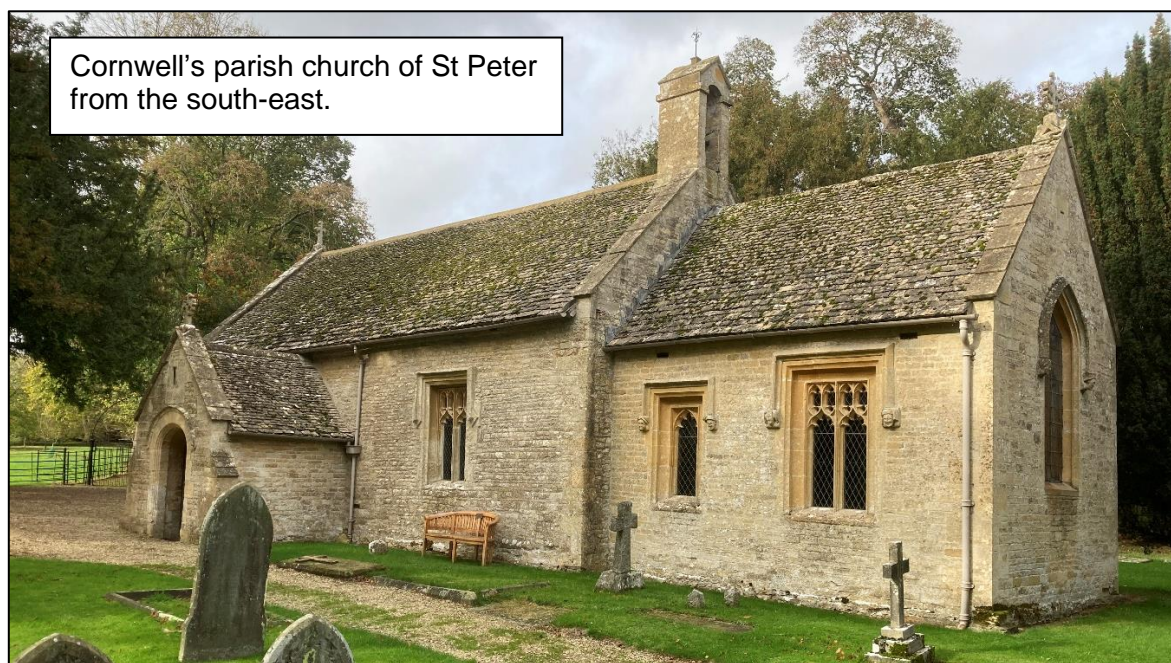




VCH Oxfordshire Texts in Progress

Cornwell

Religious History



Cornwell's parish church of St Peter from the south-east.

Cornwell had its own church by the 12th century, its poorly endowed rectory in the gift at first of the lord, later of Osney abbey, and (from the Dissolution) of the Crown. Its tithes were extinguished in return for an expanded 100-a. glebe at enclosure in 1669, although until a new rectory house was built in 1877 many rectors lived outside the parish, several employing stipendiary curates who were themselves seldom resident. Despite some lingering Roman Catholicism in the late 16th century (mainly at gentry level) few later parishioners dissented from the Anglican Church, and no other places of worship were established.

Church Origins and Parochial Organization

The church was probably founded c.1100 by the de Grey lords of Cornwell, of whom Robert gave demesne tithes to Eynsham abbey before 1109, and Alice gave the abbey the entire church before 1174, although that gift was returned to her in 1201.¹ The dedication to St

¹ Above, landownership (Cornwell manor).

Peter was established by c.1210,² and rectors' institutions are recorded from 1236,³ the living remaining an independent rectory until 1980 when the parish joined a united benefice served from Little Compton (Warws.).⁴ That became part of an even larger Chipping Norton benefice in 2001, and in 2002 a new ecclesiastical parish was formed comprising the 'five villages' of Chastleton, Cornwell, Little Compton, Little Rollright, and Salford.⁵ Cornwell belonged to Chipping Norton rural deanery throughout.⁶

Advowson and Endowment

After Alice de Grey's gift of the church to Eynsham abbey was reversed her successor Hawise de Grey gave the patronage (in 1215) to Osney abbey,⁷ which presented rectors throughout the Middle Ages.⁸ A scheme in 1396 to exchange the advowsons of Bucknell and Cornwell for that of Mixbury failed,⁹ and at the Dissolution the advowson passed to the Crown, which exercised the patronage (through the Lord Chancellor) thereafter.¹⁰ Cornwell's lord Sir Thomas Penyston unsuccessfully claimed the advowson in 1669.¹¹

The medieval rectory was of meagre value, worth only 2 marks (£1 6s. 8d.) a year in 1254 (making it the joint poorest in the deanery), and £2 13s. 4d. in 1340.¹² From that, annual pensions were due to Eynsham abbey (a pound of wax last mentioned in 1239)¹³ and Osney abbey (2s. owed by 1389 and increased to 5s. before 1509),¹⁴ of which the latter payment was granted to the dean and chapter of Oxford cathedral by the Crown in 1542.¹⁵ Eynsham abbey still claimed some tithes in 1239,¹⁶ but by the 17th century all belonged to

² *Oseney Cart.* IV, p. 333; H.O. Coxe and W.H. Turner, *Cal. Charters in Bodleian Library* (1878), 324; cf. OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 178.7.

³ *Rot. Grosseteste*, 450. The font too is 13th-century: below, church archit.

⁴ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1782/3, Order in Council 1980.

⁵ *Ibid.* DIOC/1/C/6/23/1, Pastoral Schemes 2001, 2002; <https://stmaryscnorton.com/around-the-benefice.php> (accessed Nov. 2022).

⁶ Lunt (ed.), *Val. Norw.* 311; Youngs, *Admin. Units*, I, 395.

⁷ Above, landownership (Cornwell manor).

⁸ e.g. *Rot. Grosseteste*, 450, 479; *Rot. Gravesend*, 232; *Reg. Burghersh*, II, 66; *Reg. Chichele*, I, 326; *Reg. Sutton*, V, 172, 179.

⁹ *Cal. Pat.* 1396–9, 19; *Cal. Papal Regs.* IV, 376; *VCH Oxon.* IV, 76, 253.

¹⁰ e.g. *Cal. Pat.* 1555–7, 230; 1558–60, 124; 1590–1, 153; OHC, *Cal. Presentation Deeds*; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1783, presentation pps 1870–1938.

¹¹ *Cal. SP Dom.* 1668–9, 430.

¹² Lunt (ed.), *Val. Norw.* 311; *Nonarum Inquisitiones*, 140. There is no *Tax. Eccl.* entry.

¹³ *Eynsham Cart.* I, pp. 1, 46, 57, 100; II, p. xxxix; D.M. Smith (ed.), *English Episcopal Acta I: Lincoln 1067–1185* (1980), 47; *Placit. in Domo Capit. Abbrev.* 32; *Cur. Reg.* II, p. 1.

¹⁴ *Oseney Cart.* III, p. 369; IV, p. 52; VI, p. 241; *Valor Eccl.* II, 181, 222; *Subsidy 1526*, 263.

¹⁵ *L&P Hen. VIII*, XVII, p. 506. In 1774 a lease of the 5s. pension (with 32 years remaining) was offered for sale by Hen., duke of Buccleuch: *Sale Cat., Adderbury and Other Manors* (1774), copy in OHC, Hyde IV/i/1; *VCH Oxon.* IX, 15.

¹⁶ *Eynsham Cart.* I, pp. 3, 36, 100; II, p. xxxix; B.R. Kemp (ed.), *Twelfth-Century English Archidiaconal and Vice-Archidiaconal Acta* (CYS 92, 2001), p. 109.

the rector.¹⁷ The glebe included 8 a. of open-field arable and some common meadow both given by Alice de Grey c.1210,¹⁸ and in 1614 comprised a yardland.¹⁹ The rectory's total net value in 1535 was £7 4s. 4¼d.²⁰

At enclosure in 1669 all tithes were extinguished for an additional 67 a. of glebe, which with the 33 a. allocated for existing glebe brought the total to 100 acres.²¹ That raised £45 in 1685,²² and in the early 18th century the living was worth £50 a year,²³ net income rising to £150 in 1834 and £190 in 1875.²⁴ Agricultural depression and outgoings reduced net income to only £28 (£74 gross) in 1899,²⁵ though by 1937 a variable annual grant from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners had raised it to £280.²⁶ In 1939 the entire glebe (including the rectory house and Glebe Farm) was sold to the Gillsons of Cornwell Manor,²⁷ leaving the rector's net income from investments in 1953 at £137.²⁸

Rectory House

Although some medieval rectors probably resided, no mention of a rectory house has been found until 1520, when it was in disrepair.²⁹ In the 17th century (and presumably earlier) it stood near the churchyard, and was of two storeys and three bays, containing a hall, kitchen, and buttery with three chambers above. In 1665 it was nevertheless taxed on only one hearth. Outbuildings included a seven-bay barn and other structures occupying a further seven or eight bays, and there was a garden, orchard, and hemp plot.³⁰

The house (then 'in great decay') was exchanged with the lord in 1692 for a cottage in the village,³¹ where the rector lived in 1738.³² That too was 'very ruinous' c.1770, when a further exchange was made with the lord Fairmeadow Penyston, who at his own expense built a new rectory house (Glebe Farm) on farmland east of the church. In 1805 that was stone-built and slated with a thatched barn, stable, and cow pens,³³ but successive rectors

¹⁷ OHC, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 40, f. 102.

¹⁸ *Oseney Cart.* IV, p. 333; Coxe and Turner, *Cal. Charters in Bodl. Libr.* 324.

¹⁹ OHC, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 40, f. 102.

²⁰ *Valor Eccl.* II, 181.

²¹ Above, econ. hist. (1500–1800).

²² OHC, MSS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 40, f. 104; c 141, p. 533.

²³ *Par. Colln.* I, 101.

²⁴ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. b 39, f. 103; b 70, f. 213; c 2206, no. 2.

²⁵ *Ibid.* c 365, f. 114 (incl. glebe income of £72).

²⁶ *Crockford's Clerical Dir.* (1937), 748 (incl. £166 grant); cf. *London Gaz.* 28 Oct. 1932, p. 6804 (£50); 28 Oct. 1938, p. 6722 (£40).

²⁷ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1784, pps re sale of rectory ho. and glebe 1938–9.

²⁸ *Crockford's Clerical Dir.* (1953–4), 1469.

²⁹ *Visit. Dioc. Linc.* I, 135.

³⁰ OHC, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 40, ff. 102–4; *ibid.* MS Wills Oxon. 156/2/28; *Hearth Tax Oxon.* 175.

³¹ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. b 70, f. 213; c 50, f. 2; c 454, f. 164.

³² *Secker's Visit.* 47.

³³ OHC, par. reg. transcript, miscellanea; *ibid.* MSS Oxf. Dioc. b 70, f. 213; c 448, f. 38.

judged it ‘very humble’ and ‘utterly unfit’, and none ever lived there, the building becoming instead the farmhouse for Glebe farm, occupied either by the tenant farmer or by his labourers.³⁴

Rectors remained non-resident until 1877, when a new rectory house (Cornwell Glebe) was completed on an adjacent site for the rector Charles Walkey, designed by the London architect Lewis Stride, and costing £1,460.³⁵ Built of local stone with a twin-gabled south front, that was occupied by most later rectors until 1939, when both it and Glebe Farm were sold to the Gillsons with the land.³⁶



Cornwell Rectory (now Cornwell Glebe) from the south, c.1920s. OHC, POX0190741.

Religious Life

The Middle Ages

A man named Walter served the church before 1174,³⁷ but otherwise the first known rector was Simon son of Simon (also known as Simon of Daventry), who held the living 1236–42.³⁸ More than 20 further rectors are known before the Reformation,³⁹ only a few of whom were graduates, perhaps reflecting the poverty of the living.⁴⁰ Roger of Kilworth, who succeeded Adam of Kilworth in 1290, came presumably from Leicestershire, and so too, perhaps, did his successor Geoffrey of Belgrave, presented as a subdeacon in 1293 but ordained as deacon and then priest later that year.⁴¹ William of Wickersley (1319–20) exchanged benefices with John de Hornle, vicar of Stratton St Margaret (Wilts.), who was licensed to

³⁴ Ibid. MSS Oxf. Dioc. b 9, f. 67; b 32, f. 97; b 38, f. 69; b 41, f. 73; d 549, p. 143.

³⁵ Ibid. b 70, f. 213; c 1783, rectory ho. pps (including plans and specification) 1874–7; c 2206, no. 2.

³⁶ Above (advowson and endowment).

³⁷ *Eynsham Cart.* I, p. 67; Kemp (ed.), *Twelfth-Cent. Acta*, pp. 108–9.

³⁸ *Rot. Grosseteste*, 450, 479.

³⁹ See list of rectors in church and OHC, PAR73/10/PL/1.

⁴⁰ Emden, *OU Reg. to 1500*, I, 160, 185; II, 966, 1287; III, 2112.

⁴¹ *Reg. Sutton*, VII, 38, 42, 48; VIII, 172, 179.

study in 1321 but left Cornwell for neighbouring Salford church in 1324.⁴² William Gnosall (presented in 1379) was possibly the William, rector of Cornwell, who was indicted for felony and imprisoned in Oxford castle in 1387, together with his acknowledged son Thomas Burlee.⁴³ Amongst later rectors, John Feversham (1462–71) was succeeded by John Atherton (1471–6),⁴⁴ effectively disproving a claim that John Morgan, the future dean of Windsor and bishop of St David's, held Cornwell in 1471.⁴⁵ The long-serving John Berryman (1513–56) was non-resident in 1520 but witnessed a will in 1529, and was 'of Cornwell' in 1555 when his own will requested burial in the chancel, and left two cows to fund an obit.⁴⁶ Records of assistant clergy are few, although Berryman employed a curate paid £5 a year in 1526, and named as Richard Woodward in 1530.⁴⁷



(Left) Cornwell's probably 13th-century font with carved heads on its base. (Right) Perpendicular window in the nave incorporating a bracket to support a saint's image.

Few significant alterations were made to the church itself, save for installation of an elaborate probably 13th-century font and some new 15th-century windows, one incorporating a bracket to support a saint's image.⁴⁸ Painted medieval glass in the chancel's windows, noted c.1720,⁴⁹ has since been lost, and in 1520 some church seating was reportedly broken, and the churchyard was not properly enclosed.⁵⁰ In the 1540s two

⁴² Lincs. Arch. REG/2, f. 172v.; *Reg. Burghersh*, II, 66; III, 18; Emden, *OU Reg. to 1500*, II, 966; *VCH Oxon.* XXI (forthcoming).

⁴³ Lincs. Arch. REG/10, f. 369v.; E.G. Kimball (ed.), *Oxon. Sessions of the Peace* (ORS 53, 1983), 64–5.

⁴⁴ Lincs. Arch. REG/20, ff. 239, 249v.; REG/21, f. 85.

⁴⁵ Cf. Emden, *OU Reg. to 1500*, II, 1311; *ODNB*, s.v. John Morgan (called John Young), based on *Cal. Papal Regs*, XIII, 300. That possibly refers, however, to the London rectory of St Peter Cornhill.

⁴⁶ Lincs. Arch. REG/23, f. 307; *Cal. Pat.* 1555–7, 230; *Visit. Dioc. Linc.* I, 135 (non-residence); OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 178.7; 181.29.

⁴⁷ *Visit. Dioc. Linc.* II, 44; *Subsidy* 1526, 263.

⁴⁸ Below (church archit.).

⁴⁹ *Par. Colln*, I, 101.

⁵⁰ *Visit. Dioc. Linc.* I, 135.

parishioners made provision for priests to sing masses and dirges after their deaths, one also giving the church a sheep 'out of wool'.⁵¹

The Reformation to 1819

William Horne (1559–c.1590), who conformed to the Elizabethan settlement but did not preach,⁵² witnessed a parishioner's will in 1577.⁵³ According to the Jesuit William Warford writing in the late 1590s, Horne, who was reconciled to Roman Catholicism by his nephew William Spenser (d. 1589), a Catholic priest and martyr, gave up his 'rich and comfortable benefice ... to live under the roof of a Catholic gentleman of rank'.⁵⁴ Whilst Horne did resign Cornwell, probably in 1590,⁵⁵ he may have remained in the parish in the months before his death in 1592, when he was 'somewhat sickly in body'.⁵⁶ By then the Catholic Ansley family had already left Cornwell manor house for neighbouring Chastleton,⁵⁷ and no recusants were reported in the parish in the late 16th or early 17th century.

Horne's successor Richard Freeman (1590–1627) was presumably from the Cornwell landowning family, and resided,⁵⁸ although his successor John Wilton (1628–62), 'library keeper' of Merton College, Oxford (where he was buried in 1665), evidently lived in Oxford.⁵⁹ In his absence Thomas Waring served Cornwell as 'minister', occupying the rectory house, and subsequently becoming rector from 1662 until his death in 1672.⁶⁰ John Kerry (1672–89) was an Oxford baker's son who married into the Penyston family,⁶¹ but who nevertheless complained in 1682 that the lord Sir Fairmeadow Penyston (his brother-in-law) had blocked a way to the church, failed to repair the churchyard wall, and 'totally deprived' his rectory house of water. Penyston had apparently also moved the church bell to 'such a place that it is impossible ... for any of the inhabitants to hear it', factors which Kerry feared might encourage Dissent (which was then absent).⁶² Sir Fairmeadow (d. 1705) was

⁵¹ OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 178.177; 179.206.

⁵² Pearce, 'Clergy', 25; Peel, *Register*, II, 135.

⁵³ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 185.479.

⁵⁴ J.H. Pollen (ed.), *Acts of English Martyrs* (1891), 273–8; ODNB, s.v. Wm Warford.

⁵⁵ Pearce, 'Clergy', 25; OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 265, p. 8; cf. *Cal. Pat.* 1590–1, 153.

⁵⁶ TNA, PROB 11/80/269.

⁵⁷ Above, social hist. (1500–1800); Chastleton, social hist.; relig. hist.

⁵⁸ Pearce, 'Clergy', 25–6; OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 297/1/51; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 40, f. 102; above, landownership (Salford manor estate).

⁵⁹ *Alumni Oxon. 1500–1714*, IV, 1658; *Wood's Life*, II, 39; TNA, PROB 11/320/348. For his Cornwell charity, above, social hist. (welfare).

⁶⁰ OHC, Cal. Presentation Deeds; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 40, f. 103; *ibid.* MS Wills Oxon. 156/2/28.

⁶¹ *Alumni Oxon. 1500–1714*, II, 846; K. Taylor and G. Hull, 'Excavation of Post-Medieval Features and a Dump of Late Eighteenth-Century Artefacts from 5/6–7 Market Street, Oxford', *Oxoniensia* 67 (2002), 357; above, landownership (Cornwell manor).

⁶² *Bp Fell & Nonconf.* 13; *Compton Census*, ed. Whiteman, 422.

nevertheless buried inside the church under an elaborate marble grave ledger, commissioned by his second wife Mary (d. 1715), and later fixed to the chancel's south wall.⁶³ Mary additionally gave the church a silver paten (in 1700), complementing an Elizabethan silver chalice and a stoneware flagon whose donors are unknown,⁶⁴ while the church's south porch with its distinctive sundial perhaps also reflected patronage by an early 17th-century lord.⁶⁵

Cornwell's next two rectors were both Sir Fairmeadow's nephews by marriage,⁶⁶ of whom Francis Astrey (1705–14), a fellow of Merton College, Oxford, later became treasurer of St Paul's cathedral in London, and employed a curate.⁶⁷ So too did his successor John Penyston né Kerry (1715–30), who was a son of the earlier rector John Kerry, and who inherited Cornwell manor in 1705, presumably occupying the manor house rather than the rectory house.⁶⁸ His successor as rector John Tucker (1730–58) served in person until his death, also assisting in Churchill,⁶⁹ and in 1738 held two Sunday services, preaching at the first (and better attended) one except on communion Sundays. In response to the bishop he explained that omission as being to avoid 'an hindrance', since his congregation 'would sometimes complain of being too tedious' at his sermons even though they 'rarely' lasted more than half an hour. There were then usually 10–12 communicants (who received the sacrament monthly), while the only Dissenter was the miller, who was Roman Catholic 'by education' and who attended church, but did not receive communion.⁷⁰ In 1755 church goods included a hearse cloth, communion cloth, and pulpit cushion, and the churchwarden was to procure a new parchment register and Book of Common Prayer, to have the Commandments and Sentences inscribed on the church walls, and to remove 'rubbish' from the outside walls and churchyard.⁷¹

Tucker's successors were the non-resident rectors Thomas Johns (1758–80), who lived in Northamptonshire,⁷² William Cleaver (1780–4), the future principal of Brasenose College, Oxford, who went on to be successively bishop of Chester, Bangor, and St Asaph,⁷³ and the pluralist Charles Tahourdin (1785–1819), who held the benefices of Letcombe Regis

⁶³ *Par. Colln*, I, 101; Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 281; TNA, PROB 11/544/265.

⁶⁴ Evans, *Ch. Plate*, 45–6.

⁶⁵ Below (church archit.).

⁶⁶ Above, landownership (Cornwell).

⁶⁷ OHC, Cal. Presentation Deeds; *Alumni Oxon. 1500–1714*, I, 39; Herts. Archives, DE/P/F173. For curate (Penyston Hastings in 1706), OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. e 22, p. 99.

⁶⁸ OHC, Cal. Presentation Deeds; TNA, PROB 11/638/40; above, landownership (Cornwell). For curate (Chas Hackman in 1725), OHC, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. e 4, f. 33.

⁶⁹ OHC, Cal. Presentation Deeds; *Secker's Corresp.* 17, 130; TNA, PROB 11/839/235.

⁷⁰ *Secker's Visit.* 47; *Secker's Corresp.* 17.

⁷¹ OHC, MSS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 23, ff. 299, 303; d 13, f. 144.

⁷² *Ibid.* Cal. Presentation Deeds; *ibid.* MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 558, f. 164; d 564, f. 132.

⁷³ *Alumni Oxon. 1715–1886*, I, 262; *ODNB*, s.v. Wm Cleaver; OHC, Cal. Presentation Deeds; *ibid.* Cal. Resignation Deeds; Oxf. Jnl Syn. 6 Nov. 1780, 19 Feb. 1787.

(Berks.) and Stoke Charity (Hants.), where he resided.⁷⁴ All three appointed curates including Edward Stone of Chipping Norton, Tahourdin himself (by 1776),⁷⁵ and the vicar of Chipping Norton Thomas Evans (d. 1808), followed by Evans' own curate Thomas Floyer Wickes, whose Cornwell stipend was £40 and who became rector of Cornwell in 1819.⁷⁶ By 1802 the church was served only once on Sunday, with just four communions a year, but Dissent failed to emerge and church attendance remained 'very good'.⁷⁷ The church building saw erection of several wall tablets mainly to members of the Penyston family, and the creation of a Penyston vault under the north side of the nave, Fairmeadow Penyston (d. 1785) being the first to be interred there, and Frances (d. 1873) evidently the last.⁷⁸

Since 1819

T.F. Wickes (rector 1819–29) lived mainly at Chipping Norton where he initially remained as curate, but by 1823 he served no other benefice, and had reinstated Cornwell's second Sunday service.⁷⁹ That was dropped under his successor Charles Barter (1829–68), who also held Sarsden and Churchill and employed non-resident curates, most of whom served Churchill as well. Of those, H. Raymond Barker received £120 for his Cornwell duty in 1838.⁸⁰ A Sunday school was begun in 1829,⁸¹ and on Census Sunday in 1851 a congregation of 65 (including the 26 Sunday scholars) attended the single morning service.⁸² Only five communions were celebrated in 1866, when Cornwell was one of very few Oxfordshire churches still with only a single Sunday service.⁸³ The chancel was rebuilt in 1830 by the Misses Penyston (joint ladies of the manor), who probably presented a silver paten the same year, and in the 1850s the surviving sister Frances Penyston continued to bear 'great responsibility' for the 'souls of her tenants'.⁸⁴

⁷⁴ D. McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy, 1777–1869* (1960), 51; OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. b 9, ff. 61–6.

Tahourdin's father had married Ann (d. 1799), eldest daughter of the lord and rector John Penyston (d. 1730): *Alumni Oxon. 1715–1886*, IV, 1383; *Birmingham Gaz.* 9 Dec. 1799; wall tablet in church.

⁷⁵ OHC, par. reg. transcript, clergy list; *ibid.* MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 327, p. 101; d 558, f. 164; d 561, f. 161. For Stone's father Edw. (d. 1768), *VCH Oxon.* XXI (forthcoming).

⁷⁶ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. b 9, ff. 61–6; c 327, p. 101; d 549, p. 143; d 568, f. 97; *VCH Oxon.* XXI (forthcoming).

⁷⁷ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 566, f. 91; d 568, f. 97.

⁷⁸ TNA, PROB 11/1136/303; PROB 11/1722/125; PROB 11/1357/248; wall tablets in church; inscription 'vault full 1873' (on stone in exterior N wall of nave); above, landownership (Cornwell manor).

⁷⁹ OHC, Cal. Presentation Deeds; *ibid.* MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 578, f. 77; d 580, f. 75.

⁸⁰ McClatchey, *Oxon. Clergy*, 69; OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. b 38, f. 69; b 39, f. 103; b 41, f. 73; c 332, f. 141; *Wilb. Visit.* 42.

⁸¹ *Educ. Enq. Abstract* (Parl. Papers 1835 (62), xlii), p. 744; above, social hist. (educ.).

⁸² *Ch. and Chapel, 1851*, p. 28.

⁸³ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 332, f. 141; McClatchey, *Oxon. Clergy*, 82.

⁸⁴ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. b 38, f. 69; b 41, f. 73; Evans, *Ch. Plate*, 46; *Wilb. Dioc. Bks.* 157; below (church archit.); above, landownership.

Provision improved under Edward Holmes (1868–70) and Theodore Francis (1870–4), who although non-resident officiated in person and provided two Sunday services and monthly communions. Holmes, who was also curate-in-charge of neighbouring Daylesford (then Worcs.), nevertheless considered the church's 'old-fashioned' pews 'very unsightly and a hindrance to devout worship'.⁸⁵ Charles Walkey (1874–85) paid for new altar rails in 1875 and oversaw construction of the new rectory house in 1877,⁸⁶ but was licensed for non-residence in 1883.⁸⁷ His successor was John Cox Boyce (1885–9),⁸⁸ a Low Churchman who exchanged acrimonious correspondence with Chipping Norton's Roman Catholic priest Samuel Sole in 1885, and was declared bankrupt in 1887.⁸⁹ William Collingwood Carter (1889–1900) introduced a third Sunday service and weekly communions, leaving Cornwell in 1900 to become vicar of Shipton-under-Wychwood.⁹⁰ Dissent remained negligible, with only five Nonconformist parishioners known to the rector in 1872, all of them worshipping elsewhere.⁹¹

Richard Parry Burnett (rector 1900–30) had previously spent 20 years as a chaplain in India, and was diocesan inspector of schools 1907–20.⁹² During his long incumbency the churchyard was extended (in 1909), a church fund was established to help meet rising expenses (in 1915), and a war memorial tablet was placed in the nave (in 1921).⁹³ From 1927, however, no vestry meetings were held or churchwardens appointed, and in 1929, when infirmity prevented Burnett from officiating, he failed to make alternative provision, resulting in no church services for more than a year. Following complaints to the bishop by the lord and former churchwarden Joshua Bower (who withdrew his financial assistance to the church in protest), an enquiry in 1930 found Burnett negligent of his duties, and the rectory was sequestrated until a successor could be found.⁹⁴ The following two rectors, James Martin (1931–5) and Gilbert Kemmis (1935–8), were the last to occupy the rectory house, which was sold in 1939 when Cornwell was held in plurality with Daylesford.⁹⁵

⁸⁵ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 335, f. 103; c 338, f. 118; c 1783, presentation pps 1870, 1874.

⁸⁶ Ibid. c 1783, presentation pps 1874, 1885; c 341, f. 134; above (rectory ho.).

⁸⁷ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 1784, petition for non-residence 1883; c 350, f. 108.

⁸⁸ Ibid. c 1783, presentation pps 1885, 1889; c 353, f. 111.

⁸⁹ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 29 July, 12, 19 Aug., 9, 23, 30 Sept., 14, 21 Oct., 4 Nov. 1885; *Oxf. Jnl*, 26 Feb. 1887.

⁹⁰ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1783, presentation pps 1889, 1900; c 347, f. 123; c 365, f. 114; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 19 July 1899; *VCH Oxon.* XIX, 78.

⁹¹ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 338, f. 118.

⁹² *Gore's Visit.* 133; *Crockford's Clerical Dir.* (1925), 213.

⁹³ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1783, churchyard pps 1909; *ibid.* PAR73/2/A/1; PAR73/4/F1/1.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1784, corresp. and report 1929–30.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* c 1783, presentation pps 1931, 1935, 1938; *Crockford's Clerical Dir.* (1935), 872; (1937), 748; (1940), 599; above (rectory ho.).

After the Second World War the church was served only by priests-in charge,⁹⁶ one of whom reinstated vestry meetings in 1946, when members of the Auxiliary Territorial Service presented three reading lamps to the church to commemorate the manor house's wartime use as a hospital.⁹⁷ In 1953 the curate-in-charge was Daylesford's rector Frank Wilkinson, and from 1969 until 1975 Cornwell was served by the rector of Salford Thomas Hyslop.⁹⁸ From 1980 the parish was included in ever larger benefices, and in 2023 (apart from an annual harvest festival) services were held only around Christmas and Easter.⁹⁹ A silver cruet made by the silversmith George Hart, of Chipping Campden (Glos.), was acquired to mark the 2000 millennium.¹⁰⁰

Church Architecture

Set in what is now an isolated location amid parkland east of the manor house and village, Cornwell church is a small, partly 12th-century building of coursed limestone rubble, with ashlar quoins and dressings and stone-slatted roofs.¹⁰¹ It retains its original plan of aisleless nave and (rebuilt) Norman chancel, to which a south porch was added probably in the early 17th century, and a north-west vestry in 1882. The church was refenestrated in the 15th century, and the chancel and stone bellcote were reconstructed in 1830, followed by later restorations.

Surviving early features include simple round-headed north and south doorways (the former, now opening into the vestry, with a semicircular tympanum), and a plain chancel arch of c.1200, with two pointed unchamfered orders, and responds with scalloped capitals. The font, 12-sided with moulded panels, and set on a square base with carved heads at its corners, is probably 13th-century, and in the 15th century good-quality square-headed Perpendicular windows with hoodmoulds and head-stops were inserted into the south walls of both nave and chancel, the eastern reveal of the nave's south-east window containing an image bracket on a slender shaft. The chancel's two-light east window (of similar date and style) has a segmental-arched head and three blank shields in its reveals, and a segmental-arched aumbry in the chancel's north wall may have been added around the same time.¹⁰²

⁹⁶ *Crockford's Clerical Dir.* (1945), 1611; below.

⁹⁷ OHC, PAR73/2/A/1; K. Galbraith, 'Cornwell manor, 1941–6' (1973): TS in OHC; above, social hist. (since 1800).

⁹⁸ *Crockford's Clerical Dir.* (1953–4), 1469; (1971–2), 482; (1977–9), 508, 1188.

⁹⁹ Above (church origins); www.achurchnearyou.com (accessed June 2023); local info.

¹⁰⁰ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1782/3, faculty 1999.

¹⁰¹ Unless indicated, following based on: NHLE, no. 1283726 (accessed Nov. 2022); Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 281; Parker, *Eccl. Topog.* no. 72; *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1883–1939 edns); OHC, PAR73/5/F1/1, note on 1882 restoration. Illustrated in Bodl. MSS Top. Oxon. a 66, nos. 187–8 (font and exterior, 1825); a 61, f. 2 (exterior, 1855).

¹⁰² For the chancel's lost medieval glass, *Par. Colln*, I, 101.

The gabled south porch was added probably in the early 17th century, a large sundial above the outer doorway inscribed with the Latin motto *Fugit Hora* ('Time Flies'), while the Penyston family vault under the nave's north side was constructed c.1780.¹⁰³



(Left) South porch with its 17th-century sundial. (Right) The nave looking east, with Clough Williams-Ellis's wooden wall sconces and chandeliers fitted in 1939.

No further structural work was carried out until 1830 when, at the cost of the Misses Penyston, the bellcote (containing a 'modern-looking' bell) was renewed, and the chancel was rebuilt and re-roofed 'without the slightest change in size or appearance'.¹⁰⁴ Stained glass (probably by Burlison & Grylls) was inserted into the east window in 1876 in memory of Frances Penyston (d. 1873), and a thorough restoration, perhaps to designs by R.W. Edis, was carried out in 1882, the £850 cost met by J.F. Penyston. The nave was re-seated, re-roofed, and re-floored (with tiles), whilst the porch was rebuilt and the north-west vestry added, two cinquefoil-headed lancet windows in the nave's north wall being perhaps inserted at the same time. The font was moved from the chancel into the nave, where a new Perpendicular-style stone pulpit was erected with blind tracery and ringed corner shafts. In 1886 J.F. Penyston paid for further unspecified chancel repairs and for a new two-light west window in Decorated style,¹⁰⁵ and a communion table made of Cornwell oak by the estate carpenter John Harris was first used at Easter 1887.¹⁰⁶

A pipe organ was installed in 1890 and restored in 1919, and in 1939 was moved from the nave's west end into a purpose-built chamber opened into the north wall of the chancel, as part of works paid for by the Gillsons to designs by Clough Williams-Ellis. He

¹⁰³ Above (Reformn to 1819). For furnishings and decoration, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. b 41, f. 73; b 70, f. 213; *Ch. Bells Oxon.* I, 100.

¹⁰⁵ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 353, f. 111; *Oxf. Times*, 30 Dec. 1882, 16 Oct. 1886.

¹⁰⁶ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 13 Apr. 1887.

also provided wooden chandeliers and wall sconces, to which electric lights were fitted.¹⁰⁷ In 2002 the bell was rehung by Whites of Appleton (Berks.), and the bellcote was repaired in 2005.¹⁰⁸



(Left) Penyston wall tablets, pulpit, lectern, and chancel arch looking east. (Right) Perpendicular east window in the chancel with three blank shields in its reveals.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 24 Sept. 1890; OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 359, f. 119; c 1783, faculties 1938–9; *ibid.* PAR73/2/A/1.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. DIOC/1/C/6/23/1, faculties 2002, 2005.