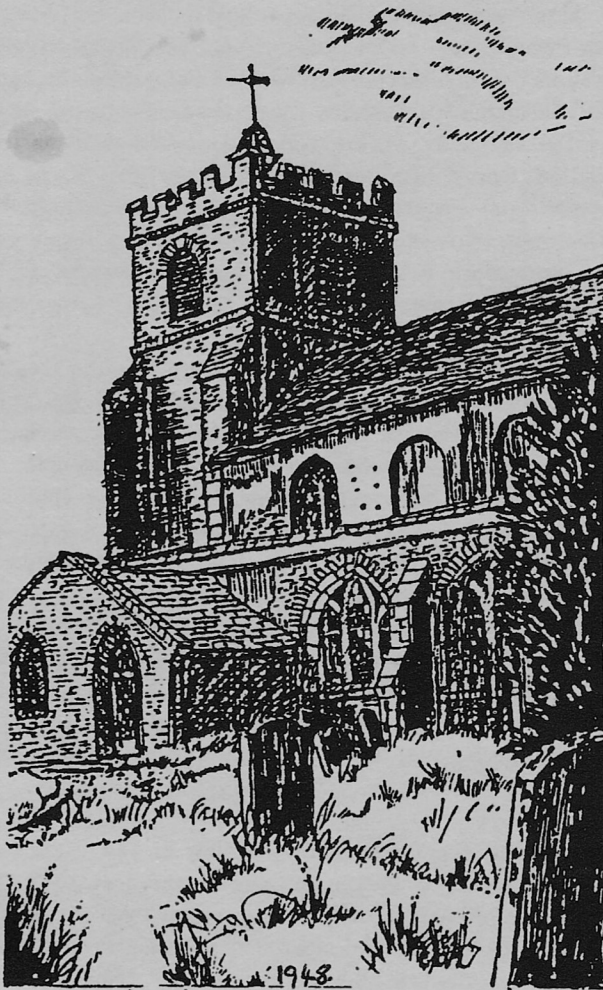


St Andrews Helions Bumpstead



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GUIDE

The meaning of the name Bumpstead, or Bummesteda as it was originally called, is the place where flax or hemp grows, and was well known as a settlement in the time of Edward the Confessor. After 1066 one of William's army, Tihel, was rewarded with lands in North Essex and other places, amongst them the Manor of Bumpstead, which so reminded Tihel of his home village in Brittany called Hellean, that he settled here and added the name to Bumpstead. He married a Saxon widow from Sturmer, and was the founder of the village as we know it, and started the long line of the De Helion family. Sir John Helion joined the Black Prince before the Battle of Crecy in 1346, and Robert Helyun fought with Henry VI at Agincourt 1451. Tihel built his Manor House on the site where the modern Helions Farm now stands, and on a hilltop facing he built a church. There is no sign now of the original church, but St Andrews stands in its place.

It is difficult to tie down the age of St Andrews to any specific date, indeed its a combination of various periods. The chancel and its arch are over 700 year old, and the nave may be older still, although it has a 16th century clerestory. It is a large church and a beautiful one for sound. The nave measures 50ft by 21ft, while the chancel is 28ft by 17ft. The walls are built of plastered flint rubble with dressings of limestone and clunch, and the roof is tiled. The original tower must have been of the same, but it crumbled and fell down in 1796, and for a while the rest of the building was in a fairly ruiness condition. After some years of disuse and raising money the tower was rebuilt in 1812, with bricks made from a small kiln in Roskins meadow opposite the church.

There were at first five bells, and a survey in 1833, the largest carried the date 1641, no date on the second, the next 1647. These had been cast by Milo Grey, and the remaining two, one of which was inscribed 1616, and the other "virgo catonata dat nos ad regna" were found cracked and were recast in 1833 by Thomas Mears of London, who also cast a sixth bell in 1834, at an overall cost of £51-19s. After several years without ringing properly, due

to the bad state of the supports, the present organist Herbert Ramsey, was the instigator of the repairs, doing much of the work himself. A cracked bell was recast in 1974, and the bells rang out once more. In 1982 the peal was made up to eight.

A subscription fund raised £108-11s for a new clock to be fitted in 1838, the work of B.L.Vulliamy of London, a Swiss maker who afterwards became Royal Clock Maker to Queen Victoria. Very few of his clocks are found in country churches. The original dial was slate with hands of copper and gilt with gold. The 2½cwt clock bell was located in a triangular wooden turret on the top of the tower, this unorthodox structure the work of Abraham Wright, who ran the Carpenters Arms public house in the village, now known as the Three Horseshoes.

Alterations have been made to the church over the years, and it is possible the south aisle was walled up at an uncertain date, but was reopened and the south aisle rebuilt early in the 16th century. You have to look close for the consecration cross which is on a north east buttress of the nave, on the exterior of the church. Pillars inside bear graffiti from the 15th century, also on the tower arch, some being merchants marks and ancient games. The south aisle was restored in 1836, again the work of Abraham Wright.

Rent came to the church from the Blacksmith Shop, Water Hall and the Almhouse Garden, opposite Slate Hall Farm, and France Hall, which stood on the outer limits of the parish. In 1872 the burial ground was enlarged, when an area in front of the church was bought from Mr Ruffle of Upper House, for £150. Part of the agreement was the Ruffle family having a special faculty from the Bishop for right of burial and placing of a monument on the new part. A four sided monument stands for that family in front of the church.

The wall around the old churchyard was built in 1856, so a new one was put up to include the fresh part bordering church hill. A portion of the old wall still stands in the north west corner. In

1950 the wall beside the road collapsed, and through a legacy from Mr W.Piper Chapman and a donation in memory of Mr C.W.Chapman, two local farmers, the wall was rebuilt and strengthened. In 1896 the Rev Bruce D.R.Baxter arrived and vastly improved the church and its services. He gave four elaborate lamps inside the church and others which were erected in the churchyard and near the gates. The Rev Baxter suffered from severe rheumatism and took many cures, the damp vicarage also didn't help, so he had to resign in 1900 and took a post in Palastine. He did not forget the village though and in his will in 1907 he left a small sum for the poor of the parish, which became 'Baxters Charity'.

In 1909 some of the seating was renewed as was the floor under the gallery, and the font moved to its present place from under the old gallery. The staircase to the gallery from the first floor of the tower was bricked up and a new set of stairs built at the rear of the church. In 1916 a new west window was placed in the tower. When Miss Harriet Cole, a generous supporter of the church, died in 1929 she left a large sum to repair the church, which was carried out and completed in 1932. On the vicars chair is engraved thanks to the benefactress. Other improvements included the lowering of the pulpit and widening the aisle to six feet, having been half that width causing difficulty to wedding couples. The beautifully carved 15th century gallery made of oak, was so full of dry rot, that it was pulled down and not replaced, although some panels are incorporated in the choir stalls.

The church organ was installed in the gallery in 1851, at a cost of £85, and moved to its present position in 1932. The old box pews were replaced with modern pitch pine ones, brought from Earls Colne church. The old pews were square like tiny rooms and occupied by the established village families, with the poorer people seated in the south aisle. Young attached men and women sat in the gallery, but seperated, while at the back of the church the older children sat, under the eagle eye of an elder sexton. 1956 saw some more repairs and rebuilding. The old vestry and porch

was replaced with the present porch, built with woodwork from an old shed from Olmstead Hall, and three 16th century windows were rehoused in oak frames. The pews in the south aisle were removed and re-floored with bricks from a neighbouring farm. Also removed was the old coke stove just inside the main door, and the Victorian Marble Reredos inscribed with the Lords Prayer and the Ten Commandments, which had been placed each side of the east window in 1858. These disappeared we know not where. For many earlier years a small part of a field off Water Lane, called 'Harmers' grew rushes used to cover the floor of the church.

MEMORIALS

Just inside the entrance, near the 15th century font, is a memorial in latin to Margaretta Hodgson, first wife of the Rev John Hodgson who died in 1836. In the floor just about here are some very old tombs, one of which once displayed a fine brass, but now completely worn away by constant feet over them. They were possibly of the ancient Stubbing Manorial family who lived in the village for many centuries, and it is from the will of William Stubbing 1491, that we learn of the grand rood screen that once adorned St Andrews. "*I assigne to the forseid church a cove price vi viij to fynde a lyght of wax brenning on the halydayes before the crucifix on the rood loft.*". Looking across the church to the north wall of the nave, we see the War Memorial 1914-18 for sixteen men of the village who laid down their lives. It was made by E.C.Green of Haverhill, of sicilian marble framed in hopton wood stone, and was unveiled before 400 parishioners on a sunny day, April 22nd 1920, by Col Symonds of Moynes Park. Also a guard of honour of ex servicemen under Capt F.J.Emson. Four acres of land adjoining the village school was also purchased as a Recreation Ground in memory as well. The one village man to lose his life in the second war also deserves to be placed on this memorial ! On the tower wall at the western end of the church, two irregular pieces of writings of the scripture have been uncovered, and another smaller piece high on the wall. One wonders if uncovered, would they find it covered with these colourful writings ? These date possibly from the tudor period.

Near the organ is a tablet in old english to a William Tabersham, who lived his 84 year in the village, and died 1771, with a quaint verse which makes some wonder what kind of person he really was. This was designed by the gentleman himself when near to death, and he paid a guinea to a friend to do this for him. He also asked for six of the poorest men to be his bearers, leaving 2s 6d to each of them. Other tablets in the chancel include one to the Rev Hodgson 1833-50, who was seemed to be well liked. Hard to decipher is a tablet in pale colours of pink, blue and black, dedicated to Deverex, son of Sir John Tallakane, who was slain at the Battle of Reiz in 1628. Yet another nearly worn out tablet is to the Gardiner family of the 15th century. In front of the altar in another tomb to William Sharpe who married into the Stubbings family. A recent discovery nearby is reputed to be an old 'priests hole' which had been covered over for many years.

The south wall of the chancel is adorned with an elaborate scroll of the list of St Andrews vicars, unfortunately not complete, two missing. The bible is of 1842 vintage. The only stained glass window is behind the vicars chair, again to the memory of the Rev John Hodgson, placed there by his second wife. It is stated he is buried in the south aisle, but no place is marked.

St Andrews congregation were always willing to contribute towards maintaining the church. In 1902 a village carpenter, William Ruse, did urgent woodwork repair inside the church, for no payment. In 1920 a handsome sanctuary carpet was dedicated on Easter Day, being the gift from a member of the church, and in the same year the organ was cleaned, paid for by a parishioner. When some younger members of the village strayed from the straight and narrow in 1925, they were gently told off when they were seen congregating on the Rev La Motte's grave and staring in the windows during the service. The village school was opened in 1854 the idea of the Rev A.R. Grant and his supporters, the subscription list bringing £121 17s 3d which saw the school built. It remained a church school until it closed in 1948, but it still stands today, a mite altered, as the Village Hall.

OUTSIDE

The present gates to the church were erected and dedicated in September 1926. At the rear of the church is an interesting stone, which commemorates a brave deed by young 22 year old Alfred Baynes, who lost his life trying to save the life of a well inspector down a newly dug well at Pale Green in 1895. The last resting place is also seen of a much liked vicar and his family, Rev M.S.W.Bishop 1921-38, still one of the neatest and well attended of the graves. The large box tombs of the Cole family are at the east end of the church, while on the right hand side of the church porch is the resting place of the Rev William La Motte 1857-96, who hailed from the Channel Islands. The entrance to the vault is near here, last opened in the 1940's, while a large cross comes from a granite of rock from the Channel Islands.

VICARS

The living was mostly in the gift of Trinity College, Cambridge, many early vicars coming from there, amongst them a brilliant scholar Robert Walker 1850-57. John Cole 1580-1605, Thodore Cole 1635-67 and Theophilus Cole 1694-1737 were all part of the important Cole family in the village who were also its vicars. Many of the earlier vicars did not seem to want to move on from St Andrews, but felt they wanted to stay in such a welcoming community, many are buried in the village. Often the vicars helped in other ways to keep the village survive, the Rev W.K.Wyley in 1900 kept up the payments of the poor rate when they fell into arrears, this from his own pocket. In 1954 came the Rev Eric Wheeler, a blunt and popular Yorkshireman, who also rode to hounds, and while at Helions Bumpstead, had a starring role for Yorkshire TV's programme depicting a typical country parson, although it could be said he was probably not so.

St Andrews always seem to attract long serving organists who were proud of their position. Names recalled include Mrs H.Percival, Miss Bishop, Mrs C.W.Chapman and Miss Mary Cole. The last named died in 1924 after between 60 to 70 years, and not missing for very often, her sister Harriet then filled in for her:

FROM RECORDS

- 1896 - Collection for new lamps £2-3-8d
- 1897 - Thanksgiving for Queen Victoria's 60 years.
- 1902 - Thanks to Mr George Chapman for sitting with the boys
- 1904 - Church closed for cleaning and recolouring
- 1905 - Mr Dyson was paid for winding the clock, 16s for
2 years
- 1916 - Mrs G.Taylor, caretaker for 40 years, stepped down, the
new caretaker to be Mrs Radford.
- 1917 - Dec 26th. No worship, deep snow everywhere.
- 1919 - Organ cleaned and returned.
- 1924 - Hirers of church crockery to send a responsible person
to collect it, with a suitable crate or basket. one shilling
for each breakage.
- 1929 - Paid out = Cleaning gravel, George Brazier 12 shillings
Cutting grass, Samuel Moore 10 shillings
Blowing organ, Basil Ponder £1-10s
Coal and coke, £4-5s-6d
- 1929 - Unsatisfactory tolling of the bell by the clerk, Mr
Chapman to call on him as to his obligations.
- 1929 - To attract more worshipers, proposal to add more hymns
and shorten other items.
- 1930 - Paid Miss B.Hughes and Mrs M.Humphrey for cleaning
and scrubbing the church.
- 1931 - Paid 3 shillings to F.Moore for trimming the ivy.
- 1938 - August: Sunday School closed for harvest.
- 1940 - A.R.P.practice at Evensong.
- 1945 - Terrific hail and thunder during the service, and
sermon could not be heard for rattling on church roof.
- 1950 - An Invalid Chair bought for £3-10s, can be used by
anyone in the village.
- 1952 - Dedication of Electric Light installation.
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