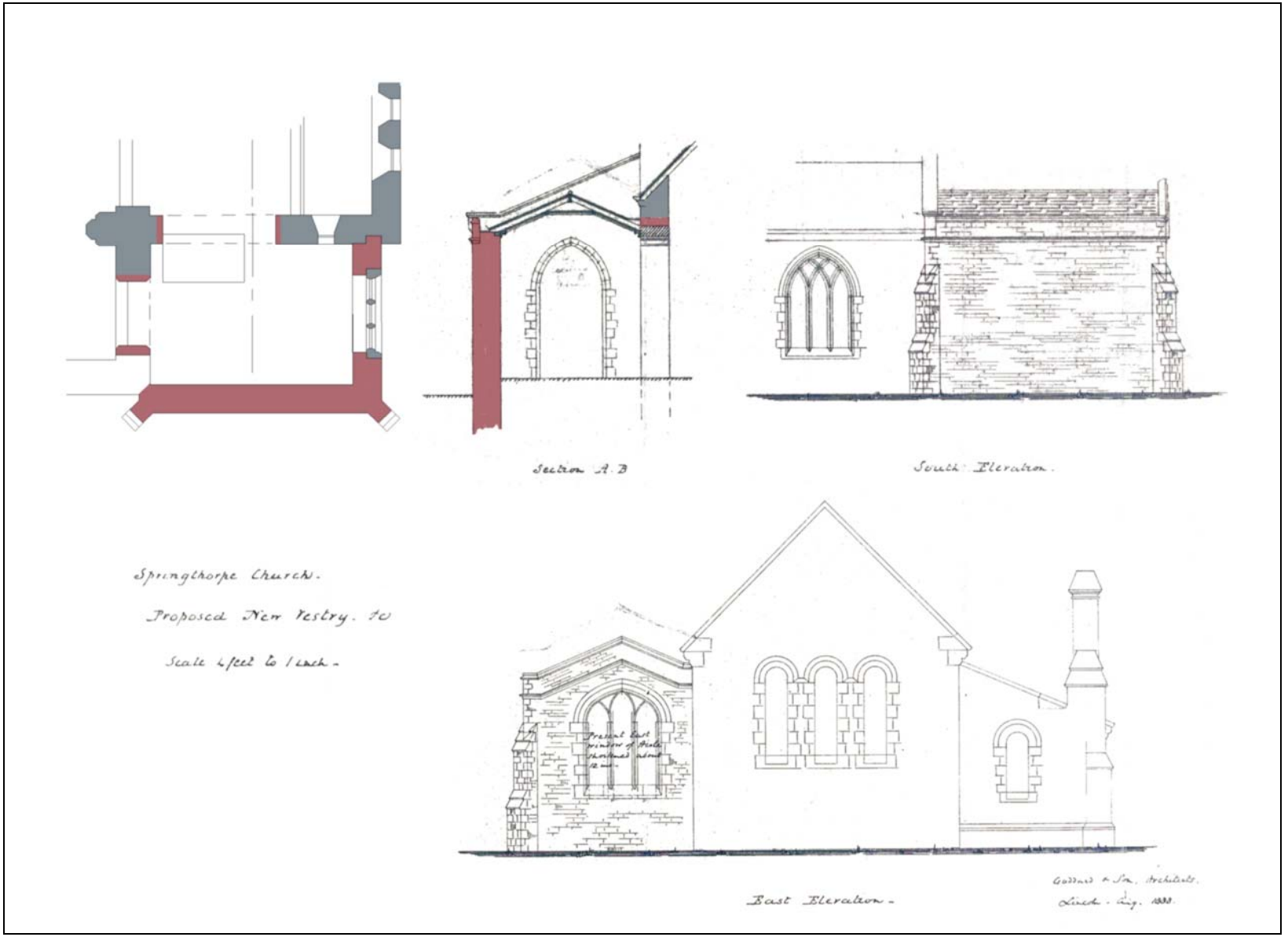


Fig. 17 Architect's Drawing for Extension of 1888

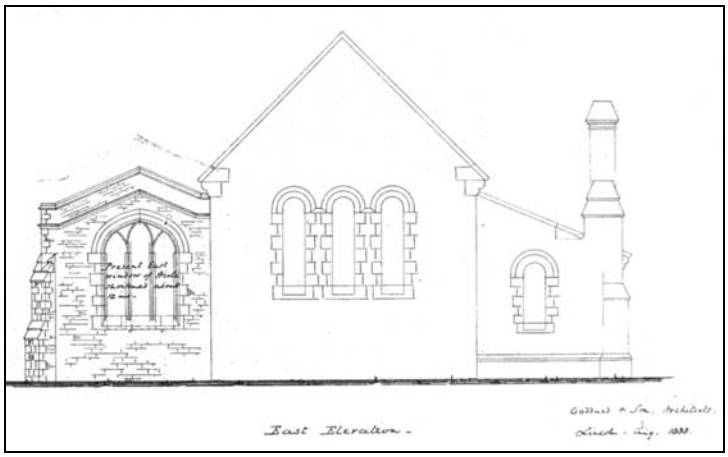


Fig.18a: Detail of the architects drawing for the new Vestry of 1888

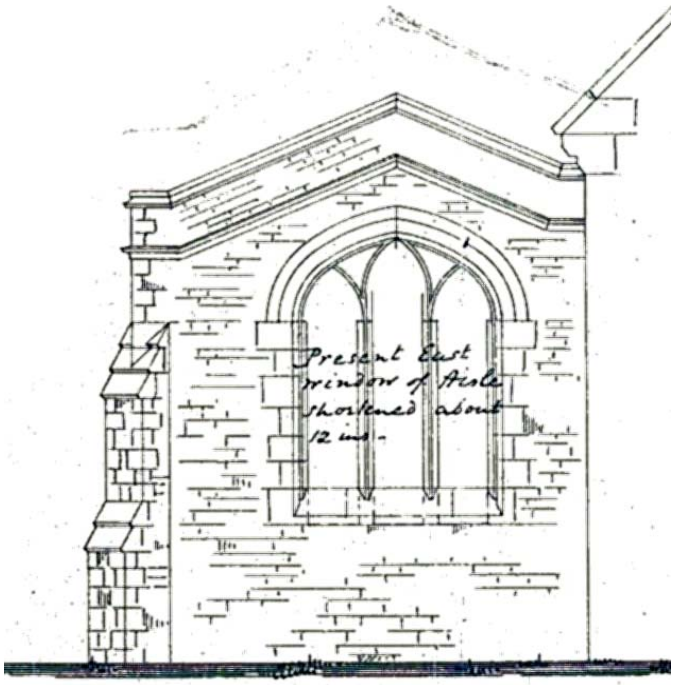


Fig.18b Detail showing note of the intention to cut down the window.

Today this extension is best seen from the southeast and it is clearly a later addition (Fig.19). It is a tall building with a gabled roof that is

Fig.19 Church from the southeast showing
the New Vestry/Organ Chamber of 1888

almost hidden by bold battlements. The drawings show that the building was originally intended to be lower, but sketched-in lines indicate a change of plan raising the height, presumably at the request of Rev. Blenkinsopp. The Tudor Gothic window that was once at the east end of the south aisle was removed, and relocated so that it is now the east window of this New Vestry/Organ Chamber. It seems likely that the added height of the building was to prevent the medieval window being cut down by twelve inches as proposed in the plans (see fig.18b). An additional small window, not indicated in the architect's plans, has been placed in the south wall – a simple lancet window within a rectangular surround. Finally, the stone walls have bold buttresses at the corners.

One other feature is different today from the architect's drawings of both 1864 and 1888. A comparison with a photograph of the north Vestry

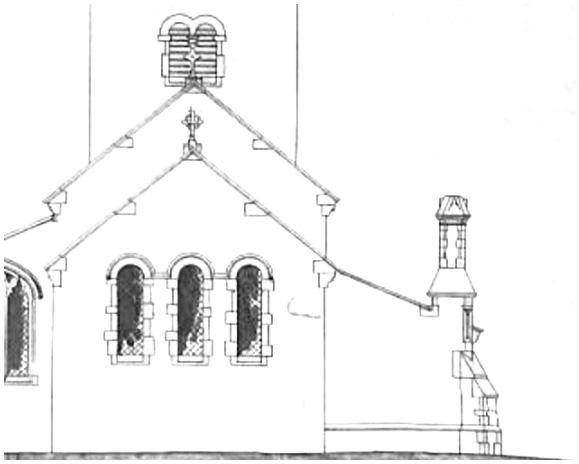


Fig.20 NE chimney today and in plans of 1864 and 1888

today reveals that the chimney of the original Vestry has been increased considerably in height (fig.20). How can we account for that?

Lincolnshire Archives has a handwritten tender from J. Constantine & Son of Manchester, manufacturers of "*Patent Convoluted Stoves*", accompanied by a plan.[13] It is dated August 30th, 1889 and shows the proposed installation of a "*Warming Arrangement*" for the church (Fig.21).

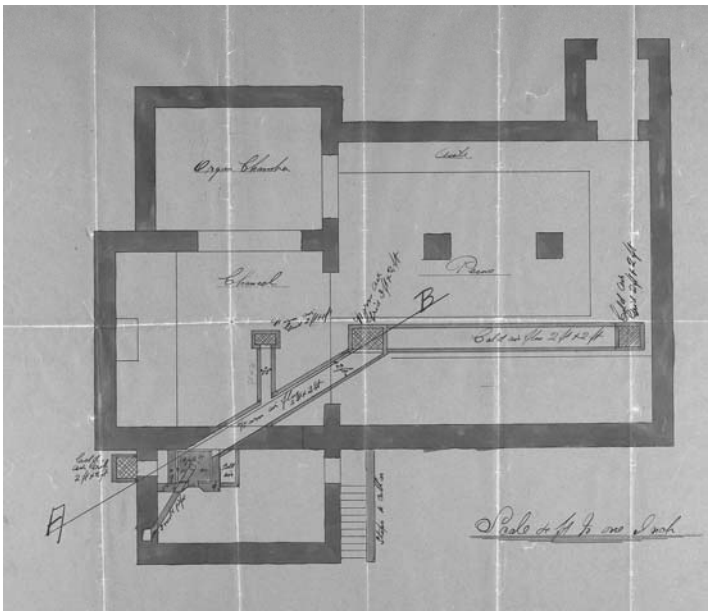


Fig.21: Plan of church central heating system

[13] Lincolnshire Archives: SPRINGTHORPE PAR 9 30 AUG 1889

The tender, addressed to "Rev. Blinkinsop" reads: "*We undertake to supply you with one of our Convoluted Stoves of sufficient size and power to efficiently warm your church for the sum of thirty-one pounds. £31Nett.*" This included fixtures and fitting, a new rake and brush, and carriage to Blyton Station. Today, the vents for this now-defunct central heating system are responsible for such cold draughts in the nave and chancel that they are now covered up with carpeting! The boiler was fitted in a cellar beneath the original Vestry at the north east of the church, with access by a stone staircase. The flue was connected to the existing Vestry chimney. This must explain the raising of the chimney to a greater height, perhaps to prevent smoking, or to create a more efficient draught.

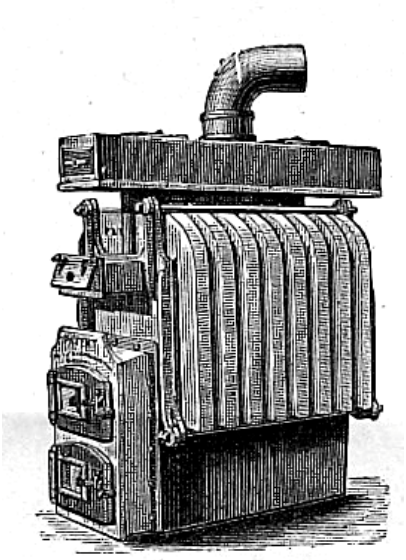


Fig.22: A Convoluted Stove

Stained Glass Windows

Fig. 23

The specifications for the great restoration of 1865 makes no mention of stained glass windows, stating that "*All the windows both old and new to be glazed with quarries of Cathedral glass in extra strong narrow leading*". Cathedral glass is sheet glass that may or may not be tinted, and is textured on one face (fig.23). However, sometime during the late nineteenth century, high quality stained glass windows were inserted, giving continuing visual appeal to the interior of the church.

a]

b]

Fig. 23 “The Font Window”
with details of panels

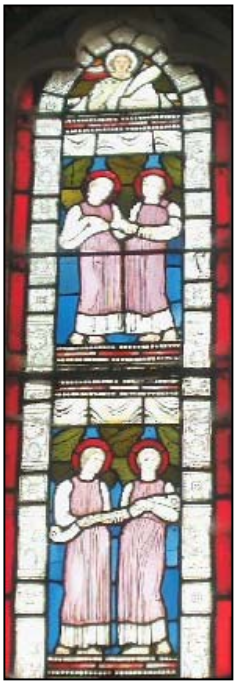


Fig 24. “The Angel Window”
with detail of a panel

On entering the church by the south door the first window is to the left, above the font. It is a simple lancet window depicting, appropriately, the Holy Family of Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus, with a group of three angels singing in the panel above (fig. 24). Another single lancet window is set in the south wall of the vestry/organ chamber. This one has two almost identical panels depicting singing angels (fig. 25).

The north wall of the nave has two Gothic windows inserted with Victorian stained glass, each with double narrative panels.

1. **The Annunciation Window** (fig.26): Depicted in the left panel is the winged Angel Gabriel holding a scroll on which is written "*Ave Maria*". In front of the angel is a vase of white Madonna lilies symbolising Mary's virginity. In the right-hand panel Mary herself is seated, with her hair hanging loose, wearing a rich blue cloak and crossing her hands over her chest. Above her is the dove that symbolises the Holy Spirit, about to enter her womb. Fig.10 shows this window from the outside.

- Interestingly, this is the only window in the church that displays the maker's name, Kayll & Co., Leeds. Whether this one company was commissioned to make some or all of the other stained glass windows in the church we cannot be sure, but an advertisement for Kayll & Co of 1896, listing "*some of the Windows recently executed*", mentions only the Springthorpe Annunciation window.

2. **The Thomas Window** (fig. 27): The right-hand window of the north wall depicts scenes relating to two St Thomases – one of them St Thomas the Apostle, and one St Thomas Aquinas. The apostle was the Doubting Thomas who put his fingers in Christ's wound to

Fig. 26 “The Annunciation Window”

Fig.27 “The St Thomas Window”

convince himself that this was indeed the risen Christ.[14] St Thomas Aquinas extolled the virtue of alms giving – *the responsibility of helping the needy belongs to those who have plenty*.[15] The left-hand panel shows the saint giving alms; the right hand one shows St Thomas the Apostle examining Christ's wound. It is probable that this window was sponsered by Sir Thomas Beckett of Somerby Hall, depicting two of his namesakes. Fig.11 shows this window from the outside.

The Commemorative Memorial Windows

The east end of the church, seen from outside in fig. 18, has two large and elaborate commemorative stained glass windows.

1. The **James Cox Memorial Window**: set into the surviving Tudor window of the New Vestry/Organ Chamber, seen outside in fig.12, and in detail from inside in fig.28.

- The memorial inscription covering the bases of the three panels reads "*James Cox D.D. Born 1764 | Died 1848 Aged 84 | Curate of Springthorpe 21 years*". For 28 years previously (c.1796-1824) he had been the headmaster of Gainsborough Grammar School (now the Hickman Hill Hotel).
- The central panel of the memorial window depicts Christ in Majesty, while the side panels show the two saints to whom this church is dedicated. On the left is St George killing a strange-looking monster that is presumably the dragon, while on the right is St Lawrence, kneeling in front of the grid-iron on which he was tortured by barbecuing.

[14] John 20:24-29
[15] Summa Theol., II-II , Q. xxxii

- This glass must have been inserted after 1888, the time of the building of the New Vestry, when the original Tudor Gothic window was moved to its current location. There would surely have been no suggestion of cutting down the height of this window, as mentioned above, if this elaborate stained glass had already been in situ.

2. **TheThomas Beckett Memorial Window**: set in the Chancel above the altar. (see fig.29). An inscription, divided between the three panels, states: *In Memory of Sir Thomas Beckett Bart. Died 17th Nov. 1872 Aged 93*. Sir Thomas, the major landholder, was a great benefactor of the church.

- The left-hand panel depicts a saint holding an arrow in one hand and a book in the other. He is difficult to identify from these attributes, however. There are two candidates, both of whom were martyred by being shot with arrows.
  - St Sebastian was a soldier saint, depicted in armour or, more often, half-naked.
  - St Edmund the Martyr was a local English saint, King of East Anglia (some say the true patron saint of England!). He is always depicted wearing his crown, even in narrative scenes showing his death.

  Neither of these saints warrents the attribute of a book, as neither wrote a theological text nor was learned in terms of Christianity. The more likely candidate would seem to be the East Anglian St Edmund, but this is by no means certain, lacking the crown.
- The centre panel depicts Christ the Redeemer, identifiable by the cross on his halo and the sign of blessing he is giving. He wears an outfit

almost identical with that of the saint in the first panel, except for the colour – green instead of blue.

- The right-hand panel depicts the Bishop of Lincoln, Edward King, wearing his bishop's mitre and holding his crozier. King (1829-1910) "*won the affection and reverence of all classes by his real saintliness of character*". [16] However, he was also criticized for his High Church views that eventually led to his prosecution (1888-90) before the Archbishop of Canterbury, for ritualistic practices. His appearance in this dedicatory window suggests that he had been admired by Sir Thomas Beckett. The baronet must have approved Edward King's High Church stance, as did the Rector of Springthorpe at the time, Rev. E.C.L. Blenkinsopp (incumbancy 1863-91). The Rector no doubt suggested the choice of imagery, and the window would have been inserted sometime between 1872 and 1890.

Painted Walls and Ceiling

So far, no documentary reference has been found to the red and white chevron patterned ceilings, nor to the painted chancel east wall with its monogram design (figs. 30 and 31). The monogram is that known as a *christogram*, denoting the first three letters of the Greek name of Jesus, *iota-eta-sigma*, or IHΣ. However, "IHS" is sometimes interpreted as meaning *Iesus Hominum Salvator* (Jesus, Saviour of Men), or *In Hoc Signo* (In His Name). Such recent interpretations are known jokingly today as as "backronyms" or false etymology.

[16] Wikipedia "Edward King (English Bishop)"

Fig. 30a: Painted Chancel wall with monogram

Fig.30b: Detail of monogram and pattern motif

Fig.31a: Painted ceiling south aisle

Fig. 31b: Painted ceiling nave

These painted features of the church were renovated during 1979-82, according to Churchwarden Michael Anyan. At that time, repairs/ restoration of the church fabric are recorded in the P.C.C. Minute Book, paid for from church funds and grants that had been obtained. Interior decorations were yet to be done, and the Youth Opportunity Scheme was being asked to do this. Discussion took place of the state of the Tower and it was decided to replace the floor of the sound chamber, as it was dangerous. [17]

We have now accounted, as much as possible, for the building of Springthorpe church and its physical structure up to the present day. There are other elements to the Church's appearance, however, apart from the structure. These are usually described as the 'furnishings' of the church, the subject of the following chapter.

[17] A 1979 claim for a grant to repair the church was rejected - Professionals: BOND, Lawrence Henry: b. 1909 - d. 1993 of Grantham (Architect). [ICBS 15302 Folios 12ff. Notes on church.Minutes: Volume 36 page 292a]

CHAPTER 2

The Church Interior & Furnishings

The oldest item in the Church must be the Early English font (fig.32).

Fig 32: The Early English Font

Baptism was the sacrament that made an infant one of the church community. It follows that baptismal fonts were a vital a part of the church. Fonts are often placed near the entrance to a church's nave to remind believers of their baptism as they enter the church to worship. (In England the use of a Baptistry building that was separate from the church itself, as seen in continental Europe, never prevailed.)

In appearance the font in Springthorpe Church is very plain, a simple drum basin surmounting a pedastel surrounded by three unornamented columns. However, judging by the score marks around the font basin itself, some deteriorated surface decoration may well have been rubbed down during the Victorian restoration of 1865. The original decoration may even have been deliberately defaced during the Reformation.

Fonts were eventually (around the thirteenth century) required to be covered and locked "*to guard against profanation*"; originally their covers were simply flat, movable lids. The wooden cover that is in use today at Springthorpe church is raised with a pulley system.

Reformation

The earliest documentary evidence of the contents of Springthorpe church is a surviving *terrier* of 1566.[18] It is transcribed in fig.33 and written in Modern English here:

- In the first place, the images of the Rood, Mary and John and all other images of popery were burnt AD 1561, Robert Naylor and William Andrew churchwardens.
- All our Mass books and all other papist books were burnt and cut in pieces by Sr Richard Robinson, our parson in the year 1561.
- One vestment sold to William Burre by Robert Naylor and William Andrew
- One other vestment of silk cut in pieces and a cloth made from it for our communion table
- The rood loft taken down and the boards from it nailed up at the east end of the church to keep out the rain and wind, and the beams and posts we have reserved to mend a common house in our town.
- Two candlesticks of wood, broken and burnt in the year 1561, and one cross of wood.
- One *pixe* and one *chrismatorie* broken in pieces and taken away
- One old *albe* cut in pieces and given to the poor people
- 2 banner cloths were burnt in 1561
- 2 altar stones broken in pieces, defaced and used as paving
- One *paxe* burnt 1562
- One *sepulcre* burnt 1561
- One holy water can, broken in pieces
- As for other monuments of superstition we had none in Queen Mary's days and that we will swear upon the book (Bible).

[18] A terrier is an inventory of goods belonging to the Church. This one was transcribed in Oxoniensis "The History of Heapham, Pilham and Springthorpe" (1905) p.15. The original document is now in the Lincolnshire Archives.

Springthorpe. William Burie and George Swyfte, Churchwardens, 8 Apr 1566.

- *In primsi, the image of the roode Marie and Johnne and all other Imagies of papistrie - were burnte anno dni 1561. Robert Nailer and William Androwe, Churchwardens.*
- *Item. All or. masse books and all other paptisticall bokes - were burnte and cutt in peces by Sir Richard Robinson, or p'sonne, ano 1561.*
- *Item. One vestment - sold to William Burre by Roberte Nayler and William Androwe, Churchwardens, ano 1561, and he haith cut yt in peces and made cusshinges thereof.*
- *Item. One other vestment of silk - cut in peces and a clothe made thereof for or. comunion table.*
- *Item. The roode loft - taken downe and the bordes therof were nailed up at th'este end of the church, to kepe oute raine and winde, and the beames or postes therof we have res'ved to mend a common house in or. towne.*
- *Item. Two candlesticks of wood - broken and burnt in ano 1561, and one cross of woode.*
- *Item. One pixe - broken in peces and made awaie and one crismatorie.*
- *Item. One old albe cutt in peces and geven to the poore people.*
- *Item. ü banner clothes - were burnte ano 1561.*
- *Item. ü alter stones - broken in peces and defaced and paved.*
- *Item. One pax - burnt 1562.*
- *Item. One sepulchre - burnt 1561.*
- *Item. One hallywater can - broken in peces.*
- *As for other monuments of sup'spicion, we had none in Quene Maries daies, and that we will depose upon a boke.*

Lincoln. John Aelmer, Archdeacon of Lincoln
George Mounson gen, ar.
Martin Hollingsworth. 18 Apr 1566.

Fig.33: Transcription of the original terrier of 1566

This Reformation document confirms that any objects relating to Roman Catholicism (*papistrie)* had been destroyed. The value of this document to us today is that it gives us a picture of how the interior of Springthorpe church might have looked before this Reformation.

The first item on the list, *"the image of the roode Marie and Johnne"*, refers to an image (a painting or sculpture) of Christ on the cross (the *rood*), flanked by the Virgin Mary and St John. This image would have been positioned above the chancel arch in a narrow gallery called the *Rood Loft,* usually accressed by a staircase. In a medieval church, a wooden *Rood Screen* separated the Chancel from the Nave, marking the division between the domain of the priest and that of his parishioners. One that has survived is in the little church of Cotes-by Stow and is illustrated here (fig. 34) as an example. The one at Springthorpe, like many others, was probably decoratively carved and with brightly painted panels. "*All other Imagies of papistrie"* probably included pictures of the saints on this screen, and crucifixes placed around the church. All of these had been burnt in 1561. An idea of how such a painted screen might have looked can be seen in fig. 35 showing a Neo-Gothic one.

In the shaft of one of the south columns of the nave there is a rectangular cavity about one inch deep (see Fig.36). There is still a reddish colouration to the cavity, as if it once held a painting. It is evident that at one time something was embedded there. It is possible that one of the '*Imagies of papistrie*'(for example, a crucifixion scene) used to be housed there, although it could have been something of much later origin.

It is telling that "*the east end of the church*", in other words the Chancel, was by then in such a state of disrepair that the wood and boards of the demolished rood loft were utilised to keep out the weather! This clearly indicates the continuing great neglect of the Chancel's structure by successive Rectors.

Other items on the list:

A *Rood* was a cross as symbol of the Christian faith but none survived the Reformation anywhere in England. This is a reconstruction of how such a rood may have appeared (fig. 37)

Fig. 37


Fig. 38

A *pix* / *pyx* was the vessel in which the 'host' or consecrated bread of the sacrament was reserved.
The one illustrated here, as an example, is only 3 ½ inches high and is in the collection of the British Museum (fig.38)

A *chrismatorie* was the vessel that contained the *chrism* or consecrated oil. It could also be a case containing three flasks of oil – for baptism, for confirmation, and for annointing the sick. This example is in the Victoria & Albert Museum and dates from 1636 (fig.39).


Fig. 39

Fig. 40 Example of a *paxe*

A *paxe* was a tablet of gold, silver, ivory or glass, bearing a representation of the crucifixion (or other sacred subject). This was kissed by the priest conducting the Mass and then passed to the other officiating clergy. It was then passed to the congregation to be kissed.

A *sepulchre* was a permanent or a temporary structure in a church for the dramatic Good Friday burial of the reserved sacrament, together with images of Christ - especially crucifixion scenes. Since the one in Springthorpe church was burnt, it suggests that it was made of wood and therefore a temporary structure rather than part of the permanent stone fabric of the church. English sepulchres were almost invariably near the high altar of the church, on the north side. The most elaborate structures created for this purpose included some kind of chest that could be closed once it had received its sacred contents on Good Friday. Candles would have been set up around it and it would then have been watched over constantly until it was reopened on Easter morning.

Introduction of pews:

There were other changes during the Tudor period. The rise of the sermon as a central act of Christian worship, especially in Protestantism following the Reformation, made for the introduction of certain new items of church furniture. Sermons had become very long – two to four hours was not uncommon. This meant that congregations needed to sit down to listen. Pews, therefore, became standard fittings in the naves. In

addition, the preacher needed a lectern, or even better a raised pulpit, from which to deliver his orations effectively. Neither the pews nor the pulpit in Springthorpe Church are the original ones.

The Eighteenth Century

The next documentary evidence that gives details of the church furniture is an undated terrier signed by Rev.Thomas Wells, who was Rector from 1744 to 1775.

> *--Furniture in the Church of Springthorpe—*
>
> *3 Bells*
> *2 Surplices*
> *A Cushion for the Pulpit*
> *A Bible*
> *A Common Prayer Book and the Book of Canons*
> *A Book of Homilies*
> *A Green Clothe for the Communion Table*
> *A Diaper Napkin Tablecloth*
> *A pewter flagon and plate*
> *A Silver Chalice and cover weighing 7 ounces*
> *A Chest*
>
> *Thos. Wells Rector*
> *Samuel Hill Churchwarden*
>
> [Springthorpe Par. 3 Terr Undated]

The history of the bells, the first item on this list, is fully explored in Chapter 3. A carved oak 17th-century chest, now in the Organ Chamber, may be the one mentioned, but it is by no means certain, as other antique items of carved oak in the church today are not listed here.

The Nineteenth Century

The Victorian restorations of Springthorpe Church made great changes to the appearance of the interior, as already described in Chapter 1. The floor was now covered with red and black tiles, and Victorian pews were installed. In addition to these, a monochromatic painting above the Chancel Arch depicting the Crucufixion is a revival of the idea of a medieval Rood (fig.41). We have no knowledge of the artist commissioned to paint this. Beneath it, an inscription has been painted around the curve of the Chancel arch: "*I if I be lifted up from the Earth will draw all Men unto ME"* [quoting John 12:32].

This inscription, as well as the painted *"ihs"* monogram decoration of the east wall of the Chancel, suggests the Anglo-Catholicism of the nineteenth-century "Oxford Movement", a movement of High Church Anglicans that sought to affirm the Catholic, rather than the Protestant, heritage of Anglicanism. The Rev E.L.C.Blenkinsopp, Rector of Springthorpe, was one of this persuasion. A lectern in the church may well date from this same period of restoration. Carved into the panel that faces the congregation is again the *"ihs"* monogram (fig. 42).

Hidden away in the North Vestry are a number of painted panels that appear to have been part of a Neo-Gothic chancel screen that was erected as part of the Victorian restorations, but removed in 1923 because of rot. These panels are labelled with the names of a variety of English saints: St Etheldreda, St Alfreda, St Ofthrida, St Ostryth, plus St Gilbert, St Chad and two of St Hugh (one as a child). Early research revealed that all of these saints were connected with East Anglia at some time during their lives.

However, a newspaper report found in the Guardian of 26th August 1891 explains the story behind these panels, and explains the imagery more fully. It states that a Miss Whaplate of Scotter did the paintings on the existing chancel screen. All of the panels depict Lincolnshire saints, or saints with some connection with Lincolnshire. The four panels on the right hand side depicted St Hugh the Bishop, St Hugh the boy martyr, St Gilbert of Sempringham (the only founder of an English order of monks), and St Chad. Those on the left side depicted St Ethelreda, Queen and Abbess; St Osyth, Queen and Abbess; St Ofthrida, Queen and Abbess; and St Alfreda, Queen. The paintings were been re-framed in groups of two or three when the chancel screen was removed. Based on the newspaper's descrition the pictures can be reassembled to get an idea of how the chancel screen might once have looked (see fig.43).

Amongst the other odds and ends squirrelled away in the vestry of is a disintegrating poster (fig.44). It is a "*Table of Kindred and Affinity*" showing which relatives you were forbidden to marry under the incest laws. Published before 1907 (when the list changed) this one probably came to the church in the late nineteenth century, when it would have hung on the wall for all to see.

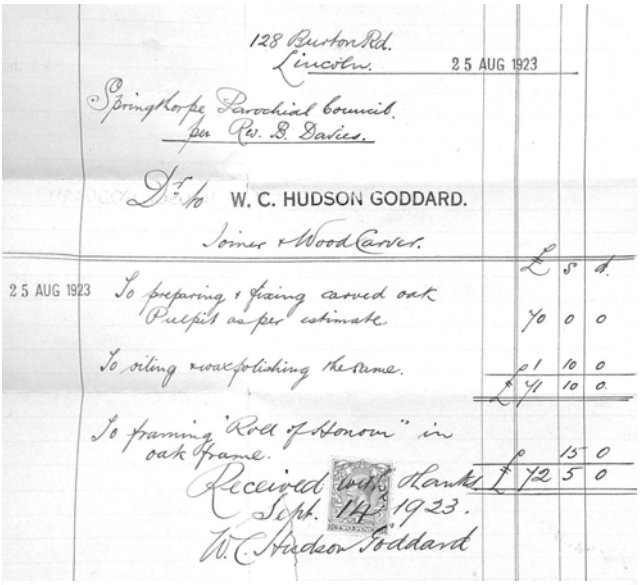
The Twentieth Century

In January 1923, the Rector of Springthorpe Parish, Rev. Benjamin Davies, and the Churchwardens, George William Stephenson and Charles Joseph Kell, were granted permission to have a carved oak Pulpit installed by the north wall of the Nave.[19] This Pulpit was to be dedicated to the memory of those men of the Parish who lost their lives in the Great War. The petition indicated that there was no Pulpit in the church at that

time. It was also proposed that an oak tablet be placed at the side of (or above) the Pulpit with the following inscription:

This Pulpit was erected
In Memory of
Charles Cook
Joseph King
Archie F. Lidgett
George Spindley
Who fell in the Great War
1914-1919

The work was completed in August 1923, as indicated by an invoice in the same file of the Archives (see fig.45). Although the pulpit has since been replaced, the Memorial Plaque survives (see fig.46).



128 Burton Rd.
Lincoln. 25 AUG 1923

Springthorpe Parochial Council.
per Rev. D. Davies.

Dr to W. C. HUDSON GODDARD.
Joiner & Wood Carver.

		£	s	d
25 AUG 1923	To preparing & fixing carved oak Pulpit as per estimate	70	0	0
	To oiling & waxpolishing the same.	01	10	0
		£ 71	10	0
	To framing "Roll of Honour" in oak frame.	0	15	0
		£ 72	5	0

Received with thanks
Sept. 14 1923.
W. Hudson Goddard

Fig.45: Invoice for the memorial pulpit.

In addition, it was proposed in the petition that the Chancel Screen, consisting of "*painted deal boards in a dilapidated condition*", be removed to provide access to the Pulpit from the Chancel. It must have been at this time that the painted panels were framed to presrve the surviving pictures of the saints.

[19] Lincoln Archives: Springthorpe Par. 9 30 Jan 1923

⌘ Still hanging on the walls of the church are two framed, decoratively written lists. One of these is yet another Roll of Honour to those locals who served in the Great War (fig. 49). The accumulated evidence suggests that this war must have had a profound effect on the villagers of Springthorpe. In addition to the three honour rolls mentioned already, there is an oak collection plate with a brass plaque attached to the base. Mrs Kell gave this to the church on Easter Day 1919 in gratitude for the safe return from war of her son, Capt. G.W.Kell (fig 50). No similar Rolls of Honour or memorials exist for those who served in the Second World War.

Fig.50: Base of the Collection Plate commemorating the safe return of Capt. G. W. Kell from the First World War.

The other list hanging on the church's north wall names all the Rectors of Springthorpe Church up to [F]red [B]utterworth dated 1937 (fig.48). This last name lacks the red capital letters, as if whoever wrote it had run out of red ink! The writings of Re. Davies again tell us more:

> *"The present Rector (the Rev. B. Davies B.D.) has been able to compile a list of the Rectors of the parish from 1227 nearly 700 years ago. It was a difficult task but after overcoming many hindrances and patient search it was completed. The long list has been beautifully mounted and can be seen hanging on the north wall of the nave of the church. It is a list of which 'Springthorpe – Its Church and People' can be justly proud."*[20]

The Rev. Benjamin Davies, from whose writings so much has been learned, especially regarding events in the early 20th century, retired as rector of Springthorpe parish in 1937, before the outbreak of the Second World War. For later information we must turn to the Churchwarden's accounts.

⌘ In 1965 at the annual Parish meeting, in reporting on the progress of the Chancel restoration, reported that the wooden floor of the pulpit side was "*completely infested with woodworm*". Probably this infestation eventually ruined the pulpit itself, although there is no mention of it. Nevertheless, in 1973 "*the new pulpit*" was under discussion by the church council and it was decided to erect this pulpit temporarily to assess its suitability.

⌘ In 1982 the PCC minute book mentions the elaborate commemorative plaque that is now in place on the church wall, that was originally in the Primitive Methodist Chapel. It has an inscription, carved into a marble slab, which includes the names of 'those who served' as well as 'those who fell' in The Great War (see fig.47).

[20] See Appendix 3

The Twenty-first Century

Aug 2008 to Churchwarden Michael Anyan from Michael Czajkowski of Edmund Czajkowski & Sons Ltd., Cabinet Makers and Antique Restorers:

1. *Oak court cupboard, inscribed on top rail "16 H/WA 83". Front doors carved. Sides plain panelled. Hinges replaced.*
2. *Late 17 century chair with raised panel back and stylised flowers carved in cresting. Originally rope-supported seat, now replaced by wood seat.*
3. *Oak 18 century table with gun barrel turned legs with ring turning beneath.*
4. *Oak early to mid 18 century long box with wood batons on front to simulate panels.*
5. *Oak panelled 17-century chest with carved front panels and front rail.*
6. *Back stool late 17 century with horizontal panel in upper part of back with scroll carving.*
7. *Back stool late 17 century with full single horizontal panel in back carved with lozenge design.*

Only one item on the current list of church furnishings corresponds to an item on the 18th-century list – a chest, which may refer to item 5 above (see fig. 52). The other seventeenth and eighteenth century furniture must therefore have come into the church after the eighteenth-century inventory of Thomas Wells (figs.51 & 53).

Fig. 52: 17th-century chest

The Court Chest bears an interesting inscription in the top border:

16 ⌘⌘⌘ **H**
WA ⌘⌘⌘ 83

This tells us that it was made in 1683 for someone with the initials HWA.

Fig 51(a): The Court Cupboard

Fig 51(b): Detail of court cupboard showing inscription

Fig 53: Three, 17th-century carved oak chairs

CHAPTER 3

The Bells of St George & St Lawrence Church:

Some Questions Answered and Others Created.

By Thelma Fysh

Why, when, and how did the practice of installing bells in churches begin?

Hand bells have been in existence since ancient times, partly used to signal special events and partly used in making music. Bells were probably not introduced into the Christian Church until some time in the 5th century. Previously a trumpet had been used to summon people to worship in public places.

The earliest known reference in Latin Christian literature specifically to large church bells (*campana*) was in the seventh century, and that was in northern Britain.[1] The Venerable Bede in Northumbria (c.710) recorded the use of a lone bell at Whitby sounding the hours of religious services, calling the nuns to prayer, back in 680 AD, having been rung at the passing away of St. Hilda.[2] The evidence also suggests that in Celtic lands generally, but especially Ireland, extraordinary importance was attached to bells, called *clocca* or *clog* in Celtic.

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[1] Information on origins mainly taken from the New Catholic Encyclopedia online : www.newadvent.org. This source gives a full and comprehensive history of the use of church bells.

[2] Bede, Hist. Eccl.., IV, xxi

During the eighth century church towers began to be built for the express purpose of hanging bells in them. The "*Liber Pontificalis*" tells us that Pope Stephen II (752-757) erected a belfry with three bells (*campanae*) at St. Peter's in Rome. Bells began to be regarded as an essential part of the equipment of every church, and the practice developed of blessing them by a special form of consecration.

In his book '*The Church Bells of the County and City of Lincoln'* (published as a limited edition in 1882), Thomas North gives some further historic background to the history of church bells in this country. He says that around 740-50 AD, King Egbert (later King of Wessex 802-39 and, briefly c.829-30, ruler of all England) is said to have commanded every priest to ring a bell at his church for the purpose of calling the hours for Sacred Worship.[3] The bell - hung simply on a spindle, and chimed - was rung on each hour throughout the day and night.

The 10th century saw a great surge in the building of churches throughout England. At the time, any Anglo-Saxon '*churl'* (a freeman of the lowest rank), or any freeholder not of noble birth but who had extensive property, was lawfully able to obtain a higher rank as a minor nobleman. To achieve this rise in status he must possess more that five hundred acres of land and, crucially, have a church with a bell tower on his estate. This probably accounts for the rising number of churches with towers that date from the period leading up to the Norman Conquest.

[3] North, (1882) p.3.

Might this have been when Springthorpe's bell-tower, came into being?

There are no records proving this, but there is strong physical evidence to suggest a Late Saxon/Early Norman tower (see Chapter 1). Interestingly, historian Robert Lacey in his book *'Great Tales from English History'* (2003*),* tells us that at the time of the Viking raids in England, during the early 11th century, many Saxon churches had high bell towers.[4] They were customarily used both as lookout stations and to sound alarm in times of danger. He goes on to tell us that if the Vikings captured a church, their first task was to pull the bell from the tower. Its metal was valuable to them - to melt down and re-shape into new swords and helmets. There was also the added satisfaction and triumph of having captured the Christian Church's 'unique sound'.

What do we know about Springthorpe's early status as a church with working bells?

We know very little, but considering that by the 13th century bells were no longer a rarity, and Springthorpe certainly had a tower at least from the 11th century, it is likely that there was at least one bell here from that early date. Every church owned at least one priest's bell, and often as many as three working bells existed in churches in rural areas. In medieval England it was distinctly laid down in canon law that the church bells and ropes had to be provided at the cost of the parishioners. The canon law assumed that a parish church had two or three bells.

During the 14th century there is evidence that bell ringers began to experiment with new ways of hanging bells. They wanted to gain ever-

[4] Page 47

greater control over the heavy bells. Tests began with a *quarter wheel* with a rope attached to its rim in order to give the bell a greater 'swing'. Gradually, and later still, bells were remounted onto a *half wheel* (fig.54), giving the ringer even more control. This was the situation in most towers by the time of the reign of King Henry VIII.

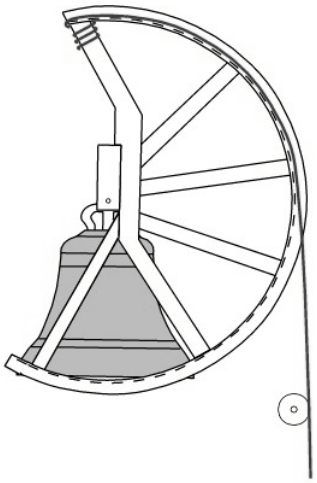

Fig.54: Half-wheel

The first documented evidence of bells at Springthorpe is also from the reign of Henry VIII, from 'Exchequer Church Goods, 1533':

> "*19 May 1553. The commissioners delivered to Rychard Robynson, curate of the Parish Church of Spryngthorp, and to Henry Wygelesworthe and William Garvie, churchwardens, iii great bells, and i sanctus bell, and i challys of p'cell gylt weying x ownces saffly to be kept by them and their successors. By me Richard Robinson, p'son".*[5]

On that date, then, three great bells and one Sanctus bell were delivered to the Rector of Springthorpe Church, Richard Robinson. One of these

[5] Oxoniensis, "The History of Heapham, Pilham and Springthorpe" (1905) p.16. This was recorded rather differently in Lincs. Notes & Queriesv.XIX p38: "*The com^{rs} have del^{d} to Sir Rychard Robynson curate and Henrye Wygglesworthe & Wyllm Hansone churchwardens iij gret bells, one sanctus bell & one challys parcell gylt weynge x ownces*."

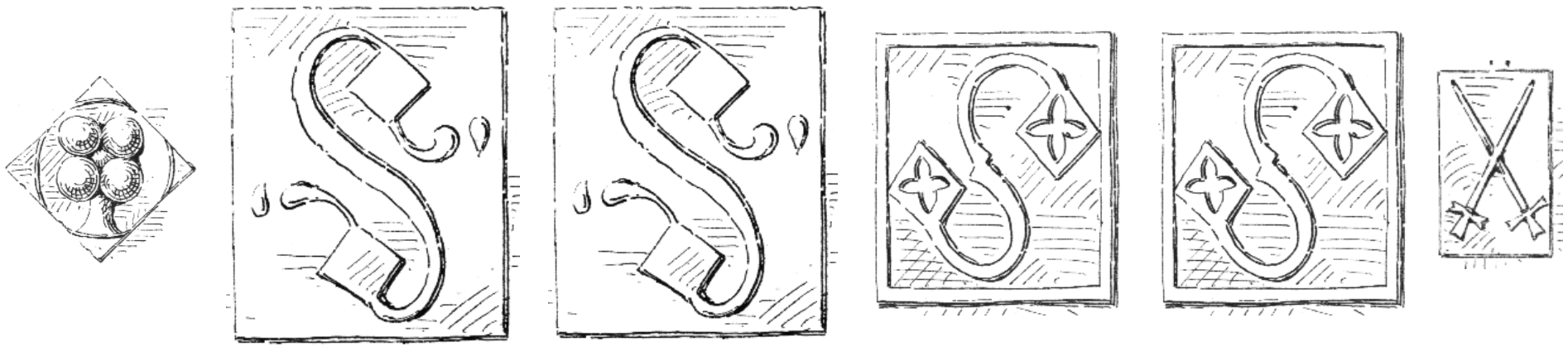

Fig.55: Founder's stamps on the 16th century bell at Springthorpe Church.

still remains as a working bell in Springthorpe's tower and is one of the county's oldest bells. The bell bears the inscription:

GEORGIUS ❑ CAMPANA ❑ UOS ❑ SONAT ❑

DULCITUR ❑ BENE ❑

Each box denotes the position of a stamp, the combination of which could identify the bell-founder. Four different stamps have been used, two of them repeated (fig. 55).

Only a year after the delivery of the bells to Springthorpe, Henry VIII was declared Supreme Head of the Church of England and the English Reformation began in earnest. The religious doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church underwent drastic reform. This was a turning point in the history of bells in churches throughout England and Wales. Many bells were destroyed with the desecration of the Roman Catholic Churches in which they hung[6]. A papal interdict banned the ringing of bells in English Catholic churches.

What happened to all these bells after they were removed from church towers?

Robert Lacey goes on to tell us that Henry VIII had taken a great interest in the artillery used in his war ships.[7] When fighting against Spanish galleons, the English galleons apparently carried twice the cannon power of their enemies. Henry's interest had encouraged new gun-building technology, which was developed directly from bell founding techniques. In 1588, some of the older English cannon had been recast from the copper and tin alloy (bell metal), melted down from the bells of the

[6] *Great Tales from English History*, page 215

dissolved monasteries. It is easy to surmise that more bell metal may have been taken from destroyed rings of bells in churches, too. However, the *terrier* of 1566 examined in Chapter 2, telling of the destruction of all items associated with *papistrie* at Springthorpe Church, makes no mention at all of the bells (perhaps they were 'kept quiet'!)[8].

During the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, and also William and Mary, many inventories of church goods were carried out by royal command. These inventories tell us today the status of bells during the 16th and 17th centuries. Gradually, as restoration and repair took place in the newly Protestant churches, bells were re-hung. The next available inventory of church goods at Springthorpe, also cited in Chapter 2, is not until the 18th century, when Thomas Wells was Rector and Samuel Hill Churchwarden. It stated that there were then '3 bells' at Springthorpe, but were they the same three bells? We do not know, but we have so far found no documentary evidence to suggest otherwise.

These three great bells may have continued to serve the village until 1865, when two of them were sent to the founder (J.Taylor & Co., Loughborough, where they were to be recast to make three. These details were first published in a book that appeared in 1882 entitled *'The Church Bells of the County and City of Lincoln'* by Thomas North, F.S.A.[9]

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[7] *ibid* - page 239

[8] In 1566, other churches reported 'bells lost or missing'. Some were hidden away in people's houses to prevent destruction - from Peacock, Florence: "Church Bells: When and Why they were Rung" in Curious Church Customs, ed Wm. Andrews (1898) P.43

[9] A limited edition numbering 210 copies, was printed by Samuel Clarke, Leicester.

How do we know so much about the history of our working bells?

Since bells began to be used in church towers as a means of calling the faithful to worship, there have been many who have studied with great interest, church bells and their usage. Hence the developments designed to make the activity smooth and manageable.

Enthusiastic followers of the art of bell-ringing began to visit and record all the bells existing throughout Britain, searching out churches large and small, documenting bell sizes, ages, musicality, and even the inscriptions which had been founded on their surfaces. These researchers spent much of their spare time travelling from place to place (not an easy task before the era of fast cars), subjecting themselves to the most amazing danger when crawling through minute spaces between great, dusty, heavy bells in order to copy and make drawings and plaster casts of the bold inscriptions on them. Deciphering these inscriptions became a passion among the knowledgeable, and led to further data being accrued.

Thomas North's book had come about because a Lincolnshire-born man, Rev.Joseph Thomas Fowler of Winterton (1833-1924), wanted to know about *every* working bell in Lincolnshire. For many years he visited towers, documenting and recording bells. With additional help from clergy and laity in the county, Rev. Fowler began to compile a most comprehensive list of all bells in the whole of Lincolnshire. Wishing to see his work published, and realising that he would be unable to complete his work satisfactorily, in 1880 he handed all his notes, sketches and casts to Thomas North. He challenged Mr. North to complete the work, and to be sure to publish it. (Thomas North had by that time already published

books on the bells of other counties plus other scholarly works related to architecture and archaeology.)

Among those notes were full details of Springthorpe's bells, which had been visited by Rev. J.T. Fowler himself, These details are given in North's book as follows[10]:

SS. GEORGE AND LAWRENCE *4 BELLS AND A PRIEST'S BELL*

Bells 1,2,3. J.TAYLOR & CO., FOUNDERS LOUGHBOROUGH 1865

(Weights: 1st, 7cwt. 3qrs. 0lbs: 2nd, 8cwt. 1qr. 24lbs: 3rd, 9cwt. 3qrs. 10lbs.)

4. GEORGIUS □ CAMPANA□ UOS □ SONAT □ DULCITUR □BENE □

["George. The bell sounds you sweetly well."[11]]

Priest's Bell: - *Blank*

Who else has shown an interest in the bells of Springthorpe?

Ranald W.M.Clouston, who had rekindled an interest in checking the data contained in Thomas North's publication, was an enthusiastic researcher into the history of parishes in various parts of the country, including their church bells. During his visit to Lincolnshire, he was able to add further information to Thomas North's work. He came to Springthorpe on 14th August 1969. Mr. Clouston has published various books and pamphlets on bells, bell ringing, and the history of parishes.

Another such expert, who also came to Springthorpe, was George A. Dawson, of Loughborough, Leicestershire. His findings regarding church

[10] Ibid, page 662.
[11] Ibid, p.265. Compare Rev. Davies translation p.

bells have been included in various articles published by him, including '*The National Bell Register*', which is still being updated frequently. After visiting Springthorpe, he wrote a letter of thanks to Mr. Michael Anyan, churchwarden of the parish. The letter is dated 3rd January 1988. In it, Mr. Dawson states:

> "*I was particularly interested in the tenor (4th) bell. It turns out to be one of a group of bells cast by an as yet unknown York bell founder who seems to have been working about 1440 to 1470.*"

The tenor bell must therefore have already been over 100 years old when it first came to Springthorpe church in 1553!

Mr. Dawson explained that the lettering on this bell (see fig.55) had enabled various groups of castings in the North of England finally to be identified as the work of a York foundry. That is to say, that the particular order in which the 'stops' between the words of the Latin inscription had been placed signified the work of an 'unknown' founder. Having found a similar pattern of stops on the bell at Springthorpe, Mr. Dawson was finally able to link a series of bells around the North of England which had proved to be a mystery. The same founder - one who, unlike other bell founders, had never signed his work made them all. He is believed now to be John Hoton of York, who made bells for York Minster in 1470. This was an important find in the study of the history of church bells in Britain.

Interestingly, discoveries made by George Dawson, working a hundred years or so after John North and Rev. Fowler, invite more questions with regard to the bells remaining in Springthorpe between 1553 and 1865.

We know that in 1865 two bells were taken to be recast, and were made into three. Does that mean they were the two, ancient 'sister' bells to 'George' - the tenor?

No, not necessarily. Mr. Dawson fears that it is impossible to specify the age of the two bells that were taken to J. Taylor's to be melted down. Records show that in 1765 there were still three working bells in the tower at Springthorpe. But it cannot be assumed that the two treble (lighter) bells were the ones cast in the Middle Ages. It was quite common at that time, if a bell became damaged, that a local founder would remove it from the church, recast it, and replace it again - thus sustaining a viable ring of bells.

Another method of keeping the bells operational was by asking the local blacksmith to perform a simple repair. There were also knowledgeable craftsmen who worked as itinerant bell founders. They would move into an area, dig a huge pit and build a furnace - sometimes in the churchyard to save the having to travel any distance with a heavy load - and recast damaged bells there and then. Mr. Dawson is certain that there is no evidence of this having occurred at Springthorpe. Repair work however, often went unrecorded by the incumbent of a church or by its churchwardens. They simply got on with arranging repairs that were urgently needed. This could easily have happened at Springthorpe.

Fig.56 The Sanctus Bell

A fifth bell in the church - the sanctus bell - diameter 11½ inches - was primarily hung for chiming (when calling people to church), and was founded by an unknown 18th century founder. It has no inscription or decoration.

The vicar or the sexton would usually have rung it. It now hangs within the tower's small Saxon 'keyhole' window (fig.56).

🔔 **How rare are the oldest bells in Lincolnshire - and where does Springthorpe's tenor bell fit in the group?**

Dr. Ketteringham, Mr. Dawson, and many others collectively, spent many hours visiting and re-visiting more than 721 towers and belfries all over the county in order to verify details for their proposed book. We can therefore be sure of their knowledge and expertise. In the year 2000, Dr. Ketteringham chronicled a total of 2,388 bells in churches. In his book he noted that "*15% of the bells now in Lincolnshire churches were cast before the English Reformation*". At that time, the oldest surviving bell in the county was of 12th century origin, and there were 37 others pre - 15th century. 136 bells were cast during the 15th century, less than 6% of the total of Lincolnshire's bells, and Springthorpe's tenor is one of them, which makes it quite rare.

🔔 **During the 19th century, alterations were made to the tower of St. George and St. Lawrence's church at Springthorpe. Was this associated with the re-hanging of the newly formed ring of four bells?**

The new bell frame, suitable for hanging four bells, was installed while the tower was clear of all bells in 1865. This frame, still present today, is unique of its type. Built around the outer walls of the belfry, it remains entirely free-standing, with its base resting firmly on the floor - unusual, in that frames are normally built on beams which reach across the tower and are embedded in the walls. Springthorpe's bell frame was never

designed to be attached to the walls of the tower. Its strength is in its ability to move gently when the bells are in motion.

*** insert - photo showing bell frame? ***

The downside of this arrangement is that the beams are exposed to the prevailing weather on the outer rim. - particularly on the west side of the tower, where the treble bell hangs. A further problem is that the wood used is a less-resilient, softer wood than oak, which would have been better. This has led to the occurrence of some rotting and instability.

Rebuilding of the top of the Anglo-Saxon tower took place in 1895, thirty years later than the installation of the new 'ring' of bells. Architectural historians such as Pevsner, have referred to this work as having been '*the addition of a 'bell stage"*. Some doubt may be cast on this assumption, as usually the 'bell stage' additions to towers were made in order to create more space for the bells. Could this really be the case at Springthorpe? The low-sided frame was already *in situ*, dating from 1865! Unless of course the intention had been to create more 'head-room' within the existing space?

🔔 Have the bells had major work done on them in living memory?

Former local ringer Lionel Stephenson clearly remembers the bells being removed from the tower during the 1930's when he was a youngster. He cannot remember why, but recalls that the event certainly caused disruption in the village. He easily recalls the service of dedication when

the bells were rung again.[12] The fund-raising bazaar that the Rector, Rev. Benjamin Davies organised, was reported in the local newspaper. There we are told the circumstances that caused the bells to need reworking:

> *"A representative from the well-known bell founders of Loughborough – Messrs. Taylor & Co., - had visited the Church and thoroughly examined the bells and reported thereon. New fittings and replacements were necessary, new stays, gudgeons, head stock and ball bearing, etc., were suggested at an estimated cost of £110."*[13]

In January of 2003, Bob Smith - at that time an inspector and bell hanger from the firm of bellhangers and engineers, Eayre and Smith, inspected the belfry and its bells.[14] In his subsequent report, he confirmed that in the 1930s the bells were rehung on ball bearings, which would have made the ringing easier and smoother. "*Cast iron 'bedplates' were fixed onto the top cills of the frame to create flat, rigid surfaces into which the new bearing housings could be mounted*."

🔔 **All working machinery needs care and maintenance. How is this organised in belfries?**

The bells in any Church of England church belong to that church and its parish, and as such, the churchwardens and incumbent are responsible for the maintenance and care of those bells. Naturally, they traditionally pass the task to a local interested person. In some parishes, the Parochial Church Council officially appoints him or her to the position, giving them

[12] See Rev. Davies own account of the rededication of the bells in Appendix 4
[13] Gainsborough News?? 17 April 1931

the rather grand title of 'Steeple Keeper'. Sometimes - typically, in small village parishes - caring for the bells has been, and sometimes still is, quite a haphazard affair. Occasionally, the bell ringers themselves are required to look after the oiling of moving parts, general cleaning etc. Springthorpe, being so small in terms of population, has found it difficult over the years to keep continuity in respect of the care of its bells.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, Springthorpe had a thriving and enthusiastic band of ringers among the local churchgoers. As far as can be ascertained, the bell ringers here could be counted on to oversee any day-to-day work that needed doing, as well as ringing for church services, weddings, funerals etc. The bells, reached by means of a very long wooden ladder being leaned against the rim of the central trapdoor to the belfry, were oiled and tended by various people.

🔔 **Who has authority for major work to be carried out on the bells in a church?**

As always, it remains the duty of ringers, whether visiting or local, to report anything untoward regarding the safe and sure ringing of the bells, to the churchwardens or incumbent. They in their turn take appropriate action.

🔔 **Church bells are very expensive to buy and to maintain. Who was working on them during the 20th century?**

Gradually, as happens in every tower, ringers left the local band for various reasons. Mrs. Bessie Anyan, who for many years was

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[14] Bell-hangers Eayre and Smith merged with John Taylor Bellfounders Ltd to form the company Taylors Eayre and Smith Ltd, based in Loughborough, Leicestershire.

churchwarden at St. George and St. Lawrence's Church, felt responsible for inviting ringers from outside the village to augment the band for Sunday service ringing - and whenever the need arose.

One such person, who made frequent visits to ring here, was Mr. Derek Till - tower captain and steeple keeper of Upton All Saints' Church. Concerned about the extreme effort needed to ring the Springthorpe bells, he sought permission to spend some time working on the belfry and the bells. He, with the help of his son Ian Till - tower captain and steeple keeper at Messingham Holy Trinity Church (also a keen and active member of the West Lindsey Guild), cleaned, oiled, tightened and repaired where possible. A slight improvement was noticed after all their efforts. Mr. Till invited various ringers to join him in keeping Springthorpe's bell ringing alive. Among them were John Kyneman - Blyton, Bruce Linegar - Lea, Thelma Fysh - Upton. Sadly, Derek.Till died, and fresh arrangements had to be made to carry on his good work at Springthorpe.

Is there a Steeple Keeper currently responsible for the Springthorpe bells?

Yes, there is, although in the absence of a village band of ringers, Mr. John Kyneman is the official person. He is ringer, churchwarden and steeple keeper at Blyton St. Martin's Church, and is willing to act in the interests of St. George and St. Lawrence Church whenever possible. He keeps the belfry at Springthorpe clean; carries out minor repairs; and notifies the churchwarden when more serious work needs to be done in the belfry. He always tries to be on hand whenever visitors arrive to view

the bells - whether they are from the diocese or from a firm of bell hangers wishing to do repairs.

The churchwarden notifies Mr. Kyneman when the church is in need of a band of ringers for services, weddings etc. In the absence of a village band, Mr. Kyneman has a long-standing arrangement with Corringham St. Lawrence's tower captain Mr. J. Wilson, who arranges for a group of ringers from either his own band, or that of Lea St. Helen's to help Mr. Kyneman on the appointed day. Considering that at the time of writing, the bells at Springthorpe - especially the treble - are notoriously difficult to ring (for want of some urgent repairs), it is particularly kind of the supporting group of bell ringers - and typical of the nature of ringers towards other towers' needs.

DEVELOPMENTS IN BELLS AND BELL RINGING

> *"A large bell can nowadays be rung comfortably by a single man. But we have seen that when Prior Conrad presented five bells, about 1110, to Canterbury Cathedral, the first and second bells required ten men, the third eleven, the fourth eight, and the fifth twenty-four men, to swing them".*[15]

How has bell ringing changed since the Reformation?

The Reformation was a magnificent opportunity to resurrect former experiments to make church bells more easily ringable. Springthorpe could well have taken advantage of the advances when the *whole wheel*, around which the rope travelled, was finally introduced (fig.56). Ringers

[15] www.archive.org text archive: Church bells of England, " Ringing and Ringers", 79.

were now able to speed up and slow down the tempo of the swing of the bell where necessary. During ensuing years, further refinements were made to the smooth working of the church bell. Bell ringing, as it is now practiced throughout Britain, had arrived.

It is entirely realistic that Springthorpe's elders would want to introduce the newest technology to their tower too. The adoption of the whole wheel made it possible - for the first time relatively comfortably - to vary the order in which bells were rung. This would have made a massive effect on bell ringers everywhere - including those here.

How does each bell ringer know when it is 'his' turn to pull the rope?

Each ringer knows the number of 'his' own bell. Bells in every tower are numbered in 'rounds' - that is, in order, starting from the lightest (the highest toned 'treble') and usually down to the heaviest (the tenor) - the bell with the deepest voice. Springthorpe's bells are unusual in this respect, as the 3rd bell, with its weight at 9cwts 3qrs 6lbs, is marginally heavier than the Tenor, or 4th bell, which weighs just 9cwts 2qrs. Yet the tones remain in the correct order. In most towers, the heavier the bell; the deeper the tone.

Does the 'whole wheel' make a difference to what we hear outside the tower?

Making the bells more 'comfortable' to ring meant that it became easier for bells to follow one after another in a more tuneful, less jangling way. That became more acceptable for people outside the building to listen to. After the introduction of the whole wheel, it also became possible for the

captain of the ringers to call out two adjacent bell numbers, after which those bells changed places, and so on until all bells had moved to a different place. It became possible for bells to be rung in constantly changing patterns.

In 1668, a Cambridge printer, Fabian Stedman, having devised a method of ringing a series of changes without the need for anyone to call anything at all, printed the first book ever to be produced on the art of ringing. It was a method that could be written down, learned and rung according to certain rules. Gradually, as word spread, ringers around the country began to devise more and more complicated methods, and so it has continued through the centuries, to the present day.

🔔 What do we know about bell ringing in village churches over the last two centuries?

A Lea and Gainsborough bell ringer during the mid-20th century, G.L.A. Lunn, was, for more than fifty years, the secretary of the 'Gainsborough District and West Lindsey Branch of the Lincoln Diocesan Guild of Bellringers'. Recording many of the bell ringing developments that occurred during his life as a bell ringer, Leslie (as he was known to the locals), wrote a book which was printed by the Lincoln Guild in 1985. In it he discussed - even then - the gradual decline in the number of church services. "How do congregations compare with those of the 19th century?" he asked. "Most churches had two services per Sunday, few have more than one today, but then, 100 years ago there was an incumbent for almost every parish."

Yet, the number of church services made a difference to the number of times the bell ringers were required, but it was still necessary for the same number of ringers to be available when needed.

- **There is talk of there having been a period of decline in bell ringing at around the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Why was that?**

One reason, given by Denis Frith in his book chronicling happenings in bell ringing during 100 years of Lincoln Diocesan's Guild, *'Ring in the True',* was that beginning in November 1904, and continuing through to the following May, there was an outbreak of typhoid in Lincoln. Many people died. Guild members were advised to stay away from the city. Mention was also made of 'strange goings-on' in the Gainsborough District early in 1906, when Gainsborough Parish Church and the Corringham towers switched membership from one District to another. It is unlikely that either of these occurrences would have made much difference where Springthorpe ringers were concerned.

- **World War I, 1914-18**, was to have a real impact on bell ringing everywhere. Tower bell ringing, other than Sunday service ringing stopped. It was thought that the sound of church bells ringing after dark, might enable the Zeppelin airships from Germany, to locate built-up areas and reveal the location of coastal towns to enemy gunboats. Ringing after dark was voluntarily suspended, though gradually these orders were ignored, and bell ringing crept back almost to normal again.

However, in 1916, threat of increased enemy bombing caused officials to ban nighttime ringing altogether. Even daytime ringing stopped in towns

and cities, so munitions workers who had been on shift work, could get some sleep. Many church clocks were silenced too. Records show that a third of Lincolnshire's ringers served in the war, and many of those died.

No records exist of the Gainsborough Guild's minutes for the period of the war. Mysteriously, the relevant pages of the minute book had been removed.

🔔 What happened about the bells in Springthorpe during World War II?

In G.A.Lunn's book, '*The history of the Gainsborough District and West Lindsey Branch, 1890 - 1984*', he recorded in 1940, that emergency measures were introduced in Britain, in order to avoid any 'surprise and intrigue' such as that which happened throughout Europe, when Germany invaded and overran several countries. When France's turn came, on June 4th, the enemy was dangerously close to Britain. His Majesty George VI's government declared that from June 18th, no bell must sound except as a warning to the population that enemy troops had landed. For the first time for many centuries, bells hung silent, by order - including those in Springthorpe.

Mr. Lunn went on to relate how, in November 1942, after General Montgomery's great offensive defeated General Rommel's crack forces in N. Africa, the Sunday following was declared a day of thanksgiving for the victory at El Alemein, and the bells were allowed to be rung just for that day. Mr. Lunn took his car, filled with ringers, and rang at as many towers as possible in the district. What a welcome they got everywhere

they visited! No-one seems to have recorded whether the bells of Springthorpe rang at all on that day.

On May 27th 1943, the ban on ringing church bells was lifted. Although for many churches, there were not many young men available to keep bells ringing during the rest of the war years.

Finally, Mr. Churchill the war-time Prime Minister, announced that at midnight on May 7th1945, all fighting would cease, and the following day, would be a day of public rejoicing for victory in Europe (VE Day). The Archbishop of Canterbury asked on the radio for church services to be held at 12 o'clock that day and that church bells were to be rung around the country.

Have there been other dates when bells have been required for national or regional celebration?

Yes, there were several occasions during the decade following the war when the Archbishop of Canterbury was to request that the bells of the nation should ring collectively.

- November 20th 1947 - Wedding of Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh.
- 1952 - all bells rang half muffled on the death of King George VI.
- June 2nd 1953 - Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.
- In July 1983, fresh repairs and redecoration of the church were complete, and in keeping with tradition, the bells were rung in celebration. Ringing for the service of thanksgiving and dedication

were: Henry Marshall, Lionel Stephenson, and Fred and Jack Marshall.

- Later still in the century (1999), the Lincoln Diocesan Guild of Bellringers celebrated its achievement of 100 years as a guild. The Bishop of Lincoln asked that as many towers as possible should ring their bells to mark the occasion.
- In the year 2000, the New Year and the Millennium were rung in and celebrated, throughout the land.

Who can still remember the bands of ringers in Springthorpe during the 20th century?

There are few details existing for Springthorpe's very early years of the 20th century. Joan Newton was able to tell that her husband's elder brother Jack was a bell ringer, following in the footsteps of their father Isaac. Isaac Newton was the church's sexton, which meant that he 'did everything' from digging graves, to attending to the needs of the church. Being the Tower Captain too, he taught all the lads of the village to ring the bells. They apparently learnt to ring when they left school, although some, including Fred's other four brothers, declined to continue after a while. It was Isaac who would at that time have looked after the bells in the belfry, oiling and greasing moving parts when necessary.

Johnny Middleton followed Isaac into the job of sexton. It was he, too, who used to ring the hand bells (which still exist, and are the property of the village). Michael Anyan acts as custodian of the set of six.

Lionel Stephenson, one of those who learnt to ring on leaving school, and who still resides in the village, remembers the team of the 1930's, 40's and 50's:

Fred Newton - the tower captain
Arty Wilcox
Reg Key
Johnny Middleton
Fred Fields.

Girls and ladies were apparently not actively encouraged to ring the bells at Springthorpe's tower in those days!

Several well-known local personalities, who came to visit the tower during Lionel's years as a ringer, include Henry Marshall, Leslie Lunn, and John Kyneman. They would have rung by the light of paraffin lamps as electricity was not yet installed.

Before each Sunday service, the bells were rung, calling the faithful to worship. Lionel thinks they may have rung for about half an hour - ample warning for the villagers to walk to the church. The bells were first rung 'up' (to a position where their mouths would be facing upwards) in readiness for the two peals of changes, after which they would have been rung down again, and the tenor chimed alone as the final 'calling' bell. Special services during the year would be rung for - ie: Easter, Harvest and Christmas. There would be practice nights to attend too.

"*We rang 'changes' a bit, though we didn't get involved in anything too difficult,*" he said. "*But some of the lads used to go out and ring at other*

towers round about, though I never did. Young Fred Newton was proud to have rung at the Cathedral once." No doubt 'Young Fred' would have met G.L.A. Lunn there too as it would most probably have been one of the Lincoln Guild Annual Meetings he went to.

Lionel, reminiscing about the duties expected of the above team of ringers, talked about the traditions followed with regard to funerals. The passing bell would be rung before the service whilst the coffin was being carried towards the church. The number of tolls of the bell told the age of the deceased. From this, the locals could easily work out who was to be buried.

On at least one of these occasions Fred Newton, Fred Fields, Arthur Wilcox and Reg Key cycled all the way from Springthorpe to Lincoln to ring on the then 16 bells high up in the tower of the Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary. At an AGM of this nature, after initial ringing, a business meeting was followed by a service in the oldest part of the Cathedral - the bell ringer's Chapel. The ringers - from all over Lincolnshire - would then have sat down to an enormous 'bell ringers' tea', followed by more ringing, either up the spiral staircase at the cathedral, or in another Lincoln tower. An extremely exhausting (though enjoyable) day for the four young men who had still to cycle all the way back - 18 or so miles - to Springthorpe.

Sadly Fred Newton, Tower Captain at St. George and St. Lawrence's for very many years, died after a long illness in 2006. His widow Joan (still living in the house opposite the church, as she and Fred had done for a long time during their married life together), confirmed much of what

Lionel was able to tell of the happy, bell-ringing years. She never felt the urge to learn to ring and join the band, though was happy to support Fred in his dedication.

A few of the occasional ringers at Springthorpe now are John Kyneman, Bev Brumby, Bruce Linegar, Glenys and Gary Beaman - all of whom come by arrangement with John Wilson at Corringham. Three other ringers who deserve mention here are two willing people new to bell ringing, but who live in the village - Gillian and Julian Cowan. They have learnt to ring at Willingham-by-Stow church with the tower captain there - Mrs Susan Faull, who is also Master of the West Lindsey Guild, and in addition, Master of the Lincoln Diocesan Guild. On occasions, they have also helped out at Springthorpe (which has a 'ground ring' - that is; one where the ropes extend down to the ground floor for pulling).

Why didn't ladies ring bells until relatively recently?

John Camp in his book "Discovering Bells and Bellringing" notes that "*It has been said that to be a ringer in eighteenth century England was to be a layabout and a drunk."* He goes on to tell us that in rural areas bell-ringing was a kind of hobby and every opportunity was taken to ring. The standard of behaviour in most belfries became appalling: "c*ursing, swearing and smoking were normal and in many towers a barrel of beer was always 'on tap in the ringing chamber."*[16] Much of the ringing seems to have been carried out for secular purposes, and it was not until the Church reforms of the Vicorian period that ringing began to resume its main function as a part of worship.

[16] Camp, p.16.

This situation may have made bell ringing strictly a man's world, or may have gradually deterred girls and women from participating. The excuse, as always, was that it would prove to be too heavy (or big) a task for the fairer sex. They were at all times welcome to provide huge teas for the hungry men after their task was over, but that was all. Bell ringing - except in exceptional circumstances - was not for them. (Nevertheless, the incident of the girl Mary Hill who was killed in a bell-ringing accident suggests that perhaps in rural parishes it was not so unusual to have girl bell-ringers.[17])

Gradually, strong-minded women infiltrated the man's world, and proved to be more than equal to the task on many occasions. The first lady to ring a peal for the Lincoln Guild was in 1913. Nowadays, as in so many other walks of life, bell ringing would be in a very sorry state if women were still not acceptable in the ringing chamber - including in the tiny village of Springthorpe, relying as it does on outside bell ringers to keep the bells active. Among the ranks of the women who visit Springthorpe tower occasionally are farmers, teachers, antique dealers, and even Lincoln Guild Ringing Masters. Discrimination has no place in bell ringing.

[17] See Appendix 7 "The Maiden's Garland"

CHAPTER 4

Church People:
Rectors, Vicars, Curates and Church Wardens

By Maureen L. Ille PhD

Our earliest documentary evidence of the people connected with Springthorpe's church is the Domesday statement:

& Coringeham

"In Springetorpe are 41 sokemen[1] *with 10 ploughs, a church and a priest.*" (see opposite page)

Thus we know that in 1086, the date of Domesday, a priest was already attached to this church, but we know nothing more about him.

The patronage of Springthorpe Church was in the hands of the lords of the Manor of Kirton, one of the largest and certainly the longest lasting of the medieval sokes of Lincolnshire. In 1066 that lord was Earl Eadwin of Mercia, but two years later the Normans defeated him and William the Conqueror took his lands. The king continued to hold the Soke of Kirton *in demesne* until at least 1086 (Domesday Survey), so either he or Eadwin must have been responsible for the initial building of the church and the appointment of the priest.[2]

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[1] A *sokeman* belonged to a class of tenants within a lord's *soke* or jurisdiction, occupying an intermediate position between free tenants and bond tenants.
[2] See Appendix 1 for further information.

THE RECTORS OF SPRINGTHORPE (in context)

Pre-Reformation

What was a Rector in the English medieval church and who appointed him? Basically, the Rector was 'endowed with' parish by the lord of the manor. The first parish churches were not built by the Church, but by local lords. They were essentially owned and operated by that lord. Many Rectors appointed during this period never even saw their parish; they just collected the revenue. Most were not even fully ordained priests. The patron appointed such people in order to build up political support groups by providing his protégés with an income. An incumbent Rector would enjoy the assets and receive all the tithes of a parish

Essentially, *tithes* were taxes on land amounting to one-tenth of whatever the land produced. In theory the revenue was to be used to support the church building and its staff, as well as the poor of the parish. The Rector was responsible for the repair of the chancel of his church, but the parishioners were usually responsible for the upkeep of the rest of the building and the churchyard.

In ideal circumstances a parish had a resident Rector who:
a] Used his benefice correctly
b] Took Holy Orders
c] Served his parishioners well.
A non-resident Rector would appoint a vicar to discharge all the spiritual duties of the office and pay him a small salary.

Usually, parishes that had a Rector also had *glebe* lands attached to the parish. Glebe included the parsonage house and grounds, as well as

farms and fields. An incumbent was entitled to retain the glebe for his own use if he wished (for instance, some incumbents farmed their own land) or he could let it, and any income formed part of his stipend. This was over and above the tithe.

Oxoniensis (the pseudonym of Rev. Charles Moor of Gainsborough All Saints) did much of the research about the Rectors of Springthorpe, in the late nineteenth century.[3] The following account follows his, with added pieces of information to place those Rectors into a historical context.

Beginnings

We know the details of the history of the Manor of Kirton Lindsey thanks to Sir Hickman Beckett Bacon, who purchased the manor in 1905 and then deposited the previously private records of the manor at the Lincolnshire Archives.[4] Oxoniensis, in that same year, tells us that *"The Patronage of Springthorpe was exercised in 1224 by an agent of the Count of Boulogne who then held the Manor of Kirton."*[5] Since the Manor of Kirton had been held *in demesne* by the monarch, for his own exclusive use, since the Norman invasion, the Counts of Boulogne must have acquired it through King Stephen's marriage (c. 1125) to Matilda, who was Countess of Boulogne. In 1224 the Count of Boulogne was Reginald, or Renaud de Dammartin through his wife Ida, Countess of Boulogne (a granddaughter of Stephen and Mathilda). Reginald's agent, Robert de Dammartin[6], who was probably a relative, appointed the first Rector of Springthorpe for whom we have a name.

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[3] *Oxoniensis*, The History of Heapham, Pilham and Springthorpe (1905)

[4] Lincoln Archivists Report #9.

[5] Quoted information about the Rectors is taken from *Oxoniensis*, pp11-13.

[6] A Robert of Boulogne was also a named benefactor of the Knights Templar's Preceptory at nearby Willoughton.

✝ **1224 – 1232: Laurence of Boulogne** (*de Bononia*)
Subdeacon[7] was appointed Rector *"by Robert de Dompmartin [sic] minister of the Count of Bononia (Boulogne) on the part of the said Count, he having first exhibited royal letters to shew that he has been made Count's seneschal in England, 16 May 1224.*"

Various different families were granted (or leased) the Manor and Soke of Kirton by the reigning monarch during the thirteenth century. They in turn appointed the Rectors of Springthorpe until the manor reverted to the monarch.[8]

✝ **1232: Henry de Honon**
Subdeacon, was appointed Rector *"by H de Burg, Earl of Kent and Justice of England, 23 Wells, 1232."*

✝ **?-1284: John** "*died 1284.*"

✝ **1284: Thomas de Wyssenden**
Clerk of Minor Orders was appointed Rector *"by Edmund, Earl of Cornwall, on death of John, last Rector, 23 Dec 1284. (Ordained Subdeacon at institution)."*

✝ **William de Schiring**. "*Resigned 1308."*

The Italian Rectors

For thirty years, from 1308, four Italians were appointed to the Rectory of Springthorpe. *Oxoniensis* tells us that they all seem to have been connected with Florentine merchants trading with England: "*Probably the presentation of a clerical member of their family to Springthorpe was considered equivalent to part payment of the royal debts.*"

[7] See Appendix 1 for the meanings of ecclesiastical titles
[8] See Appendix 2

✝ **Peter de Brixia. 1308 - 1318**.
Acolite. By Lady Margaret de Clare, Countess of Cornwall, on res of Mgr William de Schiring, 2 June 1308.

- *Peter de Brixia received letters testimonial from the Bishop on 29 Nov 1308 on his going abroad, to certify he was of good morals and honourable life.*
- *On 7 Mar 1311, being then the Rector of Springthorpe and of Chevening, dio Rochester, he had papal license to retain both, as well as his church of S. Mary at Garda, dio Verona.*
- *On 10 Jul 1313, he had leave to visit the Court of Rome, transact he affairs and return within a year, providing for the parish in his absence.*
- *In 1318, notwithstanding papal dispensations, he was dismissed from Springthorpe, for lack of sacred Orders.*

✝ **1318 – 1321: Bartholemew de Verrona.**
Clerk. *"By Hugh de Audley junior, on dismission of Mgr Peter de Brixia, last Rector, 'in accordance with the new constitution', 26 Mar 1318.*

✝ **1321 – 1327: Ambrose de Castello**
Acolyte. "*By King Edward II, on res of Mgr Peter de Brixia, Bartholemew de Verrona [sic] last Rector, 5 Jan 1327."*

- *In 1314 William de Castello was the King's tentmaker.*
- *Ambrose de Castello had leave on 9 Apr 1321 to pursue his studies for one year in England, and proceed to Subdeacon's Orders.*
- *In 1321 he and Peter de Brixia acknowledged that they owed the Society of the Peruzzi £12, secured on their lands and chattels in Norfolk and Lincolnshire.*

✝ **1327 – 1336**: **Benedict Junctyn de Florencia**
"*By the Lady Isabella de France, Queen of England, Lady of Ireland and Countess of Pontum, on res of……..last Rector, 27 May 1327.*
Benedict Junctyn de Florencia was provided by the Pope, on 4 Nov 1327, with a Canonry of Wells, with a reservation of a Prebend. He was the son of Benedict de Florencia".

❖ In 1324 the Manor was described as "*the queen's manor of Kyrketon-in-Lyndeseye"*.[9] Queen Isabella was then a Regent for her young son Edward III, whose coronation was in 1327. On 4 Dec 1330, King Edward III granted the manor of Kirton to his brother, John of Eltham, on his elevation to the earldom of Cornwall. John, however, died in

[9] Ibid. (ref: CChR, 1327–41, p. 198)

1336-37, and the King appointed the next Rector of Springthorpe. In 1337 the King granted one William Clinton, a boyhood companion, the Manor of Kirton, worth 500 marks a year.[10] After that the Manor and Soke of Kirton remained a parcel of the Duchy of Cornwall.

✝ **1336 – 1337**: **John de Wynteringham**
Son of Robert de Wynteringham. By King Edward III 16 Dec 1336.
- *Rector of Plumstead 1338*

✝ **1338 - ?: John de Belton**
By William de Clynton, Earl of Huntingdon, in exchange with John de Wynteringham, last Rector, 22 Apr 1338.
- *Rector of Debache 1329, and afterwards of Plumstead, both dio. Norwich.*

 **1349 THE BLACK DEATH** 

❖ William de Clinton died childless in 1354. The Manor was then held by Edward, the Black Prince until his death in 1376. It then must have reverted to the monarch, King Edward III, who instigated a Poll Tax in 1377 to raise money for his war with France. The Clerical Poll Tax records name the Rector of Springthorpe at that time, although he was not mentioned by Oxoniensis:

✝ **Bef. 1377-1378 John Gardiner**

Recorded in the Clerical Poll Tax records of the Diocese of Lincoln for the parish of 'Springthorp', 1377. [11] A chaplain, John Veisyn was also named, suggesting that John Gardiner was not resident. John Gardiner paid 12d. tax and his chaplain paid 4d.

[10] "Edward III and the 'New Nobility': Largesse and Limitation in Fourteenth-Century England" by James Bothwell in The English Historical Review, Vol. 112, No. 449 (Nov., 1997), p.1114 (Oxford University Press)
[11] McHardy, p.62

❖ Edward III died in that same year, to be succeeded by his grandson Richard of Bordeaux who became King Richard II (Richard's father, Edward, the Black Prince, having predeceased his own father). Subsequently, the Monor of Kirton became part of the dower of Richard II's queen, Anne of Bohemia. The following Rectors were appointed either by King Richard II or by is wife, Anne of Bohemia. Most had short terms of office.

✝ **1378 – 1390: John de Rotherham**
By King Richard II 11 Dec 1378.

- *Rector of Lannendon, dio Bangor, 1377,*
- *of Bettescombe, dio Salisbury, and Kilkeyn, dio S Asaph 1378.*
- *Leave of absence for two years, in fitting places, 3 May 1379.*
- *Rector of All Saints, Beanewell, dio Lincoln 1387, of Hengham, dio Norwich 1388,*
- *of S. Andrew's by the Wardrobe, London and of Pottersbury, Northants 1390.*

✝ **1390 – 1395: John de Garton**
"Clerk. By Queen Anne, on res of John de Roderham, last Rector, 1 Feb 1390."

✝ **1395 – 1397: William Tayllour**
"Chaplin. By King Richard II, on res of John de Garton, last Rector, 12 July 1395 [Exchanged to S. Nicholas, Thanet 1396]"

✝ **1396 – 1397: John Randolph**
"Vicar of S. Nicholas in Caneto, dio Canterbury. By King Richard II, in exchange with William
Tayllour, last Rector 25 Apr 1396. [Exchanged to Throwley, Kent 1397]."

✝ **1397 – 1403: William Cameryngham**
"Vicar of Thurlegh, dio Canterbury. By King Richard II, in exchange with John Randolph, last Rector 25 Sep 1397."

- After the death of Anne of Bohemia the manor was farmed for an annual rent by successive local magnates (including the Burghs and the Sheffields)[12] but the monarch appears to have continued to appointed the Rectors to Springthorpe

- Henry V was crowned king in 1413 and died in 1422. Before that he had been Prince of Wales as well as Duke of Cornwall. He appointed two known Rectors to Springthorpe. *Oxoniensis* records no resignation or death of the second of these but there is a period of forty-one years before the next record of a Rector of Springthorpe. Could the same incumbent have lasted so long in the position?

✝ 1403 – 1415: William Sprydlyngton
"*Clerk. By Henry, Prince of Wales, Duke of Aquitaine, Lancaster and Cornwall, and Earl of Chester, on death of William de Camerynghamm, last Rector 1 Oct 1403.*

- *William Sprydlington was a clerk in 1369 to Edward, Prince of Wales, and the Auditor of his ministers' accounts*
- *Licensed to proceed to all Orders, minor and sacred, and ordained Deacon and Priest 1404*

✝ 1416 – 1457?: Roger Helwys
Chaplin. By King Henry V, on death of William Sprydlington, 3 Feb 1416.

- Henry VI was but a baby of eight months when his father, Henry V, died and he succeeded him. He was not crowned king until 1429 and did not assume the reins of government until he was declared of age in 1437. He has been described as a pious but weak monarch during whose reign the Wars of the Roses started. He and his son (Edward the Prince of Wales and Duke of Cornwall) appointed three Rectors to Springthorpe.

[12] Lincolnshire Record Society, 19, I / 38-64.

✝ **1457 – 1459: William Hoode**
Chaplin. By King Henry VI, 25 Apr 1457."

✝ **1459 – 1461: Thomas Kyrkegate**
"*Priest. By Prince Edward, eldest son of King Henry VI, Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall, and Earl of Chester, on vacancy, 16 Feb 1459."*

✝ **1461 – 1473: John Pleseley**
"*By Prince Edward, on res of Thomas Kyrgate, 13 July 1461. [Exchanged to a moiety of Treswell, Notts 1473]."*

❖ Henry VI lost the throne to Edward of York who was crowned King Edward IV in 1461. Edward appointed just one Rector to Springthorpe.

✝ **1473 – 1494: William Rodys**
Rector of a moiety of Treswell, dio York. By King Edward IV, in exchange with John Pleseley, last Rector, 26 Sep 1473. [Retired on a pension of 7 marks per annum, 1494].

❖ During this long incumbency of over twenty years, there were turbulent times in England. Three different monarchs reigned: Edward V (one of the Princes in the Tower who was deposed after two months reign), Richard III (defeated by Henry Tudor in 1485 after a two-year reign) and Henry VII, the first Tudor monarch, who reigned until 1509. Nominally, Henry VII's son, Arthur Tudor, Prince of Wales and Duke of Cornwall, appointed the next three Rectors although he died before his father, in 1502, aged only 16 years. His brother Henry became King Henry VIII on the death of their father in 1509.

❖ From this time the Manor of Kirton became permanently attached to the Duchy of Cornwall.

✝ **1494 – 1498 : William Wysehede.**
"*Chaplin. By Arthur, eldest son of King Henry VII, on res of William Rodis, 27 Jan 1494. [Vicar of Orreby 1498].*"

✝ **1498 – 1501: Richard Stoks**
"*Priest. By Arthur, Prince of Wales, on res of William Wisehead, 20 July 1498.*"

✝ **1501 – 1508: John Gorle M.A.**
"*Priest. By Arthur, Prince of Wales, on res of Mgr Richard Stoks, 12 Sep 1501.*"

✝ **1508: John Tomson.**
"*Priest. By King Henry VII, on res of last incumbent, 19 Dec 1508." [One Richard Tomson is named as Rector in a Visitation record of 1523. One 'John Comys alias Thomson' was at the time Rector of Grayingham.]*

The Reformation

With the reign of Henry VIII came the English Reformation (1533-41). In Lincolnshire the Dissolution of the Monasteries led to rebellion. The Lincolnshire Rising was a brief rebellion of Roman Catholics against the establishment of the Church of England by Henry VIII. It began in Louth, on October 1, 1536, shortly after the closure of Louth Abbey. It quickly gained support in nearby towns. With support from local gentry, a rebel force estimated at up to 40,000 marched on Lincoln and, by October 7, occupied Lincoln Cathedral. They demanded the freedom to continue worshipping as Catholics and protection for the treasures of Lincolnshire churches. The rebellion, however, effectively ended on October 10, 1536 when King Henry sent word for the occupiers to disperse or face his forces. Most of the rebel leaders were executed. We have no record of how Springthorpe reacted during the rebellion, but the Rector of Springthorpe, Richard Harpham, remained in position throughout this period until his death in 1539. In 1531 the will of one Richard Terwhit of

Gainsborough refers to him as "*Sir Richard Harpam the parson of Springthrope*".[13]

✝ **1530 – 1539: Richard Harpham.**
"*Chaplin. By King Henry VIII, on death of last incumbent, 27 Sep 1530.*"

✝ **1539: Thomas Clarke.**
"Priest. By King Henry VIII, on death of Richard Harpham, last Rector, 30 May 1539. [Still Rector 1546]."

The removal and destruction of objects associated with Catholicism did not occur quickly at Springthorpe Church (suggesting some sympathy for the rebels' cause). They remained in place throughout the Protestant reforms of the five-year reign of the child king Edward VI and the nine-day rule of Lady Jane Grey (1547-53). The pressure to purge the church building of such objects must have decreased during the subsequent five-year reign (1553-58) of the devoutly Catholic Queen Mary I, who sought to undo many of these Protestant reforms.

✝ **1551: Richard Robinson**
Firstfruits 9 May 1551. [Still Rector 1561]
- *Vicar of Torksey in 1535*

❖ Only in 1561, during the reign of Elizabeth I, did Springthorpe Church eventually dispose of its "*images of papistrie*" and "*monuments of superstition*" (see Chapter 2). This was during the incumbency of the above Richard Robinson, although he had been Rector throughout the earlier period of Protestant reform. During Queen Elizabeth I's long reign (1558-1603) we know of only three of the Rectors of Springthorpe. There appear to be periods without a Rector at all, or more likely, missing records of incumbency.

[13] Lincoln Wills: volume 3; C.W. Foster (editor) 1930; pp. 125-135. Transcribed at www.british-

✝ **1576: Gregory Garth.**
Firstfruits 10 Oct 1576.

- *Gregory Garth was a native of Richmond.*
- *He matriculated as a sizar at Pembroke Coll, Cambs 1545, proceeded B.A. 1549, M.A. 1552, B.D. 1562, D.D of Oxford 1566.*
- *He was Fellow of his College about 1550, Proctor 1554, Lady Margaret Preacher 1562, Prebendary of Bedford Major at Lincoln 1564 - 1574, Chancellor 1568 – 1605.*
- *He was Rector of Chalfont S. Giles, Bucks 1562 - 1585, of Glatton, Hunts 1563, of Warbovs, Hunts 1565, of Hemel Hampstead, Herts 1565, of Wallington, Herts 1566, of Holton le Beckering 1576.*
- *He was admitted to Gray's Inn 1605 and died in 1608.*
- *Rector of Springthorpe for only six weeks, the shortest incumbency recorded.*

✝ **1576-86: Boniface Martyn**
First fruits 24 Nov 1576. [Still Rector about 1579]

- *Vicar of Corringham 1562,*
- *Rector of Heapham 1565*
- **Buried at Springthorpe Church 8 Oct 1586**[14]

✝ **1586-1621 William Farmerye**
Clerk M.A. By Queen Elizabeth, on death of last incumbent 9 Nov 1586. [First fruits 7 Feb 1587. Signs Transcripts 1599 to 1621.

- *Rector of Heapham 1588, of Ludborough 1627*
- ***Buried at Heapham 11 Nov 1633***

❖ King James I reigned in England from 1603 to 1625 (he was already king of Scotland as James VI). His eldest son was Henry Stuart, Prince of Wales, who died at he age of eighteen in 1612. Henry's brother, Charles, then became heir to the throne, and he was created Prince of Wales in 1616. As Prince of Wales he appointed two Rectors of Springthorpe. He became King Charles I in 1625.

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history.ac.uk
[14] Rev.B. Davies "Springthorpe, the Church and the People" (unpulished) p.77 – transcribed in full in Appendix 3.

✝ **1621 Robert Waterhouse of Hallifax**

- *Benefice sequestered for his adherence to the royal cause, but afterwards restored.*[15]

✝ **Thomas Wye. 1624**.

By the Prince of Wales. First fruits 12 May 1624.

- *Called Thomas Wier.*
- *Still Rector 1642-3*

❖ Cromwell's Commonwealth of England

King Charles I was executed in 1649, the monarchy abolished, and the Commonwealth of England created. Government of the country took the form of direct personal rule by Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector until his death in 1658. There was apparently only one incumbent Rector of Springthorpe through this turbulent period. The information is a little confusing:

✝ **Before 1647: John Halifax**[16]

- *Undated: "No reason for subscription given. Subscribed before Sr Edw Lake, Regr of Archdeacon of Stow. Subscription to the Act of Uniformity by someone already in office".*

✝ **1647- Johannes (John) Hallifax M.A.**[17]

- *Appointed 9th March 1647*
- *Ordained Deacon 1637*
- *Ordained Priest 1639*
- *1658: Re-appointed Rector of Springthorpe*
- *1662: Licensed as a preacher in Springthorpe, but also listed as Rector*
- *John Halifax had a large family born in Springthorpe, including two sons also in Holy Orders.*
- *His son William, bapt. 24 Sept 1655, became Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons in 1706.*[18]
- **Buried at Springthorpe Church 8 March 1676**[19]

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[15] Worthies of Barnsley, Ch.VII, p.166
[16] www.theclergydatabaseorg.uk *Liber cleri* record
[17] ibid
[18] Davies, p.77
[19] ibid p.87

❖ **The Restoration of the monarchy** brought King Charles II to the throne of England (1660-85), and thus to the appointment of the next Rector of Springthorpe. Thereafter, the monarch appointed all subsequent Rectors of Springthorpe.

✝ **1677-1705: Thomas Mason. B.A.**
By King Charles II, on death of last incumbent 22 Mar 1676/77.
- *Ordained priest by Abp of York 1674*
- *Licensed to preach at Springthorpe and throughout diocese 1677*[20]
- **Buried at Springthorpe Church 17 Sept 1704**[21]

❖ No new Rectors were appointed to Springthorpe during the reigns of James II (1685-88) and William III (William of Orange) (1689-1702).

❖ The last Stuart monarch was Queen Anne who reigned 1702-14. She appointed one Rector to Springthorpe.

✝ **1705 – 1710: Thomas Reynolds M.A.**
Clerk. By Queen Anne 10 Jan 1705.
- *Ordained priest by Abp of York 1679. Also Vicar of Haugham*

After Queen Anne's death a Protestant successor had to be found because the Act of Settlement 1701 prohibited Catholics from inheriting the throne.

❖ George of Hanover was Queen Anne's nearest Protestant relative and became King George I of England. Thus he inherited the Manor of Kirton and the right to appoint the Rector of Springthorpe. The following four Rectors were appointed by the Hanoverian kings George I, George II, George III and George IV.

[20] ibid
[21] Davies, p.77

✝ **1717 - 1744: Robert Althorp. LLB Cambs.**
By King George I on death of Thomas Reynolds 4 Apr 1717.

- *1710 Licensed as Deacon at Springthorpe*
- *1712 Ordained Priest by Bp of Lincoln*
- *1712 Rector of Hammeringham and Vicar of Scrafield*
- *Also Sequestrator of Haugham, residing at Maltby*
- *1717 Appointed Rector of Springthorpe*
- **Buried at Springthorpe Church**[22]

✝ **1744 – 1775: Thomas Wells.**
Clerk. By King George II on death of last incumbent 7 Sep 1744.

- *Ordained priest by Bp of Peterborough 1707.*
- *Also Rector of Willingham*

✝ **1775 – 1807: Robert Wells.**
By King George III, on death of Thomas Wells, last Rector 13 Dec 1775.

- *Son of Thomas Wells of Willingham. Clerk.*
- *Matriculated at Lincoln Coll. Oxon. 1752, aged 18. B.A. 1766, M.A., R.D. and D.D. 1774.*
- *Vicar of East (Market)Rasen 1781-3.*
- *Died 26 Mar 1807*

✝ **1807 – 1826: Robert Willoughby Carter.**
By King George III, on death of last incumbent, 25 Apr 1807

- *Rector of Quarrington 1805. Re-instituted 1825.*
- *Resigned 1826*

✝ **1826 – 1863: Isham Case. M.A**.
By King George IV, on cession of Robert Willoughby Carter, last Rector, 18 Feb 1826.

- *Rector of Quarrington 1821*
- *Vicar of Metheringham 1825*

❖ By the end of the 18th century most of the Manor of Kirton was 'disposed of'. (Allegedly, in 1799 George IV, when Prince Regent, sold the Manor of Kirton to discharge his gambling debts to John Julius Angerstein, a wealthy Russian Jew.) Nevertheless, the Duchy of Cornwall retained certain manorial rights. It appears from

[22] Davies, p.77

Oxoniensis's research that the monarch was still reponsible for appointing the Rectors of Springthorpe parish.[23]

❖ The three Rectors appointed to Springthorpe by **Queen Victoria** were:

✝ **1863 – 1891**: **Edward Clennell Leaton Blenkinsopp.**
By Queen Victoria, on death of Isham Case, 17 Jul 1863.
- *B.A. of Durham 1839, M.A. 1842.*
- *Ordained priest 1843.*
- *Perpetual Curate of S. James' Lathom, Lancs 1851 - 1855,*
- *Chaplin to the Forces 1856 - 1862.*
- *Resigned Springthorpe 16 Oct 1891.*
- *Died at Ilfracombe 18 Aug 1898*

✝ **1892 – 1895: Frederick Alfred Wallis.**
By Queen Victoria, on res of E.C.L. Blenkinsopp, last Rector 20 Feb 1892.
- *Missionary at Zanzibar 1881 - 1889.*
- *Resigned at Springthorpe 21 Jan 1895*

✝ **1895 - 1910: Thomas Toovey Hedges.**
By Queen Victoria, on res of Frederick Alfred Wallis 5 Apr 1895.
- *Vicar of Alfriston, Sussex 1877 - 1882,*
- *Rector of Pilham 1882*

******Here the research of *Oxoniensis* ends.******

[23] Leaflet St Andrews Church, Kirton-in-Lindsey [http://www.the-umc.org.uk/StAsleaflet.pdf]

The Research of Edward Clennell Leaton Blenkinsopp

In 1886 the Rev.E.C.L.Blenkinsopp, Rector of Springthorpe, took the time to examine and comment on the signatures in the parish registers of the church. The earliest signature was that of John Hallifax who signed in 1658, 1661, 1668 and 1669. His successor, Thomas Mason signed almost every year until his death in 1704.

The parish registers were not signed at all 1705-18 (during the incumbency of Rector Thomas Reynolds) and 1743-44 (Rector unknown).

GET COPY OF Blenkinsopp notes in PR from Archives

Following the example of Blenkinsopp, an examination of the 20th century registers shows the following incumbents of Springthorpe Parish:

1910-37 Rev. Benjamin Davies was Rector of Springthorpe parish and remained the incumbent until 1937. He was also curate at Morton (from 1903) and Rector of Pilham with Blyton and Wharton. He died in 1952 aged 89.

1938 to 1958 F. Butterworth signed the Parish Registers, as Vicar of Springthorpe.

1959 to 1966 Martin Cordes signed the registers, also as Vicar.

1967 to 1972 Denzil Wright signed, first as Priest in Charge and then as Rector.

1974 to 1977 John Fairweather signed the registers as Rector

1979-82 Rev. H. J. Knight, Rural Dean of Corringham signed

1980-81 Rev. Clifford Hendry signed some baptisms

1985-91 Rev.Andrew C.Grieve signed as Rector

From 1993 Rev. M. W. Page-Chesney signs the Parish Registers as Vicar.

The Lincoln Diocesan Calendars 1900-2004 confirm these appointments:

DATES	INCUMBENT CLERGY	ORDAINED
1910-37	Benjamin Davies B.D.	1892
1937-59	Frederick Butterworth	1922
1959-66	Albrecht Johannes Martin Cordes	1956
1967-72	Denzyl (E.D.C.) Wright M.A	1932
1973-78	Rev.John Fairweather	1967
1978-79	Vacant	
1980-82	C.Hendry B.D.	1954
1982-83	Vacant	

1983-91	R.A.C.Grieve	1971
1991-2003	Michael William Page-Chestney	
2004	Vacant	
2005-	Rev. Chris. Green of Glentham seconded to the Corringham Group for 3 out of 4 services	

OTHER CLERGY OF SPRINGTHORPE:

Documentation on other clergy appointed to Springthorpe church is more difficult to find. The earliest reference found so far is in the Clerical Poll Tax records for the diocese of Lincoln.[24] There, those clerics of Springthorpe parish eligible to pay the tax in 1377 were named. Apart from the incumbant Rector, John Gardiner, a chaplain is cited, called John Veisyn. Thereafter, there is a gap of 270 years before more information emerges.

"The Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540-1835" (CCEd)[25] includes a list of church officials appointed to Springthorpe from 1647 to 1831. The list includes the offices of Rector, Deacon, Preacher and Curate. The office of Rector, as already discussed, was an Institutional Appointment, the Rector directly receiving both the greater and lesser

[24] McHardy, p.62

[25] www.theclergydatabase.org.uk launched in 1999 and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, makes available the principal records of clerical careers from over 50 archives in England and Wales with the aim of providing coverage of as many clerical lives as possible from the Reformation to the mid-nineteenth century.

tithes of his parish. However, he was not necessarily licensed to preach. The Rector John Hallifax, an ordained deacon, was appointed Rector in 1647, but was not licensed to preach in Springthorpe until 1662. His successor, Thomas Mason, was both appointed Rector and licensed to preach in 1677. Indeed, Mason was licensed to preach not only in Springthorpe but also throughout the diocese of Lincoln.

Historically, Anglican parish priests were divided into rectors, vicars, curates and, less often, perpetual curates. These were distinguished mainly according to the way in which they were appointed and so remunerated. Each was invested with 'the care of souls' of a parish, meaning instruction of the members of the church, essentially through administration of the sacraments. The title "Preacher" as distinct from other titles within the clergy, indicated that the person was licensed to preach sermons and give admonitions (advise, counsel, cautions, exhortations).

✝ The earliest record of a clergyman other than a Rector is that of **Rev**. **Robert Waterhouse Hallifax**, who was cited in a document at Sussex Archives as Vicar of Springthorpe in 1633.[26] This would have been during the incumbancy of Rector Thomas Wye (1624-47). The name is very similar to that of Robert Waterhouse of Halifax, Rector of Springthorpe 1621-24. The family is recorded as having changed its surname name to 'Hallifax'. This Robert was probably the son of the former Rector. He is also thought to be related to the subsequent Rector, John Hallifax (1647-77).

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[26] A document in Sussex Archives describes Arms granted to Robt. Waterhouse Hallifax, Esq., of Yorkshire, 9 Oct. 1572, and "allowed, with difference, to Rev. Robt. Waterhouse Hallifax, Vicar of Springthorp, Lincs, 24 June 1633".

✝ Yet another member of this family, **Rev. Thomas Hallifax**, is also documented as Vicar of Springthorp, in the "late 17th C" at the Sussex Archives.[27] This would have been during the incumbancy of Rector Thomas Mason (1677-1705).

✝ During the incumbency of Thomas Reynolds as Rector (1705-17) a deacon, **Robert Althorp**, was appointed in 1710. On the death of Reynolds in 1717, Althorpe became the new Rector, settling in Springthorpe. In 1718 he bought a cottage and lands in the parish from John Rimington of Little Corringham, Yeoman, and his wife Mary for £115.[28] Robert Althorp was buried at Springthorpe church on 17th January 1743/44.

✝ In 1733 and 1734 **Francis Althorp** was licensed as curate in Springthorpe. He was both an ordained deacon (1733) and an ordained priest (1734), and moved to North Wheatley as assistant curate in 1736. He was probably a son of Robert Althorp.

✝ During the incumbency of Thomas Wells as Rector (1744-75), **Robert Broughton** was appointed curate in 1744, followed by **Robert Wells** in 1756. Robert Wells was a busy man: he was also vicar at Market Rasen (1766-83) and perpetual curate at Hemswell (1774-1807).

✝ In 1775, on the resignation of Thomas Wells (his father?), Robert was appointed Rector of Springthorpe, a position he maintained until 1807, but he was also Rector of Willingham from the end of 1781 until his death in 1807. He had three curates appointed to Springthorpe during

[27] Pedigree of Rev. Thos. Hallifax, Vicar of Springthorp, Lincs. (late 17th C.) describing his descent from Richd. Waterhouse, Esq., born 1438. Sussex Archives Ref. HA 519/63
[28] Lincolnshire Archives document MISC.DON 264/4

his Rectory, **Henry Willis** (1777), **John Bellaman** (1790) and **John Orde** (1793).

- A Stipendary Curate, **Thomas Ramsden Ashworth**, was appointed to Springthorpe in 1825, the last year of Robert Willoughby Carter's incumbency as Rector (1807-26). An ordained deacon, Ashworth had a stipend £50 with surplice fees, and he was also resident curate of Heapham.

- The next Rector of Springthorpe, Isham Case (1826-63), was also Rector of Metheringham, southwest of Lincoln, and was living in the Vicarage there in 1842. He had a Stipendary Curate appointed to Springthorpe in 1831, **Hompesch Massingberd**, an ordained priest and deacon, with a stipend of £50, who was to reside at Gainsborough. Massingberd was also a stipendary curate at Kettlethorpe with Laughterton and Fenton, Bradley, and Barnoldby le Beck, as well as vicar at Upton with Kexby – another busy man, it seems.

The later issues of the Lincoln Diocesan Calendar (after1967) sometimes gives information about the assisting curates of the parishes.

- Revd E.D.C.Wright had two assistant clergy during his incumbency: 1967-70 **P.R.Miller**, and 1970-73 **J.R. Armfelt.**

- Throughout his incumbency (1991-2003), Michael William Page-Chestney was assisted by his curate **Rev. Susan Valerie Page-Chestney**, who was also his wife. They left in 2003 when he became Vicar to Immingham.

✝ Known Curates Appointed to Springthorpe:

1733	Francis Althorpe
1734	Francis Althorpe
1744	Robert Broughton
1756	Robert Wells
1777	Henry Willis
1790	John Bellaman
1793	John Orde
1825	Thomas Ramsden Ashworth (Stipendiary curate)
1831	Hompeche Massingberd (Stipendiary curate)
1863-48	James Cox D.D.
c.1850s ?	Benjamin Street (d.1892)
1967	P.R.Miller
1970-73	J.R. Armfelt B.A.
1991-2003	Susan Valerie Page-Chestney.

Laymen in the Church Organisation

The Church Wardens are the senior lay leaders of a Parish. Traditionally, one is appointed by the Vicar (known as the Vicar's Warden) and the other elected by the parishioners (called the Peoples' Warden). They are both part of a Church Council. In Springthorpe only after 1965 were the terms "Vicar's Warden" and "People's Warden" mentioned in the minutes, and both were elected by the P.C.C.

Known Churchwardens of Springthorpe church:

1533	Henrye Wygglesworthe Wyllm Hansone
1561	Robert Naylor William Andrew
1566	William Burie George Swyfte
1671	John Stoocks William Prockter
1699	J.R.Nocton R. Duckle
1701	John Smith Robert Wilkinson
Undated terrier	Robert Wilkinson Robert Chambers
1702	Robert Lacey John Oldham
1746, 1749, 1755, 1773, 1774	Samuel Hill
1747, 1749	Joseph Milnes
1778	James Hill
1864	Benjamin Milburn
1911	George William Stephenson Charles Joseph Kells
1960-1977	Mr Percy G. Stephenson
1960-2009	Mrs Elizabeth (Bessie) Anyan
1977-78	Mr Landers
1978-1985	Miss D. Stephenson
1985-current	Michael C. Anyan
2009-current	Mrs Penny Sedgewick

The Parochial Church Council (P.C.C.) is elected each year at the Annual Meeting of parishioners. The Church Council is responsible for the affairs of the parish under the leadership of the Vicar. It includes a treasurer who reports to the Council about the finances of the parish. The Church Council is responsible for the finances of the Parish.

Elected Springthopre P.C.C. members since 1960 (from Minute Book):

Anyan, Mr Charles
Anyan, Mr Michael
Anyan, Mrs Bessie
Casswell, Mr J.
Deekin, Mrs
Durdey, Miss Norma
Durdey, Mr
Graham, Mr Tom
Landers, Mr
Middleton, Mr J.
Newton, Miss G.
Newton, Mr Fred
Newton, Mr J.
Saynor, Mr E.
Saynor, Mrs L.
Sedgewick, Mrs Penny
Stephenson Mrs Mary
Stephenson Mrs Percy
Stephenson, Miss D.
Stephenson, Mr Lionel
Stephenson, Mr Maurice
Stephenson, Mr Percy
Whitehouse, Mrs
Wilcox, Mr A.
Wilcox, Mrs
Willey, Mrs E.M.
Winter, Mr F.
Winter, Mrs G.
Wood, Miss
Winter, Mrs Shirley

From 1987 members of the P.C.C. were no longer named in the minute book. There were 32 people on the church's electoral roll in 1960 but only 6 in 1990, perhaps largely due to the death of older members and the lack of incoming younger people. The usual attendance at the AGMs of the P.C.C. between 1985 and 2004 was limited to the two Churchwardens and the Vicar. From 1997 the Churchwarden Michael

Anyan fulfilled all the roles of Treasurer, Secretary, and Deanery Synod Representative.

In 2005 a new Church Support Group was formed, encouraging far more parishioners of Springthorpe and Sturgate to become involved with church activities. The following year it was reported to be working excellently, with the Church being regularly cleaned by volunteers. Heading the Church Support Group was Mr Stephen Cartwright who began making applications for grants to repair the fabric of the building. Unfortunately, despite Mr Cartwright's efforts, in 2008 English Heritage refused to grant aid for the necessary repairs. Although re-applications were to be made, much of the initial momentum was lost.

Chapel Exterior (above)

Church (below)

CHAPTER 6

The Churchyard at Springthorpe

The churchyard we see today is not at all as it would once have been. In most places what we call the churchyard would have pre-dated the church. The ground would have been consecrated for holy burial and as a place of prayer. It would seem that in the Domesday Book it was an exception for a church to be mentioned in relation to a village, because the ancient Saxon custom had been for noblemen to erect an elaborate Cross rather than a church. Springthorpe, too, had an ancient cross, although we do no know how ancient. It was knocked down in 1563, according to an account in the parish register:[1]

> *"1563. Rolland Chambers of Kirton and Mabel Wilson were married 22 Nov and on the same night the cross in the cemetery was overthrown"*

✝ We learn a great deal about churchyards and their uses in earlier times from John Nicholson's account of 1898, "Concerning the Churchyard", from which the following information is taken.[2] The graveyard was not only a burial place, but also a place where disputes could be resolved and oaths taken before the clergy. As early as 1287 the ecclesiastical authorities discouraged the settling of secular disputes in church grounds, but it was still going on in the 15th century, as documentary evidence shows.

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[1] Oxoniensis, p.?

✝ In pre-Reformation England, annual fairs were often held in churchyards, and on Sundays and holidays "*the churchyard became a public playground*". We have no specific evidence from Springthorpe, but that of many other churches suggest that the higher authorities struggled in vain to prevent churchyards being used for "*improper and prohibited sports*" such as "*wrestling, football and handball*" [Salton, Yorkshire 1472]. A fine of twopence was levied, but clearly had no effect, as in 1519 the same ecclesiastical authorities threatened excommunication!

✝ Whitsuntide was a time of a special feast known as the Whitsun Ales or Church Ales, at which money was raised for church repairs. The churchwardens brewed the ale and the people came in from the surrounding countryside to join the festivities. There would be music, songs and dances; the baiting of bulls, bears and badgers; games of, balls, dice and cards, and general merry-making. All this went on among the graves in the churchyard, sometimes even with tents and booths erected.

✝ The earliest documentary evidence relating to Springthorpe's churchyard is an Archdeacon's Visitation of about the year 1300. This tells not only of the dire state of the church building and its lack of required 'furnishings', but also states:

"*The Cemetery is badly enclosed and defiled by divers beasts."*[3]

✝ 19th century Visitations suggest that the churchyard continued to be much neglected. The following is from the Visitation of 1851:

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[2] Nicholson, John: "Concerning the Churchyard" in Curious Church Customs (1898) pp147-160.

"Sir Thos. Becket has liberally contributed towards the repairs of the Church . . . and has promised to place a better fence round the Churchyard."

It must be, then, that the sturdy stone wall that now surrounds the churchyard was not built until after 1851. It is perhaps most likely that it was built during the 1864 restoration of the church, when the ground surrounding the church itself was lowered and levelled.

Springthorpe Burials

But what of the actual burials at Springthorpe church?
The oldest surviving gravestone is of 1700, with but earlier burials can be found out from the Parish Registers, although they are difficult to read, and from other documentary information.

✝ A stone slab, 16 x 12 inches, is built into the exterior wall of the north vestry, to the left-hand side of the door. It dates back to the 15th century and is the oldest survivng burial marker at Springthorpe church. It is usually quite overlooked, because its inscription has now been completely eroded away by the weather. Fortunately, its Latin words were recorded in the Kelly's Directory of 1885.

"*[Hic] Jacet Radulphus filius*
Johannis cujus anime
Propicietur [Deus]. Amen"

(Here lies Ralph son of John on whose soul may God have mercy. Amen)

The stone must have been placed in this position when the North Vestry was built during the 1865 restoration. It must have previously been inside the church in order that its inscription had survived for four centuries. Sadly, the placing of it outside on the north wall

[3] Oxoniensis, p.16.

ensured that it would quickly deteriorate. Rev. Davies urged that it be quickly moved indoors back in the 1930s, but no action was taken. Perhaps it should be surmounted now by an engraved plaque reminding of the words of the inscription.

✝ We have no record of how many people of the parish died during the Black Death in the 14th century, but the parish register of 1549 tells us:

> "*Between 3 Aug and 12 Oct 1549,*
> *eleven persons died here of the plague".*

This is a reminder that there were recurrent outbreaks of plague in the centuries following the Black Death.

✝ Four of the Rectors of the parish are recorded in the Burial Registers of Springthorpe.[4] They are:

Boniface Martin:	*October 8th 1586*
John Hallifax:	*March 8th 1676*
Thomas Mason:	*September 17th 1704*
Robert Althorpe:	*January 18th 1743*

None of their grave markers have survived, but it is very likely that they were interred inside the church, probably beneath the chancel floor. In one case specific evidence of this survives. A document in Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds branch, from around 1780, was brought to our attention by a family history researcher descended from the Springthorpe Hallifax family. It states that there were then some monuments to the Hallifax clergy in Springthorpe church. It also refers to a Rev. Robt. Waterhouse Hallifax, Vicar of Springthorpe, 24 June 1633**,** about whom we have, as yet, no further information.

✝ The earliest surviving gravestones in the churchyard are from the 18th century:

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[4] Davies, Appendix 3

1700: Mary, daughter of Samuel and Jane Hill aged 14 years &
1776: Samuel Hill aged 71 years (on the same gravestone.)
1708 1731: Robert Wilkinson
1755: John Lacy aged 77 years
1762: Mary, wife of Joseph Smith of Sturgate, aged 27 years
1781: Mary, wife of William Smith aged 50 years
1789: John Webster aged 81, as well as his wife Mary (1784)

These are all situated close to one another, in the area to the east of the path leading to the church's south door. The inscription on that of John Lacy is still clear:

Observe my friends as you pass by
As you are now so once was I
As I am now so you must be . . .
[the last line is below the ground level]

✝ The position of the ancient cross that once stood in the graveyard was probably to the west of the path, not far from the church door. A new cross was erected, allegedly on the ancient stone base, in 1892. It is inscribed with the words:

"*in affectionate remembrance of twenty eight* [years]*faithful service rendered by the Rector – the Rev. E. L. Blenkinsopp*"[5]

This was reported by Rev. Benjamin Davies, who further tells of the inscription on the base:

"Ancient Cross thrown down
Feb.26.1564. Restored 1892
In Memory of the Rev. E. L. Blenkinsopp
Rector 1863-1891."

He further notes that the date inscribed on the present cross does not correspond to that in the registers (November 22nd 1563) – someone didn't do their research carefully, which always seems to have dismayed Rev. Davies.

1910 - The Addition to the Church Graveyard

[5] See Appendix 3 for the full account

✝ When the old churchyard had little or no more room for burials, a section of adjoining land, owned by Sir Hickman Bacon, was given to the church to increase the capacity of the graveyard. This is the area to the west of the old churchyard, down at a lower level and reached by a set of steps. A document in Linconshire Archives shows the petition for consecration of this land, addressed to the Bishop of Lincoln, the Right Reverend Edward Lee. It was signed by Rev. Benjamin Davies, Churchwardens (George William Stephenson and Charles Joseph Kell) and a number of Parishioners (Robert Winter, John Warner Green, Fred Lidgett, Fred Taylor and Ernest Barwick).[6]

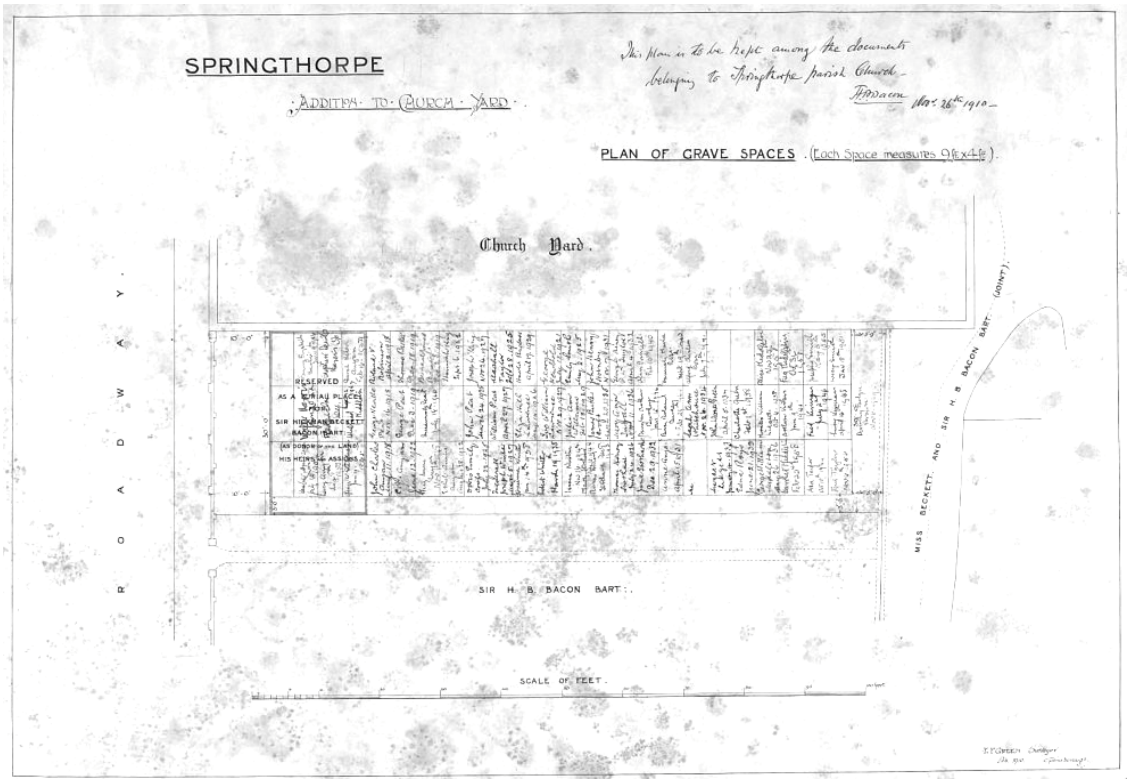


Fig. : Plan of the Addition to the Church Yard at Springthorpe

From the detail of the plan of the churchyard extension (fig.) it can be seen that there were 60 plots proposed, set in 3 rows of 20, for the

[6] Linc.Archives Doc. CONSEC 284H/17 (1911)

interment of local villagers. In addition, the area closest to the road was set aside: "*Reserved as a burial place for Sir Hickman Beckett Bacon Bart: (as donor of the land) his heirs and assigns.*" It was the size of 12 plots. Sir Hickman Bacon, however, never married and had no children of his own. The Bacon family never used the plots, and eventually the spaces were used for local graves. As burials took place during the twentieth century each section of the chart has been filled in with the name and date of burial of the deceased whose grave corresponds to each plot.

✝ Thanks to the work of as yet unidentified persons, a map of the entire graveyard was produced around1975, with a key to the graves. All the Monumental Inscriptions were recorded and the record is held in Lincolnshire Archives.[7] Not only did they transcribe all the headstones that were legible, but they also recorded a number of what they thought were small headstones bearing only initials. These, in fact, are not headstones but footstones that mark the lower end of certain graves. They can often be matched to their appropriate headstone by the initials and, in some cases, dates.

[7] Appendix 9 is a transcription of the original document made by Richard Ille-Smith in 2008-09, which can also be seen online at www.springthorpe-village.org.uk. See also "Lincolnshire monumental inscriptions, vol. 4" [Typescript] in Lincolnshire monumental inscriptions, vol. 4 (1981).

CHAPTER 7

Chapel: Primitive Methodism

By Maureen L. Ille

Methodism has its roots in 18th-century Anglicanism. In fact, John Wesley (1703-1791) was a Church of England minister, but one who sought to challenge the religious assumptions of the day. During a period of time in Oxford, he and others met regularly for Bible study and prayer, to receive communion, and do acts of charity. The term 'Methodists' was given to them there because they lived by 'method'. In origin, therefore, it was just a nickname, but John Wesley later used the term Methodist himself to mean the methodical pursuit of biblical holiness. From there the movement developed into the Methodist Church we now know.

John Wesley declared "*I live and die a member of the Church of England*" and believed that the movement he had founded should remain within the Anglican Church. The Church of England, on the other hand, was keen to distance itself from Wesley and his followers. In the end, the strength and impact of Methodism made a separate Methodist Church inevitable. In 1795, four years after Wesley's death, Methodists in Britain became legally able to conduct marriages and perform the sacraments.[1]

[1] From the BBC website (www.bbc.co.uk)

Primitive Methodism

The "Ranters":

Methodism, as derived from Wesley, was one and undivided during his lifetime but, following his death, there were several secessions all of which maintained the name Methodist. Such were the Primitive Methodists, formed around 1811 and led by Hugh Bourne (a wheelwright) and William Clowes (a potter).

Bourne and Clowes were uneducated, rebellious, charismatic evangelists who supported the American evangelical idea of "Camp Meetings". These were daylong, open-air assemblies involving public praying, preaching, hymn singing and Love Feasts ('*a simple sharing of a simple meal*', not the orgy that the name seems to suggest!). The first Camp Meeting in England was held on Sunday 31 May 1807 at Mow Cop on the Cheshire/Staffordshire border.

The enthusiasm associated with revivalism was seen as disreputable by the early 19th Century establishment. In 1799, the Bishop of Lincoln claimed that the "ranter" element of Methodism was so dangerous that the government must ban itinerant preachers. Men like Bourne and Clowes were not educated members of the establishment and so their preaching and mass conversion was a challenge to 19th-century society. The Wesleyan Methodists were now trying to distance themselves from such popular culture, which bourgeois society considered vulgar. They were impatient with the 'less respectable' elements of Methodism. The Camp Meeting Methodists, however, were able to look back to the early days of the Methodist movement and conclude that amongst other things, field

preaching had then been acceptable. The Primitive Methodist movement could therefore be said to have started in reaction to the Wesleyan drive towards 'respectability'. It was a movement led by the poor and for the poor.

Later, in a second stage of Primitive Methodism in the 1840s and 50s, another idea was adopted from America – 'the protracted meeting'. The aim was to make new converts, but it was also to "*rekindle the lukewarm piety of existing members*".[2] Protracted meetings, over several days, consisted of intense preaching, prayer, singing, and commitment, to engender spiritual renewal.

Despite being organised and carefully planned, these sessions could, apparently, get out of hand and become even more protracted. One such example, cited by Obelkevich, took place here in Springthorpe in 1845. It lasted for fifty-eight days! The entire village population at the time was a little over two hundred, yet the meeting resulted in at least twelve new conversions. Such meetings were usually held in the winter months when there was less demand on agricultural workers and nights were long and cold. The chapel full of people was presumably a warm and friendly place to be.

<u>Later Developments</u>:

By 1850 the Primitives and Wesleyans were showing signs that they could, in fact, surmount their differences. Primitive Methodism was mellowing and by 1850 it was more in keeping with social norms. Less emphasis was being placed on the supernatural and trances, hymns about

[2] Obelkevich, p226

Hell were sung less frequently, and the revivalist enthusiasm of the Primitive leadership declined.

Unfortunately, the Primitives also became less ardent in their support of the female right to ecclesiastical equality. In 1828 women were forbidden from becoming superintendents, and in mid-century the Primitive Methodist Magazine stopped publishing biographies eulogising female preachers. Preaching changed considerably. Services became characterised by their decorum and the ministry was increasingly professional. The community's values were now more in line with 'bourgeois respectability'. In the early twentieth century, the Wesleyans and Primitives were reconciled and reunited.

The Methodist Church is now the third largest Christian Church in England, after the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches. The Methodist Church is traditionally known as 'non-conformist' because it does not conform to the rules and authority of the established Church of England.

The Primitive Methodist Chapel at Springthorpe

There is a street in Springthorpe called Chapel Lane, but it is not the street where we find any chapel building today. However, in 1831 a small Primitive Methodist chapel was built on the south side of this lane, and the maps indicate that it would have once stood in what is now the garden of Thorpe House. This garden is well elevated from the level of the road and it is tempting to imagine the bricks that once formed the old chapel buried beneath this modern lawn. No picture of this chapel has yet been found, yet the building survived into modern times as a Reading

Room, and is remembered still by some of the villagers (although probably as a ruin)

- From a report in the Primitive Methodist Magazine of 1861 we discover that there was an extension of 9½ ft built onto the length of original chapel.[3] Two windows were added and six new pews installed "*at the top of the elevation*". Two of the old pews were moved "*from the bottom to the top*" to make room to accommodate the Sabbath-school. This seems to indicate that the pews were ramped from front to back of the chapel. The floor in front of the pulpit was now boarded for free standing seats and a new singers stall. The cost, we are told, was £48 9s. 2d., £35 9s. 2d. having been raised by collections, donations, tea-meetings etc. In addition, £7 had been raised to buy the new harmonium.

- A new chapel was built in 1898 to accommodate the ever-growing population of Primitive Methodists in the area. The original plans are in Lincolnshire Archives (see fig.). The chapel itself (25 x 4 ft) was built to accommodate 120 people, with a schoolroom (20 x16feet) behind. From the plans we can see that from the schoolroom there was access to a kitchen at the rear. The kitchen had a boiler with a coalhouse attached. Outdoor toilets (a urinal and two 'privies', plus an ash pit) were built at the back in a separate building. The architect was John Clark of Norfolk St, Sheffield and the contractor was Mr Cooper Snowden of Grimsby.

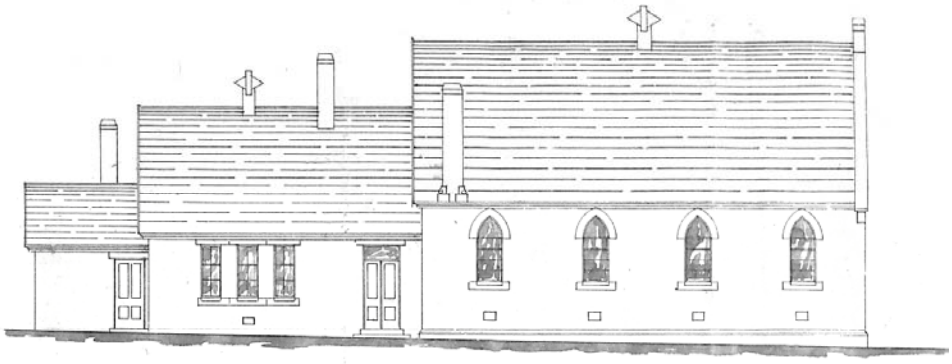
  The site was the property of Sir Hickman Bacon and Miss Beckett of Somerby Hall, who leased the ground to the Chapel Trustees for a

period of 500 years at a nominal rent charge of two shillings. There was one condition attached to this lease - in the event of the building not being used by the Primitive Methodists as a place of public worship for a period of twelve months, then the lease would expire.

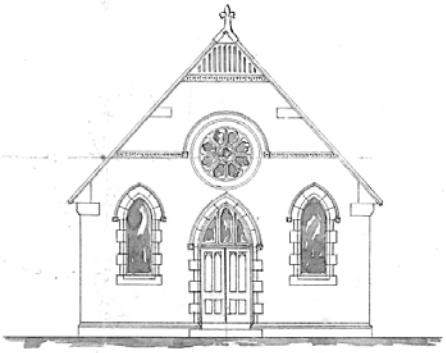
Much of this information comes from a newspaper article that appeared in the "Retford, Worksop, Isle of Axholme and Gainsborough News" (1898) in its report of the laying of the foundation stones.[4] Present for the occasion were Sir Hickman Bacon and Emerson Bainbridge (M.P. for Gainsborough 1895-1900) both of whom took an active part in the ceremony. The foundation stones all seem to have been granite memorial stones with inscriptions, laid by various local families in remembrance of family members. The affair seems to have lasted through the evening with hymns, speeches and prayers, and with adjournments to the granary at Mr Charles Anyan's farm where there were refreshments provided by the chapel ladies, and a bazaar.

The new building was constructed in red brick in a neo-Gothic style, with Ancaster stone dressings. The front of the building, over the door, was inset with a wheel-like oriel window with ornamental label stops. These are terracotta heads, one male, and one female, which are almost identical with the stone ones that decorate the Parish Church.

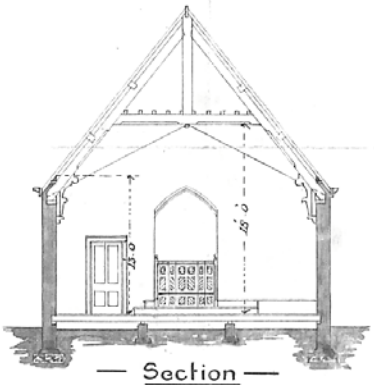
[3] P.M.M. 1961 p.686.
[4] This news report is transcribed in full in Appendix 10



— Side Elevation —



— Front Elevation —



— Section —

The 1851 Religious Census

The year 1851 is memorable. That was the year of the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace. Genealogists know that the 1851 population census, taken on the night of Mothering Sunday, the 30th/31st March, was the first UK census to ask detailed questions about each household. It is less well known, however, that two other censuses were taken that year - an educational census of all schools (including Sunday Schools) and a census of "*Accommodation and Attendance at Worship*" - generally referred to as the "Religious Census", taken on the 30th March. Although it was intended to repeat the Religious Census in 1861 the various denominations could not agree to the form it should take and so the plan was dropped. The 1851 Religious Census was therefore the first and only one carried out in the United Kingdom.

The delivery of the forms, and the discovery of the various meeting places, was the responsibility of the local census enumerators. They had to deliver the census forms in the week before to the census, and then collect them (along with the population census forms) on the following Monday.

Three distinctly different forms were produced:

[A] Anglican Churches - black print on a blue paper

[B] Non-Anglican places of Worship - red print on a blue paper

[C] The Society of Friends or 'Quakers' - black on white paper

In addition, each form asked slightly different questions:

- All forms asked about attendance at services on Sunday, March 30th.
- Forms A and B (but not C) asked about average attendance.
- Form A, for Anglican churches only, asked about endowments, and the income of the church and its incumbent.

Many churchmen fervently opposed this last question as “too prying”. The government eventually capitulated and removed the legal penalties for non-completion of the forms. This, of course, defeated the object of the Religious Census, as many of the returns would be only partial. It became effectively a voluntary census, although officially encouraged. In practice, however, it seems that most Anglican incumbents were happy to fill in the 'prying' sections of the form, including caustic remarks from some of the poorly paid clergymen.

Neither the Religious Census nor the Population Census asked people directly for their religious affiliation. Questions were confined to facts relating to a] the amount of accommodation provided for religious worship and [b] the number of people attending worship on the given day.

Form A:

1. Name and Description of Church or Chapel
2. Where Situated
3. When consecrated or licensed
4. In case of a Church or Chapel Consecrated or licensed since the 1st January, 1800; state hereafter by Whom Erected, Cost, how defrayed
5. How Endowed
6. Space available for public worship
7. Estimated Number of Persons attending Divine Service on Sunday, March 20, 1851
8. Remarks
9. Signature

Form B/C:

1. Name or Title of Place of Worship
2. Where Situated
3. Religious Denomination
4. When erected (those before 1800 to be indicated as pre-1800)
5. Whether a separate and entire building (this and question VI were to distinguish between cottage meetings and those in chapels)
6. Whether used exclusively as a Place of Worship
7. Space available for Public Worship
8. Number of attendants (Roman Catholic churches, which may have several morning Masses, were instructed to aggregate attendances)
9. Remarks
10. Signature

The task of tabulating the returns was given to a twenty-eight-year-old solicitor called Horace Mann. In 1854 he published his report, covering all of the census returns. Unexpectedly, the book turned out to be a best seller with over 21,000 copies being sold shortly after publication. For many people the main result was summed up in Mann's own comment: "*The most important fact which this investigation as to attendance brings before us is, unquestionably, the alarming number of non-attendances*". He further commented that most of these neglecters were to be found in the 'labouring classes'.[1]

Researchers, who have analysed the Religious Census of 1851 in various different ways since then, have made some interesting observations. For example, in his book The Census and Social Structure, based on the Leicestershire returns, David M. Thompson noted that:

- Nonconformist chapels are found in villages where there was no single, large landowner dominating the area.
- Chapels of older dissenting groups are often found in villages with a number of long-established freehold farmers.
- Methodist chapels are more likely found in villages where there are agricultural labourers.
- Nonconformist chapels are likely found in the larger villages where the population had grown.
- Church of England parishes generally do better than average in places of smaller population, undivided landownership and where the men are employed in agricultural pursuits.

Some of these points clearly do not apply to Springthorpe. This village did have a single large landowner dominating the area, and yet a very early Primitive Methodist chapel was built. Despite its small population of "*men employed in agricultural pursuits*" and its "*undivided*

[1] See the National Archives website http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk

landownership", the Church of England did not "*do better than average*" in Springthorpe.

In the chapter on Primitive Methodism in his book Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey 1825-1875, James Obelkevich points out the generally subordinate position of Primitive Methodism relative to its rivals, the Wesleyans and the Church of England. The Religious Census shows only 43 places of worship in the area compared with 124 for the Wesleyans and over 200 for the Church of England. Obelkevich states "*in nearly every case the Primitive Methodist attendance on Census Sunday was the smallest of the three*". Springthorpe, he tells us, was an exception, its situation being quite untypical. It had the only dissenting place of worship in the parish, and the Church of England incumbent for much of the period was an "*outspoken Anglo-Catholic*". This would be a reference to Rev. E.C.L.Blenkinsopp, the Rector responsible for instigating the great restorations of the church. However, the Religious Census took place in 1851 and Blenkinsopp did not take up the rectory until 1863. His predecessor, Rev.Isham Case, was the incumbent at that time, although he was resident in his other parish, Metheringham.

The information for Springthorpe, obtained from the Religious Census of March 30th 1851 by Rex Russell, shows the following:

PARISH CHURCH:
Morning Attendance: 9 people (only one morning service)

PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL:
Morning Attendance: 53 Sunday Scholars
Afternoon Attendance: 40 + 55 Sunday Scholars
Evening Attendance: 82

This shows an overwhelming support for Primitive Methodism in this village – of those attending a religious service only about 10% attended church, while 90% attended chapel.[2]

Obelkevich, however, looked at the record of baptisms in the chapel at Springthorpe between 1844 and 1875 and compared it with that of baptisms at the parish church. He states that about 30% of all baptisms of children living in the parish were performed by Primitive Methodists. A number of families had what are called 'mixed baptisms' – some of their children received an Anglican baptism while others received a Primitive Methodist baptism. It seems that farmers and craftsmen in the parish were more likely to commit to one form of ceremony or the other, while the labourers were less committed or "*guided by mere convenience*".[3]

It must be noted that Primitive Methodist 'members' were outnumbered in the chapels of this region by 'adherents' and others (who attended but did not officially join) by more than two to one. There is little surviving evidence of the role played by what Oblekevich calls "*the unconverted majority*".[4]

[2] From unpublished research by Rex Russell provided to the Village Hall Committee following a dayschool on starting a local history project.
[3] Oblekevich p.240-41.
[4] ibid