

RELIGIOUS HISTORY

PARISH CHURCH

The present church building dates back to at least the early 14th century, but was substantially altered between the late 14th century and the early 16th.¹ A will of 1466 refers to the church of Our Lady of Bradford,² but the church was dedicated to St Giles by 1754.³ The register of baptisms and burials dates from 1558, and that of marriages from 1561.⁴

Advowson

The advowson was contested in the second half of the 13th century. In 1264 Thomas de Audeham claimed Bradford's advowson in right of his wife Isabel, the daughter of William de Montague, who had been lord of the manor, when he presented Robert de Bruton to the benefice. This was disputed by Thomas Paynel who had been presented by Hawysia, the widow of John de Gatesden, another of William's daughters. The Audeham claim was upheld.⁵ A further dispute arose in 1270 when the king claimed the right to present during the minority of Margaret, the daughter of John de Gatesden. This was challenged by Richard, Bradford's priest, who had been appointed by the bishop of Bath and Wells as a result of the continuing dispute over the advowson between the Gatesdens and the Audehams. Richard's claim was rejected and the bishop ordered to accept the king's nominee.⁶

Walter de Meriet, lord of the manor, owned the advowson by 1320.⁷ In 1350 John de Middleton, who had resigned as rector, himself presented his successor to the benefice.⁸ By

¹ M. B. McDermott, 'St Giles's Church, Bradford on Tone: A Short History and Guide' (1980) (SHC, PAM 97), 3; Julian Orbach and Nikolaus Pevsner, Somerset: South and West (London, 2014), 126-7.

² Weaver, Somerset Wills 1383-1500, 210

³ J. Ecton, Thesaurus Rerum Ecclesiasticarum: Being an Account of the Valuations of all the Ecclesiastical Benefices in all the Several Dioceses in England and Wales (London, 1754), 37.

⁴ SHC, D/P/bra.t/2/1/1.

⁵ Holmes, Registers of Giffard and Bowett, 8-9; above, landownership, Bradford manor.

⁶ SDNQ, XIV, p. 253.

⁷ E. Hobhouse (ed.), Calendar of the Register of John de Drovensford, Bishop of Bath and Wells (A.D. 1309-1329) (Som. Rec. Soc. 1), 184.

1357 the advowson had returned to the Meriet family when it was in the hands of Walter's nephew and heir Simon and Simon's wife Margery.⁹ As late as 1536 alms were given for the souls of Simon de Meriet and his wife out of the endowment of the church.¹⁰ The advowson subsequently passed with the manor in 1372 to Sir William de Bonville, who sold them that year to Sir Guy de Bryan, who in turn granted them to Sir Henry Perecehay two years later.¹¹ By 1381 the advowson was in the hands of John Waskham (alias Walsham or Raddington) who alienated it to the prior and convent of Barlinch.¹² In 1387 it was agreed that the prior and convent should pay the yearly sum of 6s. 8d. to the dean and chapter of Wells to indemnify them for the appropriation of Bradford church; the pension was still being paid in 1560.¹³ The rectory remained the property of Barlinch priory until its dissolution in 1536-7.¹⁴

In 1543 the Crown granted the rectory to Richard Parker of Tawstock, Devon and the advowson descended with the rectory estate until the death of William Burrridge, who was also Bradford's vicar, in 1858.¹⁵ The Crown presented the vicar in 1660, probably because of a sequestration during the Interregnum,¹⁶ but the advowson had been restored to Edmund Parker by 1675.¹⁷ Between 1715 and 1718 it belonged to Edmund's grandson, Edmund Parker alias Southcote of Blyborough, Lincolnshire, a Catholic.¹⁸ By 1861 Alexander Adair of Heatherton Park owned the advowson.¹⁹ His son Hugh Jenison Adair was vicar of Bradford and the owner of the advowson by 1866.²⁰ His successor as vicar, Philip Palfrey

⁸ T. E. Holmes (ed.), *The Register of Ralph of Shrewsbury, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1329-1363*, II (Som. Rec. Soc. 10), 640.

⁹ Green, *Feet of Fines 1347—99*, 183-4.

¹⁰ *Valor Eccl.* I, 219.

¹¹ Green, *Feet of Fines 1347—99*, 83, 86, 191; above, landownership, Bradford manor.

¹² *Cal. Pat.* 1377-81, 599; *ibid.* 1381-5, 53, 167.

¹³ HMC, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Dean and Chapter of Wells*, I (London, 1907), 397-8; *Ibid.* II (London, 1914), 284.

¹⁴ TNA, SC 6/HENVIII/3127.

¹⁵ Above, landownership, rectory estate.

¹⁶ This section, pastoral care and parish life.

¹⁷ F. W. Weaver, *Somerset Incumbents*, 314-5.

¹⁸ SHC, Q/RRP/1/25; Q/RDD/29/411.

¹⁹ *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1861), 285.

²⁰ *Ibid.* (1866), 289.

Broadmead, owned the advowson from 1885 until his death in 1922, when he was succeeded by his widow who was still the owner of the advowson in 1939.²¹ In 1973 Harold Hamilton Broadmead of Enmore Castle, Bridgwater, transferred the advowson to the bishop of Bath and Wells.²² Bradford was united with neighbouring parishes in 1975 to form the benefice of Bradford-on-Tone with Oake and Hillfarrance, and Heathfield.²³ By 2003 the patrons were the bishop of Bath and Wells and the parochial church councils of Bradford, Oake, Hillfarrance and Heathfield with Cotford St Luke.²⁴ Bradford had ceased to be a separate parish by 2008 and was part of the Wellington and District Team Ministry; the advowson was in the hands of the patronage board of the team ministry.²⁵

Income and Property

The living was valued at 14 marks in 1264, out of which 5s. was paid as an annual pension to Bermondsey abbey.²⁶ In 1291-2 the living was assessed at £13 6s. 8d., making it one of the wealthier benefices in the deanery of Taunton. The prior of Montacute received an annual pension of 10s. out of the living.²⁷ When the glebe land was granted to Barlinch priory in 1381 it comprised four messuages, 80 a. of land, 10 a. of meadow and 10 a. of pasture not exceeding the yearly value of 5 marks.²⁸ The living was valued at 20 marks in 1428²⁹ and at 13 marks in 1487.³⁰ Around 1530 the vicar was assessed for first fruits and tenths at 16s. and

²¹ Ibid. (1927), 144; *ibid.* (1939), 106-7.

²² SHC, D/D/ord/91/3.

²³ McDermott, 'St Giles's Church', 17.

²⁴ *Dioc. Dir.* (2003-4), 184;

²⁵ *Ibid.* (2008), 238.

²⁶ Holmes, *Registers of Giffard and Bowett*, 8-9.

²⁷ *Tax. Eccl.* 198, 200.

²⁸ *Cal. Pat.* 1381-5, 53

²⁹ *Feud. Aids*, IV, 408.

³⁰ H. C. Maxwell-Lyte (ed.), *The Registers of Robert Stillington, Bishop of Bath and Wells 1466-1491, and Richard Fox, Bishop of Bath and Wells 1492-1494* (Som. Rec. Soc. 52), 144.

his curate at 6s.³¹ In 1536 the net value of the vicarage was £10 17s. 4d. The lands were valued at £1, great tithes at £2, tithes of wool and lambs at 19s. 8d., and offerings and other monies at £6 17s. 8d.³² On the dissolution of Barlinch priory that year the vicar received an annual pension of 40s;³³ it was still being paid in 1605³⁴ and 1707.³⁵

By 1639 the vicarage had 15½ a. of glebe land. The vicar received the tithe hay from 11 a. of land on Bradford Moor.³⁶ The 1635 probate inventory of the vicar, James Cole(s), listed only household goods, which would suggest that he had not been farming the glebe himself but had let it to tenants.³⁷ In 1639 anyone letting out land in the parish to a non-resident was to pay 1d. from every shilling of the rent money to the vicar.³⁸ This was still the case in 1671.³⁹ The reputed value of the living was £50 by c.1661.⁴⁰ In 1707 the net value of the vicarage was £47 15s. 7¼ d. The value of the glebe land did not exceed £10. The tithe hay of Bradford moor was valued at 8s., other tithes at £36, and Easter dues and other offerings at £1 10s.⁴¹ In 1815 the value of the living exceeded £150.⁴² In 1833 the average net income was £120.⁴³ In 1842 the tithe rent-charge payable to the vicar was assessed at £156 12s. 3d. The glebe amounted to 15 a. 34 p.⁴⁴ In 1837 7 a. 2 r. 14 p. of the glebe at Mill Close was being let at an annual rent of £20.⁴⁵ The glebe lands amounted to 27 a. 17 p. in 1885.⁴⁶ Most of the glebe land was subsequently sold off, including 6 a. 2 r. 1 p. at Mill Close in 1906, and

³¹ SHC, D/D/vc/20.

³² *Valor Eccl.* I, 173.

³³ *Ibid.* 219.

³⁴ C. J. Brett, *Crown Revenues from Somerset and Dorset, 1605* (Som. Rec. Soc. 96), 152, 245.

³⁵ SHC, D/D/rv/1.

³⁶ SHC, D/D/rg/373.

³⁷ SHC, DD/SP/1635/131.

³⁸ SHC, D/D/rg/373.

³⁹ TNA, E 134/23Chas2/Mich4.

⁴⁰ SHC, D/D/vc/24.

⁴¹ SHC, D/D/rv/1.

⁴² D/D/Rb, 1815.

⁴³ *Rep. Com. Eccl. Revenues* (1835), 128-9.

⁴⁴ SHC, D/D/Rt/A/401.

⁴⁵ SHC, D/P/bra.t/3/1/4.

⁴⁶ SHC, DD/WBF/4/23.

by c.1930 comprised 4 a. 34 p. near Blackbrook and a further 1.5 a. of allotment land.⁴⁷ The living was valued at c.£314 in 1939.⁴⁸

In 1639 there was a vicarage house with barn, stables, outhouses, a cow house, a garden and two orchards. An old andiron and three square stools belonged to the house.⁴⁹ It is not known whether this was the vicarage that stood on a site opposite the church by 1841.⁵⁰ The vicarage must have been of some age by then as in 1868 the house and its offices were said to be in need of considerable repair.⁵¹ Plans for a new vicarage, on the same site, were drawn up in 1871⁵² and the property was on the verge of completion in 1873.⁵³ The new vicarage comprised a drawing room, dining room, servants' hall, kitchen and scullery, six bed and dressing rooms, a bathroom, and four attic rooms. The property also had a stable block and coach house.⁵⁴ A new vicarage was built c.1969 and its predecessor sold off.⁵⁵

Pastoral Care and Parish Life

The Middle Ages The church has an octagonal font, which was re-discovered in the 1920s. It is probably contemporary with its 13th century base.⁵⁶ The earliest known incumbent is Robert de Bruton, whose right to the living was challenged by Thomas Paynel in 1264.⁵⁷ Richard was the incumbent in 1270⁵⁸ and Richard de Ford in 1309; the latter was a canon by the time of his resignation as rector in 1320, when he was replaced by Simon Savage.⁵⁹ John

⁴⁷ McDermott, 'St Giles's Church', 24.

⁴⁸ Kelly's Dir. Som. (1939), 107.

⁴⁹ SHC, D/D/rg/373.

⁵⁰ SHC, D/D/Rt/M/401; D/D/Rt/A/401.

⁵¹ CofE Record Centre, QAB/7/3/F560, 20 Jul. 1868.

⁵² SHC, DD/CC/R/E177.

⁵³ E. Jeboult, 'The Valley of the Tone', A General Account of West Somerset, Description of the Valley of the Tone and the History of the Town of Taunton (Taunton, 1873), 35.

⁵⁴ TNA, IR 58/82133, 3; SHC, D/P/bra.t/3/4/1.

⁵⁵ SHC, D/R/wel/24/2/278; D/R/wel/24/2/298.

⁵⁶ H. Pridham (ed. A. J. Webb), Ancient Church Fonts of Somerset (Taunton, 2013), xxviii; McDermott, 'St Giles's Church', 21.

⁵⁷ Holmes, Registers of Giffard and Bowett, 8-9.

⁵⁸ SDNQ, XIV, p. 253.

⁵⁹ Hobhouse, Register of Drokenford, 27, 184.

de Middleton became rector in 1333.⁶⁰ In 1334 William de Vernay left one bushel of wheat to the rector of Bradford for forgotten tithes.⁶¹ When John de Middleton resigned as rector in 1350 he owned the advowson and presented his successor Henry de Bennecott.⁶² A John Ruffin was rector in 1379.⁶³ In 1381 there was a chaplain called Thomas in the parish.⁶⁴ Following the alienation of the rectory and advowson to Barlinch priory that year, it is possible that some of the Barlinch canons travelled to Bradford to conduct the services rather than appointing vicars as there are no further references to a Bradford incumbent until one John was recorded as parson in 1429.⁶⁵ When William Baker was presented to the living in 1438, on the death of Robert Waskham, it was described as a perpetual vicarage.⁶⁶

In 1418 it was noted that the living's income had been sequestrated on account of Bradford's payment of money, perhaps the Peter's pence, to John XXIII, who had been antipope from 1410 to 1415. This money had still not been collected, apparently on account of the poverty and exile of the prior of Barlinch. Bradford's first fruits appear to have been collected by the papacy in 1420.⁶⁷

The church received bequests in wills in this period. Thomas Ashcombe bequeathed 6s. 8d. in 1466 and in 1499 John Rowsewell bequeathed a cow to the 'store' of Bradford church.⁶⁸

⁶⁰ T. E. Holmes (ed.), The Register of Ralph of Shrewsbury, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1329-1363, I (Som. Rec. Soc. 9), 140-1.

⁶¹ SHC, DD/AH/65/10/4, will of William de Vernay.

⁶² Holmes, Register of Ralph of Shrewsbury, 640.

⁶³ H. C. Maxwell-Lyte, 'Somerset Incumbents, 1354-1401', PSANHS 78, 97.

⁶⁴ R. Dunning, 'Somerset Parochial Clergy, 1373-1404', PSANHS 114, 92.

⁶⁵ H. C. Maxwell-Lyte, The Honour of Dunster (Som Rec. Soc. 33), 133.

⁶⁶ T. S. Holmes (ed.), The Register of John Stafford, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1425-1443. From the Original in the Registry at Wells, II (Som. Rec. Soc. 32), 214.

⁶⁷ T. S. Holmes (ed.), The Register of Nicholas Bubwith, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1407-1424. From the Original in the Registry at Wells, II (Som. Rec. Soc. 30), 323-4, 402; the identity of the prior of Barlinch at this time is uncertain, but it may have been John Porter, who was prior at his death in 1430: VCH Som. II, 134; I am grateful to Dr John Booker for advice on the relevant passages in the register.

⁶⁸ Weaver, Somerset Wills (1383-1500), 208-9, 380.

1500-1800 By 1529 there was a ‘brotherdyn’, perhaps a guild or guild chapel, in the church, to which John Attway bequeathed 20*d*. Attway also left money for torches, which may have been used at funerals, and the All Souls light. John Southey made bequests towards the church’s bells in 1533 and gave 6*s*. 8*d*. for two services.⁶⁹ Several others made monetary bequests to the church in this period. Agnes Perry left 3*s*. 4*d*. in 1536,⁷⁰ Denise Farthing alias Leigh left 16*d*. in 1570,⁷¹ and William Meare bequeathed 3*s*. 4*d*. in 1585,⁷² as did Thomas Pearce in 1601.⁷³

In 1548 it was noted that the church had 233 communicants.⁷⁴ There was no English Bible in 1547.⁷⁵ It was reported in 1554 that high altar was not consecrated and the church was said to be in decay.⁷⁶ In 1557 there were complaints concerning the church’s broken windows.⁷⁷ Though there are no further specific references to the poor condition of the church’s fabric in the 16th century, in 1577 the churchwardens were presented because they had absented themselves from church and not levied any money for the repair of the churchyard wall, which had collapsed.⁷⁸ In 1577 one man was presented for habitual drinking at service time.⁷⁹ William Langdon was presented for seldom attending church in 1620, as he travelled considerable distances during the week.⁸⁰

In 1566 Richard Warre, the lord of the manor, claimed that the chantry house in Bradford was used by the parishioners with his permission ‘for their common affairs as also

⁶⁹ F. W. Weaver, Wells Wills (London, 1890), 11.

⁷⁰ Ibid. (ed.), Somerset Medieval Wills, 1531-1558 (Som. Rec. Soc. 21), 32.

⁷¹ TNA, PROB 11/52/95.

⁷² TNA, PROB 11/68/234.

⁷³ TNA, PROB 11/98/64.

⁷⁴ Green, Somerset Chantries, 33.

⁷⁵ SHC, D/D/ca/12A, 63.

⁷⁶ SHC, D/D/ca/23, 34.

⁷⁷ SHC, D/D/ca/27.

⁷⁸ SHC, D/D/ca/57.

⁷⁹ SHC, D/D/ca/57.

⁸⁰ SHC, D/D/ca/220.

to place these such common artificers as should seem fit', suggesting that it may have been utilised as the church house.⁸¹ However, it seems he was unable to substantiate this claim.⁸²

A series of notes at the end of Bradford's earliest parish register detail seating arrangements in the church in the 17th century. In 1614 Alexander Wilcox paid 6*d.* for a seat behind the pulpit. James Norman constructed his own seat in the chancel with the consent of the vicar in 1612. Seating was segregated in 1617 when two seats next to the belfry were granted to women, one of whom was the daughter of another worshipper. Segregation appears to have ended by 1652 when ground for six seats was granted to John Woodhouse, for himself, his wife, their son and three daughters.⁸³

In 1623 it was reported that there had been no services for a quarter of a year as the vicar, James Cole, was seriously ill at his wife's house, which lay 14 miles away.⁸⁴ The church's fabric may also have been in a poor condition at this time. In 1634-5 the churchwardens were presented at the consistory court for the state of the tombs and the pulpit cloth. Considerable efforts were made that year to improve the fabric. Glass in some of the windows was replaced, a communion table was purchased for 10*s.*, while this table and the church screen were painted at a cost of £4 14*s.* 9*d.* A 'carpet' was also purchased for the communion table, at a cost of £1 12*s.* 6*d.* The church still has its rood loft, which was repaired and varnished for £2. At the same time 1*s.* 2*d.* was spent on a new lock and key for the rood loft door. The church's organ was repaired and its 'weare' removed from the floor of the church into the rood loft at a cost of £3 10*s.* A new Bible, the Book of Common Prayer,

⁸¹ TNA, REQ 2/42/63.

⁸² Above, landownership, chantry estate.

⁸³ SHC, D/P/bra.t/2/1/1.

⁸⁴ SHC, D/D/ca/235.

and the Book of Homilies were also purchased, for £3 10s. 6d. The pulpit was moved from the north side of the church to the south side at this time.⁸⁵

An inventory of the church's goods and vestments in 1634 listed a copy of Bishop Jewel's Apology,⁸⁶ 'the paraphrases of Erasmus, a book of monuments, a prayer book for the fifth of November, the book of canons, and the book for recreations', as well as a communion cup and cover, a pewter flagon (also for the communion table), a cushion for the pulpit, a linen cloth for the font, surplices and four 'singing bookes'.⁸⁷ A new silver communion cup, still in the church's possession, was purchased by the churchwardens in 1662.⁸⁸

Despite improvements, problems with the church persisted. In 1630 it was noted that the walls and tower were in need of repair.⁸⁹ The condition of the church was still a concern in 1665 when it was reported that the church walls were defective, some of the battlements had fallen down and a number of tiles had blown off the roof.⁹⁰

In 1637 it was reported that the part of the churchyard at the 'backside' (presumably the north end) and at the west end of the church had never been used for burials, 'very ancient men' in the parish testifying that it had been used as a place of bowling and recreation throughout their lives. It was also noted that the matter had been raised in the court of the archdeacon of Taunton forty years previously, but that had failed to prevent the area being used for sports.⁹¹

William Buckley, Bradford's vicar, was elected and sworn as parish register to perform marriages in February 1656, suggesting that he was a puritan.⁹² Buckley's

⁸⁵ SHC, DD/SF/16/4/1, churchwardens' acct; D/D/cd/82.

⁸⁶ A 1562 work in defence of the Church of England against puritan criticism.

⁸⁷ SHC, DD/SF/2/7/17.

⁸⁸ McDermott, 'St Giles's Church', 23.

⁸⁹ SHC, D/D/ca/274, 188.

⁹⁰ SHC, D/D/ca/342a.

⁹¹ SHC, DD/SF/16/4/2, copy memorandum on Bradford churchyard.

⁹² SHC, D/P/bra.t/2/1/3, 28 Feb. 1656.

appointment was probably the result of a sequestration during the Interregnum and he appears to have been deprived of the living at the Restoration when John Brice was installed as vicar by the Crown.⁹³

There were only 16 communicants in the parish in 1776.⁹⁴ By 1786 the church had a choir, which met for practice on Friday nights, alternating between the church and a house in Hele. The choir's teacher, Joseph Crocker, was paid 1s. for each Friday and each Sunday. It was agreed that the 18 male singers would forfeit 2d. for absence from Sunday service or for failing to go round the parish singing at Christmas. The choir's members were presumably chiefly boys and young men as it was also stipulated that any member of the choir 'who swears an oath in Church or tells any tale that do not concern Singing, or makes fun or laughs as to interrupt the Singing' was to forfeit 1d. for each offence.⁹⁵

In the late 18th century Rack described the church as dull, dark, and 'fast going to decay'. The Gothic screen, which divided the chancel, and part of the side aisles, from the rest of the church, was painted blue. The rood loft above it had by then been converted into a gallery for the choir. There were four doors and 13 pews. The pulpit was of carved wainscot.⁹⁶

After 1800 In 1815 the vicar, Henry Churley Manley, also served as incumbent of Sampford Arundel, six miles away. There was one Sunday service and no curate. The church was said to be able to hold between 500 and 600 persons.⁹⁷ Manley was succeeded by William Burrigge in 1819, who was already the owner of the half-share of the manor once

⁹³ Weaver, *Somerset Incumbents*, 314-5.

⁹⁴ SHC, D/D/vc/88.

⁹⁵ SHC, D/P/bra.t/1/7/1.

⁹⁶ McDermott and Berry, *Rack's Survey*, 269.

⁹⁷ SHC, D/D/rb, 1815.

owned by the Franceis family, the advowson and the rectory estate.⁹⁸ By 1827 Burrridge was also vicar of Hillfarrance, Sunday services alternated with Hillfarrance; there were two in the summer, and one in winter.⁹⁹ In 1833 the church was said to be able to hold 390 people.¹⁰⁰ The church was reported to be in good repair in 1840. There were now two Sunday services, and communion was held monthly.¹⁰¹ In 1843 the National school was kept in the vestry room and the church itself. The churchyard served as a playground and sheep were also grazed there.¹⁰² It was also a haunt of drunken revellers and in September 1843 William Burrridge and his son were forced to stay out past midnight ‘to keep the churchyard free from whores & drunken fellows.’¹⁰³ The 1851 religious census gave average total attendance on Sunday mornings as between 150 and 200 people, plus 50 Sunday school children. Average afternoon attendance was between 200 and 250.¹⁰⁴

In 1858 it was agreed to re-roof the aisles and transepts and to straighten the roof of the nave.¹⁰⁵ At the same time the north wall was rebuilt, the pews were replaced and the gallery (and probably also the screen) was taken down.¹⁰⁶ It was decided to install a new organ in 1867.¹⁰⁷ In 1873 the church was described as having been restored at a cost of £2,000, of which the greater part was met by Alexander Adair of Heatherton Park. The church had also been provided with a new vestry before 1873.¹⁰⁸

Choir stalls, designed by Bligh Bond, were dedicated in 1912 in memory of Edgar Henry Watson, a former churchwarden.¹⁰⁹ The following year the church’s present organ, by

⁹⁸ Above, landownership.

⁹⁹ SHC, D/D/rb, 1827.

¹⁰⁰ Rep. Com. Eccl Revenues (1835), 128-9.

¹⁰¹ SHC, D/D/va/1/12.

¹⁰² SHC, D/D/va/2/12.

¹⁰³ SHC, DD/X/SKG/8, 18 Sep. 1843.

¹⁰⁴ TNA, HO 129/314/3/1/17.

¹⁰⁵ SHC, D/P/bra.t/9/1/2, 18 Jun. 1858.

¹⁰⁶ Taunton Courier, 21 Sep. 1859, 5.

¹⁰⁷ SHC, D/P/bra.t/9/1/2, 18 Jan. 1867.

¹⁰⁸ Jeboult, ‘Valley of the Tone’, 35.

¹⁰⁹ SCH, D/D/cf/1912/6.

Morgan & Smith of Brighton, was also installed in Edgar Watson's memory.¹¹⁰ In 1921 the vestry was replaced by a parochial church council.¹¹¹ Electric lighting was installed in 1936.¹¹² Mary (Mollie) Duckworth (d. 1970) bequeathed a new chalice and paten.¹¹³ In 1977 Holy Communion was celebrated weekly on a Thursday morning, with two additional Holy Communion services on Sundays every month. There was an additional monthly Family Communion service and a monthly Evensong.¹¹⁴ A small church library was created in 1980.¹¹⁵ By her will Pamela Baker (d. 1990) left the church £10,000.¹¹⁶ The church received a bequest of £75,000 from Mrs Stella Lois Hawkins in 1999. Plans to use the money to erect a new Sunday schoolroom and toilet at the church did not materialise.¹¹⁷ In 2019 there were morning services on the 1st 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.¹¹⁸

St Giles' Church

The three-bay arcades, chancel arch and lancet window in the south wall of the chancel are all of c.1300.¹¹⁹ The church has a Perpendicular west tower, and the windows of the south aisle and south transept are also Perpendicular. The walls are Blackstone chert, while the doorways windows and buttresses are either of Hamstone or a local grey sedimentary stone.¹²⁰

The spiral stairway that gave access to the rood loft survives in the north aisle. The Victorian font is octagonal; the old font re-discovered in the 1920s survives at the west end of

¹¹⁰ SHC, D/P/bra.t/6/3/1.

¹¹¹ SHC, D/P/bra.t/9/2/1, 18 Mar. 1921.

¹¹² SHC, D/D/cf/1936/32.

¹¹³ SHC, DD/X/NDS/38, 37.

¹¹⁴ SHC, A/DBL/22/3, Mar. 1977, 5.

¹¹⁵ SHC, A/DBL/22/3, Aug. 1980, 6.

¹¹⁶ SHC, DD/X/NDS/38, 37, 42.

¹¹⁷ SHC, D/P/bra.t/8/1/2.

¹¹⁸ achurchnearyou.com/church/11385/ (accessed 5 Dec. 2019).

¹¹⁹ Orbach and Pevsner, *Som. South and West*, 126.

¹²⁰ McDermott, 'St Giles's Church', 3.

the nave. At the east end of the north aisle is a desk-cum-chest which includes to re-used late medieval bench ends.¹²¹ The wooden pulpit, which dates from the first half of the 18th century, was moved from St Mary Magdalene in Taunton before 1873.¹²² The reredos is probably late 19th century; work to restore it began in 1921 and was finally completed in 1926 when figures depicting the four evangelists, designed by W. D. Caröe, were installed.¹²³

An effigy, in late 14th century armour, lies in a low recess in the south wall. It possibly represents Sir Simon de Meriet, who died before 1372.¹²⁴ There is an elaborate brass monument on the north wall of the chancel to William Adair of Heatherton Park (d. 1844) and his family. On the wall of the north aisle is a monument in the form of an open book surmounted by an urn to John Petten of Rumwell (d. 1801). On the same wall is a large classical monument to Josiah Easton of Hele (1761-1848) and his wife and 12 children. His industrial-style table tomb, of slate on cast iron, lies in the churchyard. The middle window in the north aisle is dedicated to James Easton (1796-1871) and Hugh Easton (1906-65), 'Artist in Stained Glass', and was designed by Gerald Coles (1929-2004).¹²⁵ The east window, of 1850, is by Joseph Bell, while the west window is by John Toms and dates from 1859. There is a 1913 window in the north aisle by Alice Erskine.¹²⁶ Two stained-glass windows were found to be structurally unsound in 1928 and as a result the main lights of the end windows of the aisles were re-glazed with clear glass in 1929.¹²⁷

The main wheel and pinion of the church clock could be of Elizabethan date or earlier. Its going-train is probably early 18th century. The quarters train is a little later.¹²⁸ The church has six bells. The inscription on two of the bells was used by the Exeter foundry in the

¹²¹ Ibid. 21.

¹²² Jeboult, *Valley of the Tone*, 35.

¹²³ SHC, D/P/bra.t/6/3/2.

¹²⁴ A. C. Fryer, *Monumental Effigies in Somerset*, *PSANHS* 67, 31.

¹²⁵ McDermott, 'St Giles's Church', 22.

¹²⁶ Orbach and Pevsner, *Som. South and West*, 126.

¹²⁷ SHC, D/P/bra.t/6/3/3.

¹²⁸ SHC, A/DQO/48/20.

mid 15th century. Roger Semson (or Symson) of Ash Priors cast two of the other bells in the middle of the 16th century. William Purdue cast another of the bells in 1646; this bell was re-cast by John Taylor of Loughborough in 1964. The treble bell was cast by Mears and Stainbank of London in 1871.¹²⁹

CHANTRY

The chantry was probably situated in the north transept of the church, where there is still a piscina, or in the south transept, which is structurally distinct from the south aisle.¹³⁰ It was founded by John Parson,¹³¹ who was ordained deacon in 1449 and was vicar of Bradford at the time of his death before May 1497.¹³² Parson endowed the chantry with an inn and ½ burgage in Wellington called The Swan, and messuages, lands and tenements in Sampford Arundel, Langford Budville and Rimpton, and awarded a stipend to the chantry priest.¹³³ John Hussey was the chantrist by 1533 when he was bequeathed 2s. 6d. by John Southey.¹³⁴ In 1548 Hussey was described as of ‘honest conversation’, but ‘indifferently learned’.¹³⁵ Hussey’s residence, known as the chantry house, was a little property with a courtyard adjoining the priest’s house.¹³⁶ In 1536 the chantry was valued at £4 13s. 4d. yearly.¹³⁷ When chantry was suppressed in 1548 its gross value was put at £5 18s. and its net value at £5 14s. 6d. In September that year the king sold the estate to William Chester and Christopher

¹²⁹ SHC, McDermott, ‘St Giles’s Church’, 22.

¹³⁰ McDermott, ‘St Giles’s Church’, 8.

¹³¹ TNA, REQ 2/42/63.

¹³² H. C. Mawell-Lyte (ed.), The Register of Thomas Bekynton, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1443-1465, II (Som. Rec. Soc. 50), 485; *ibid.* (ed.), The Registers of Oliver King, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1496-1503 and Hadrian de Castello, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1503-1518 (Som. Rec. Soc. 54), 4.

¹³³ TNA, REQ 2/42/63; Woodward, Chantry Grants, 19-20.

¹³⁴ Weaver, Wells Wills, 11.

¹³⁵ Green, Somerset Chantries, 33.

¹³⁶ TNA, REQ 2/42/63.

¹³⁷ Valor. Eccl. I, 173.

Needham, who shortly afterwards alienated it to Thomas and Edward Timewell for £137 8s.¹³⁸

NONCONFORMITY

In 1577 Robert Sealey was presented for talking in church and not removing his hat at the name of Jesus.¹³⁹ Humphrey Timewell was presented in 1606 for disturbing the vicar and congregation during a service by taking the parish clerk's place. The same year James Thomas was presented for not receiving communion.¹⁴⁰ Thomas Mitchell and John Bond were both excommunicated in 1623.¹⁴¹ In 1630 Thomas Timewell was presented for not receiving communion.¹⁴²

Evidence of nonconformity in the 18th century is sparse. William Sewe of Bradford was granted a meeting house licence for his home in 1703.¹⁴³ There was a family of Anabaptists in the parish in 1776.¹⁴⁴

An Independent (or Congregationalist) chapel opened in Regent Street in July 1860. Erected at a cost of over £400, raised entirely through voluntary subscriptions, the chapel was capable of accommodating more than 100 people; there was a schoolroom was attached to it.¹⁴⁵ The first minister was William Gammon, who was also minister of Norton Fitzwarren and Bishops Lydeard. After Gammon retired in 1882 Bradford separated from the other

¹³⁸ Woodward, Chantry Grants, 19-20; above, landownership, chantry estate.

¹³⁹ SHC, D/D/ca/57.

¹⁴⁰ SHC, D/D/ca/151.

¹⁴¹ SHC, D/D/ca/235; T. F. Palmer (ed.), Collectanea ii: A Collection of Documents from Various Sources (Som. Rec. Soc. 43), 85.

¹⁴² SHC, D/D/ca/274.

¹⁴³ SHC, Q/RRW/1.

¹⁴⁴ SHC, SHC, D/D/vc/88.

¹⁴⁵ Taunton Courier, 1 Aug. 1860, 8. Work on the chapel had presumably commenced the year before as the building has an 1859 date stone.

chapels.¹⁴⁶ The congregation dwindled and the last interment in the chapel's burial ground took place in 1887.¹⁴⁷ The chapel closed c.1901 and the building remained empty until the 1920s.¹⁴⁸ The bodies in the burial ground were exhumed and re-interred in the parish churchyard in 1925.¹⁴⁹ The old chapel was used as a village hall between 1928 and 1931.¹⁵⁰ By 2019 it had been a private home, known as Chapel House, for many years.¹⁵¹

Joseph Gould, a Bradford miller, was recorded as a local Methodist preacher in 1871.¹⁵² In 1979 it was noted that there had until recently been Jehovah's Witnesses attending the village school.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. 1 Nov. 1882, 8; Rep. Som. Cong. Union (1896), 64, 77.

¹⁴⁷ TNA, RG 37/18.

¹⁴⁸ Taunton Courier, 7 Mar. 1928, 7

¹⁴⁹ TNA, RG 37/18; SHC D/P/bra.t/2/9/1.

¹⁵⁰ Above, social history, communal life, village organisations.

¹⁵¹ francisfrith.com/uk/bradford-on-tone/chapel-house_memory-204409 (accessed 28 Jul. 2019).

¹⁵² TNA, RG 10/2362.

¹⁵³ SHC, C/E/4/378/2, 313.