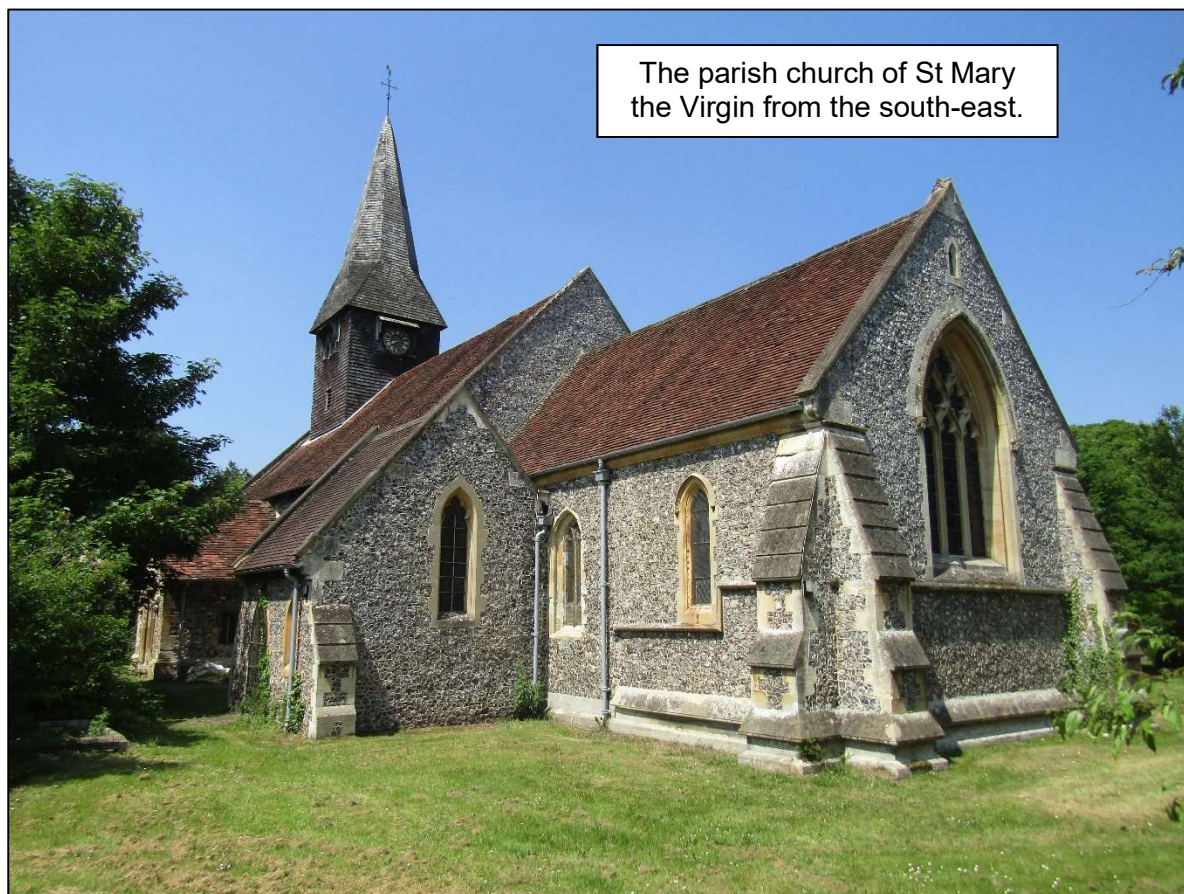




VCH Oxfordshire Texts in Progress

Whitchurch

Religious History



Nothing survives of the 10th-century church commemorated in Whitchurch's place-name, which was perhaps originally subject to Goring, but which was apparently independent by the late 12th or early 13th century.¹ The benefice (a rectory) was often held by non-resident pluralists, with day-to-day care left to chaplains or curates, although after the rectory house was rebuilt in the early 19th century most rectors resided and served the church in person. An Anglican chapel of ease (St John's church) was built at Whitchurch Hill in 1883, and briefly had its own parsonage and resident curate. Nonconformity was largely absent until the early 19th century when a Wesleyan Methodist chapel (closed in 1915) was erected at Whitchurch Hill, while a Roman Catholic chapel for Polish refugees was established in 1950 and remained in use for around 40 years.

¹ Above, vol. intro. (relig. life); below (church origins).

Church Origins and Parochial Organization

Whitchurch presumably had a ‘white church’ (i.e. one with chalk or whitewashed walls) by c.990, when the place name is first recorded,² although the earliest present-day fabric dates from the early 12th century.³ The founder was most likely an early holder of the Whitchurch estate, conceivably Leofric: the medieval manor house adjoined the churchyard enclosure, and patronage remained with lords of Whitchurch manor throughout the medieval period.⁴ A chaplain was mentioned in the 1170s–90s, and by the early 13th century the church was fully independent, served by a rector (and briefly also by a perpetual vicar), and with an apparently sizeable glebe.⁵ The dedication to St Mary the Virgin was established by 1243.⁶

Except for a brief transfer to Nettlebed deanery from 1852–74, the benefice remained an independent rectory in Henley deanery until 2003, when it was joined with six others to form Langtree united benefice and team ministry.⁷ The parish’s Berkshire part was transferred from Salisbury to Oxford diocese in 1836,⁸ and remained part of Whitchurch for ecclesiastical purposes until 1997.⁹

Advowson, Glebe, and Tithes

The advowson descended with the manor until 1551,¹⁰ when the king (as lord) granted it to Sir Thomas Wroth.¹¹ By 1559 it was owned by Francis Hastings, earl of Huntingdon, but the queen presented in 1581, and thereafter the advowson remained with the Crown, despite a competing presentation by John Whistler as lord of Whitchurch in 1611,¹² and an

² Sawyer S.1454; *PN Oxon.* I, 62–3; Blair, *A-S Oxon*, 137, 199.

³ Below (church archit.).

⁴ Above, landscape etc. (settlement); landownership; below (advowson).

⁵ Below (endowment; pastoral care).

⁶ *Rot. Grosseteste*, 474, 476; cf. Berks. RO, D/A1/228.

⁷ Youngs, *Admin. Units*, I, 408; OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c. 1884/2, Order in Council 2003.

⁸ *London Gaz.* 7 Oct. 1836, p. 1729; cf. Berks. RO, D/A1/228; D/A1/7/63; D/A1/132/131, referring to part of the parish in Sarum diocese.

⁹ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c. 1169/2, pastoral order 1997. The only exception was the Swan pub (transferred to Berkshire and Pangbourne civil parish in 1991), which remained part of Whitchurch’s ecclesiastical parish in 2018: above, landscape etc. (boundaries); Church of England parish map (accessed online at www.churchofengland.org in Jul. 2018).

¹⁰ e.g. *Rot. Welles*, I, 33; *Rot. Grosseteste*, 463, 472; *Rot. Hund.* II, 775; *Cal. Pat.* 1345–8, 278; *L&P Hen. VIII*, IV (2), p. 2079; above, landownership (Whitchurch).

¹¹ *Cal. Pat.* 1550–3, 190.

¹² S. Spencer Pearce, ‘Clergy of the Deaneries of Henley and Aston and of the Peculiar of Dorchester during the Settlement of 1559 and Afterwards’, *OAS Rep.* 64 (1918), 137–9; *Cal. Pat.* 1580–2, 122; OHC, *Cal. Presentation Deeds*. Jn Whistler (d. 1626) tried to leave the advowson to his eldest son Edward in his will: TNA, PROB 11/151/86.

unsuccessful claim by John Wroth in 1676.¹³ In 1861 it was transferred from the Crown to the bishop of Oxford,¹⁴ who remained a joint patron of Langtree united benefice from 2003.¹⁵

The rectory was one of the better-off benefices in Henley deanery, valued at 10 marks (£6 13s. 4d.) a year in 1254,¹⁶ at £10 13s. 4d. in 1291,¹⁷ and at £16 2s. 8½d. net in 1535,¹⁸ excluding demesne tithes worth £1 6s. 8d. owned by Bec abbey and later by St George's Chapel, Windsor.¹⁹ By the early 18th century the overall value was c.£200 a year,²⁰ rising to £377 gross (£341 net) in 1802.²¹ The glebe included open-field land by 1342,²² and in 1626 totalled 138 a. in addition to the rectory house and a separate house apparently in the village (below).²³

Another 164 a. was added in lieu of extinguished tithes at enclosure in 1806, when the remaining tithes (excluding those from the parish's Berkshire part) were commuted to variable corn rents initially worth £53 a year. Some of those were exchanged for a further 6 a. at the common's enclosure in 1813,²⁴ and in 1820 the glebe covered 287 acres.²⁵ The Berkshire tithes, long disputed by the Wilders of Purley Hall, and reckoned in 1816 to be worth £100 a year payable from 302 a.,²⁶ were commuted in 1839 for a variable £100 rent charge,²⁷ and by 1851 the benefice's total gross income was £480, derived from the Oxfordshire and Berkshire tithe rents (then £16 and £96) and the glebe (£368).²⁸ Most of the land (278 a.) was sold to William Fanning in 1868 for £15,000,²⁹ which in 1879 was used to purchase ground rents in Battersea (Surrey), yielding £637 in 1893 and £635 in 1944.³⁰ The

¹³ *Cal. SP Dom.* 1675–6, 104; 1676–7, 368.

¹⁴ *London Gaz.* 3 May 1861, pp. 1891–2.

¹⁵ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c. 1884/2, Order in Council 2003.

¹⁶ Lunt (ed.), *Val. Norw.* 304.

¹⁷ *Tax. Eccl.* 30; D.M. Smith (ed.), *English Episcopal Acta I: Lincoln 1067–1185* (1980), 13–14; cf. *Nonarum Inquisitiones*, 136; *Feudal Aids*, VI, 371.

¹⁸ *Valor Eccl.* II, 166.

¹⁹ Above, landownership (estates: tithes).

²⁰ *Par. Colln*, III, 339.

²¹ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 434, f. 166v.

²² *Goring Charters*, I, no. 156.

²³ OHC, F XIV/1, f. 22; below (rectory ho.). Cf. OHC, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 141, pp. 105, 109–19; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Dioc. c 655, f. 69.

²⁴ OHC, enclo. award; *ibid.* Whitchurch Common enclo. award.

²⁵ *Ibid.* F XIV/20.

²⁶ Berks. RO, D/EWI/E19–25.

²⁷ OHC, tithe award.

²⁸ *Ch. and Chapel, 1851*, 111; cf. OHC, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 27, f. 191.

²⁹ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2070/1, draft conveyance and report 1868; above, landownership (other estates).

³⁰ J. Slatter, *Some Notes on the History of the Parish of Whitchurch* (1895), 130; OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 359, f. 453; c 2069, statement of income 1945; pps re sale of glebe in church vestry.

remaining 9 a. was sold piecemeal during the 20th century.³¹ Overall income in 1920 was £680, but only £326 in 1950.³²

Meadow and fishing rights derived from former chantry endowments provided additional funds for church maintenance by 1621, until the premises were sold in 1801.³³ In 1953 Madeline Garton gave £300 to be invested for the upkeep of St John's church at Whitchurch Hill,³⁴ and a charity in support of both churches was established in 2016.³⁵

Rectory House

A rectory house existed by 1626 and presumably much earlier, set within a generous 2-a. plot adjoining the churchyard.³⁶ In 1635 it was a tiled, two-storeyed structure of five bays, with six upper chambers and outbuildings including a malthouse, apple house, and 11-bayed barn, perhaps the 'old tithe barn' dismantled c.1863.³⁷ In 1665 it was taxed on seven hearths,³⁸ though by 1686 it was 'very ruinous', prompting the incoming rector Luke Beaulieu to sue the previous rector's widow for £116 towards repairs.³⁹ By 1800 the house was 'so decayed as not to be well worth the expense of additional building', consisting of three 'inferior' bedrooms, a small parlour, a kitchen, and a brewhouse, cellar, and dairy.⁴⁰ Three years later it was accordingly rebuilt for the rector James Etty to designs by William Parker of Henley, in brick and tile and with Portland stone dressings. The cost was £1,300,⁴¹ but in 1805 the work was said to have been 'shamefully executed', forcing the new rector Hugh Moises to pay £115 for repairs.⁴² By the 1830s the structure was 'in a ruinous state in consequence of a defective foundation'.⁴³

The house was replaced in 1835 with a new one on a slightly different site, built in Georgian style to designs by Richard Billing of Reading. The estimated cost of £1,617 excluded £700-worth of materials salvaged from the earlier building, including the drawing

³¹ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2070/1, contracts and conveyances 1926, 1945, 1948; WGHA, pps re sale of glebe.

³² *Crockford's Clerical Dir.* (1920), 94; (1949–50), 198.

³³ TNA, C 66/1138, m. 17, mentioning a 'free platt' and 'free water'; *ibid.* C 66/1157, m. 23, mentioning 'Lampe Meadowe' and 'free fishery'; above, econ. hist. (fishing); social hist. (welfare).

³⁴ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2070/2, file re Garton bequest.

³⁵ Char. Comm. website, no. 1168335; www.whitchurchfriends.org.uk (both accessed Jul. 2018).

³⁶ OHC, F XIV/1, f. 22; *ibid.* enclo. map.

³⁷ *Ibid.* MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 141, p. 109; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2069, faculty 1863.

³⁸ *Hearth Tax Oxon.* 5.

³⁹ TNA, C 5/79/7.

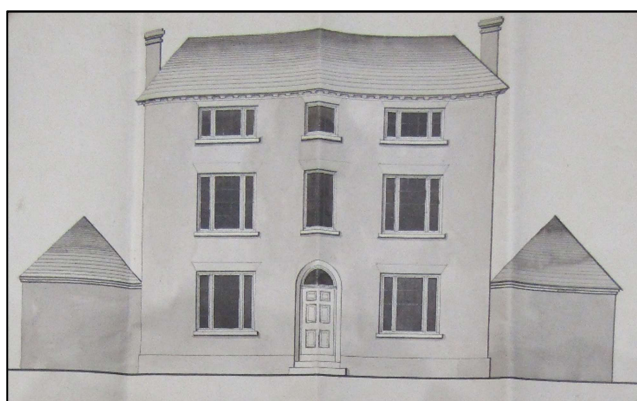
⁴⁰ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 655, ff. 69–72.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* par. reg. transcript, App. E; *ibid.* MSS Oxf. Dioc. b 106, no. 6; c 434, ff. 166–169v.

⁴² *Ibid.* MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 27, ff. 164–171, 210–221.

⁴³ *Ibid.* MS Oxf. Dioc. b 106, no. 7.

room chimneypiece.⁴⁴ Built of whitewashed brick with a hipped Welsh slate roof, the main four-bay front features 12-pane sash windows to both storeys, and a central Doric porch.⁴⁵ A large north wing added c.1899 to designs by S.S. Stallwood was mostly demolished in 1960.⁴⁶ The house was sold in 2009, when the team rector lived in Checkendon, although a new residence (St Mary's House) for a house-for-duty priest was erected in 2007 on part of the former rectory garden.⁴⁷



William Parker's design for the 1803 rectory house (left; OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. b 106, no. 6) and the surviving 1835 former rectory house (Old Rectory) (right).

A separate house in Whitchurch was the subject of a dispute in 1591, when it was claimed to have been added to the benefice by gift.⁴⁸ Presumably that was the house in the upper village called the 'old vicarage' by 1626, although it was never a true vicarage and seems usually to have been leased,⁴⁹ despite possibly sometimes accommodating resident curates.⁵⁰ In 1800 it was 'old and requiring continual repair',⁵¹ and in 1817 it was sold with 3½ acres.⁵²

⁴⁴ Ibid.; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Dioc. b 70, f. 829. For locations, cf. OHC, encl. map; OS Map 1:2500, Oxon. LV.12 (1877 edn).

⁴⁵ NHLE, no. 1368972 (accessed Jul. 2018); Pevsner, *Oxon.* 840.

⁴⁶ OHC, RDC6/3/Y3/21; SODC, P60/H0861 (accessed online); P. Hawley, 'Relics & Monuments': *Essays and Talks on Whitchurch Village History* (WGHHS, 2nd edn, 2017), 103.

⁴⁷ Info. (2018) from Oxford diocese.

⁴⁸ TNA, E 133/7/993.

⁴⁹ OHC, F XIV/1, f. 22; for location, *ibid.* encl. map. As the gift seems to have been relatively recent, any connection with the short-lived early 13th-cent. vicarage (below, relig. life) seems unlikely.

⁵⁰ e.g. Edw. Peach c.1738 (below, relig. life).

⁵¹ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 655, f. 69. For a poss. ref. in 1731, *ibid.* MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 27, f. 129.

⁵² *Ibid.* Penn. I/vi/1.

Religious Life

The Middle Ages

Whitchurch was served in the 1170s–90s by a chaplain named Ralph, who witnessed a grant by the lord of Whitchurch and a separate grant to Goring priory.⁵³ The first known rector, instituted between 1209 and 1219, was Geoffrey de Dunstanville, perhaps the same Geoffrey (d. 1234) who was lord of Shiplake, or at least a relative. A vicar named Silvester was instituted at the same time, and was to pay the rector 10 marks (£6 13s. 4d.) a year; he was required to be ordained as priest and to serve the church in person, and was to have a resident chaplain ‘able to administer confessions and other sacraments, and in the tongue known to the parishioners’, perhaps suggesting that Silvester spoke only Norman French.⁵⁴ Silvester witnessed a deed as vicar c.1225,⁵⁵ but thereafter only rectors are known, and the vicarage presumably lapsed. Thomas Esperun (rector 1240–77) was deputy chamberlain to Whitchurch’s patron and lord Baldwin de Redvers, while his immediate successor Adam de Stratton, a notorious pluralist and royal moneylender, was steward to Isabel de Forz.⁵⁶ Simon the clerk may have been his chaplain at Whitchurch in 1279, and another clerk (William of Whitchurch) had a freehold in the parish.⁵⁷

Several later medieval rectors were similarly non-resident pluralists, and included at least six Oxford graduates.⁵⁸ Robert Newby (1395–1413), a native of North Yorkshire, was rector of Garsington and an official of the archdeacon of Oxford, and though occasionally resident in Whitchurch may have deputed his responsibilities to the chaplain William Crowton, who was named in his will.⁵⁹ John Argentyne (1457–62), a Franciscan friar and chaplain to Queen Margaret,⁶⁰ was succeeded by Roger Gray (1462–83), who combined university posts with the neighbouring vicarage of Mapledurham.⁶¹ He was buried at Whitchurch under a funerary brass made during his lifetime (almost certainly between 1455 and 1462), which was originally destined for Mapledurham church.⁶² The long-serving

⁵³ *Reading Cart.* I, no. 387; *Goring Charters*, I, no. 2.

⁵⁴ *Rot. Welles*, I, 33, 48; Sir R.J. Godlee, *A Village on the Thames: Whitchurch Yesterday and Today* (1926), 255; above, Shiplake, landownership. Presumably the vicar enjoyed the remaining income, although in 1254 the entire benefice was valued at only 10 marks.

⁵⁵ A.H. Cooke (ed.), *The Early History of Mapledurham* (ORS 7, 1925), 88–9.

⁵⁶ *Rot. Grosseteste*, 463, 472; *Rot. Gravesend*, 231; N. Denholm-Young, ‘Thomas de Wykes and his Chronicle’, *EHR* 61 (1946), 165; *ODNB*, s.v. Adam de Stratton.

⁵⁷ *Rot. Hund.* II, 776. William witnessed a deed between c.1272 and 1290: *Boarstall Cart.* no. 43.

⁵⁸ Emden, *OU Reg. to 1500*, s.v. Argentyne, Gosebourne, Gray, Newby, Persevale, Southam.

⁵⁹ *Cal. Pat.* 1391–6, 609; *Reg. Repington*, II, 372–4, mentioning his bed at Whitchurch.

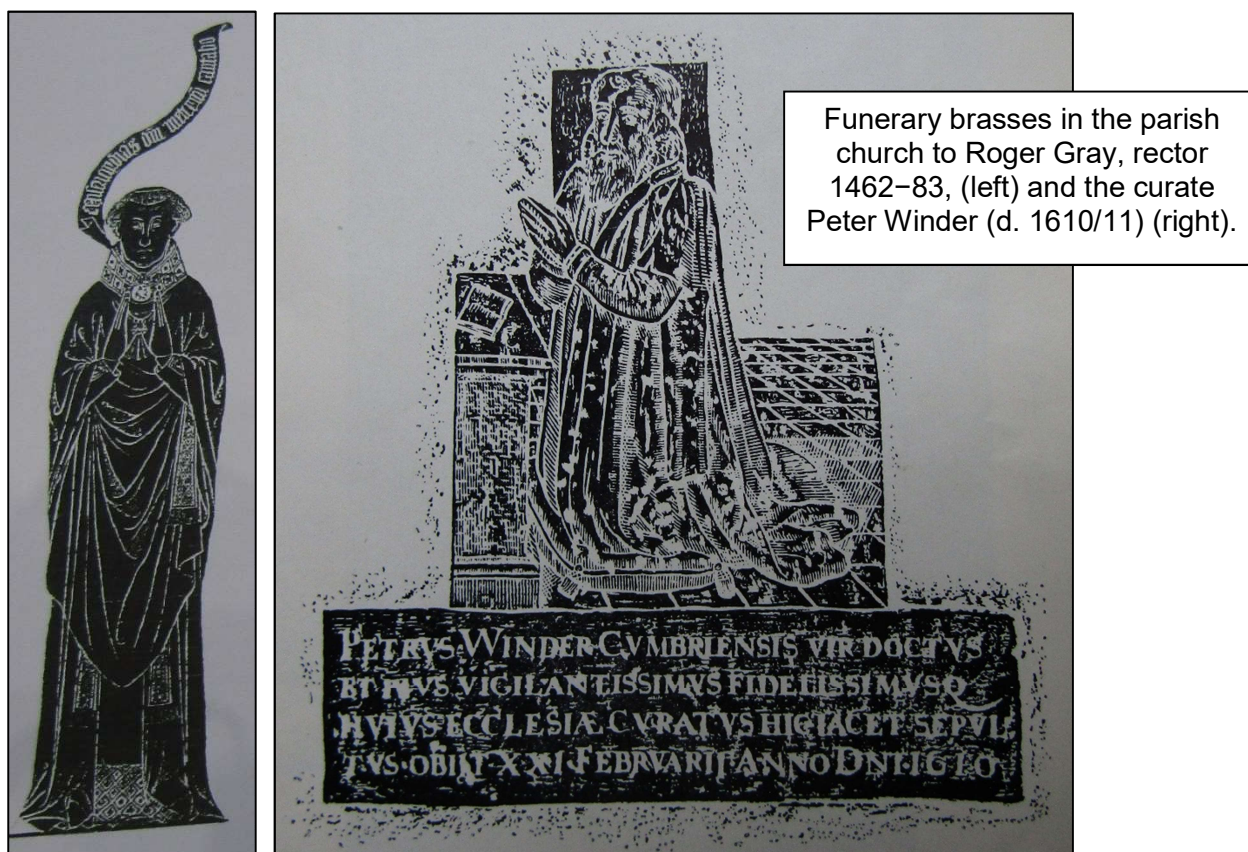
⁶⁰ Emden, *OU Reg. to 1500*, I, 45; *Cal. Papal Regs.* XI, 562; *Cal. Pat.* 1461–7, 182.

⁶¹ *Cal. Pat.* 1461–7, 182; Lincs. Arch. REG/22, f. 223v.; Emden, *OU Reg. to 1500*, II, 807.

⁶² P. Manning, ‘Monumental Brasses in the Deanery of Henley-on-Thames’, *Oxf. Jnl of Monumental Brasses* I (1898), 304–5. The inscription clearly refers to Mapledurham rather than to Whitchurch,

Thomas Persevale (1488–1526) was granted a £10 pension on his resignation⁶³ and died in 1533, also commemorated by a brass in the church.⁶⁴ His successor William Wright (d. 1528) requested burial in Reading, and left his best gown and a worsted doublet to his Whitchurch chaplain George Osprynge.⁶⁵

Lay involvement is poorly recorded, although the church's Norman south doorway points to investment in its fabric in the early 12th century.⁶⁶ In 1243 Roger de Hyde was licenced to build and endow a chantry chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary within his manorial enclosure at Hyde in the Berkshire part of the parish; neither font nor bells were permitted, although consecrated bread and holy water could be kept there. In return the attendance of Roger and his family at the parish church was demanded every Sunday and principal feast day, and Roger was required to provide 2 lb of wax a year for two candles on the high altar. He additionally granted his chaplain William de Stoke a house and lands in Hyde and South Stoke, and undertook to keep the books, chalice, lights, vestments, and ornaments of his chapel in good repair.⁶⁷



describing him as 'vicar' and relating his efforts in 1455 to unite the vicarage and rectory: cf. above, Mapledurham, relig. hist.

⁶³ *Cal. Pat.* 1485–94, 221; Lincs. Arch. REG/27, f. 182v.

⁶⁴ Manning, 'Monumental Brasses', 306.

⁶⁵ Lincs. Arch. REG/27, f. 182v.; TNA, PROB 11/22/595.

⁶⁶ Below (church archit.).

⁶⁷ *Rot. Grosseteste*, 472–7. For Roger's South Stoke land, *VCH Oxon.* VII, 98.

A wider group of parishioners may have invested in the parish church in the 15th century, re-roofing the nave and building a south porch incorporating a carved stone panel depicting the Rood. A Whitchurch miller was commemorated in painted window glass (since lost) around the same time,⁶⁸ while continued seigneurial patronage is evident in the burial in the chancel of Thomas Walshe (fl. 1410) of Hardwick and his wife Alice, both with funerary brasses.⁶⁹ Chantries supported by gifts of land were based presumably in the parish church, most likely in one of its two former north chapels,⁷⁰ while lights to Our Lady and the Rood were the subject of bequests in wills, along with the church bells.⁷¹

Reformation to Restoration

In the early years of the Reformation little seems to have changed, a widow in 1543 leaving a cow and ten sheep for two obits at Whitsuntide and All Hallows.⁷² During Edward VI's reign Whitchurch's chantries were presumably suppressed, however, the lands supporting them being later sold,⁷³ and in 1553 some of the church's elaborate vestments and altar cloths were removed.⁷⁴ Whitchurch's rector through this crucial period was another absentee, John Oliver or Smith (1528–52), a civil lawyer and (from 1533 until 1545) dean of King Henry VIII College, Oxford, who held numerous appointments and livings despite apparently never being ordained priest.⁷⁵ Throughout his long incumbency curates came and went,⁷⁶ amongst them Geoffrey Acrith, a former Augustinian canon of Newstead priory (Notts.),⁷⁷ who reintroduced Roman Catholic practices under Mary I. Despite also serving Chalgrove as curate, he was buried in the chancel at Whitchurch in 1558.⁷⁸

A greater appetite for reform was shown by Robert Norwood (rector 1559–92), who conformed to the Elizabethan religious settlement. Though also rector of Slapton (Bucks.) he resided at Whitchurch by 1586⁷⁹ and probably by the 1570s, when he wrote and witnessed several parishioners' wills. All were conventionally Protestant,⁸⁰ and presumably with his knowledge a page cut from an illuminated pre-Reformation Latin missal was used in the

⁶⁸ Below (church archit.).

⁶⁹ *Par. Colln.* III, 339; Manning, 'Monumental Brasses', 304.

⁷⁰ Below (Reformation; church archit.).

⁷¹ OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 178.11, 178.47; Berks. RO, D/A1/228.

⁷² OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 178.157.

⁷³ *Cal. Pat.* 1572–5, 411; 1575–8, 27, 310.

⁷⁴ *Chant. Cert.* 99–100, 134.

⁷⁵ *L&P Hen. VIII*, IV(2), p. 2079; Emden, *OU Reg. 1501–40*, 425; *ODNB*, s.v. Jn Oliver.

⁷⁶ cf. *Visit. Dioc. Linc.* II, 67; OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 178.47, 179.219.

⁷⁷ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 180.29; G. Baskerville, 'The Dispossessed Religious of Oxfordshire', *OAS Rep.* 75 (1930), 345.

⁷⁸ OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 181.41, 183.14; *VCH Oxon.* XVIII, 151.

⁷⁹ Spencer Pearce, 'Clergy', 137–8; *Alumni Oxon. 1500–1714*; Peel, *Register*, II, 131.

⁸⁰ OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 185.197, 185.219, 185.263, 185.264, 185.398, 185.399, 185.442, 185.443.

1560s to bind the parish overseers' accounts. Nevertheless the church retained some old-style vestments including four albs and a cope, even if by 1593 they had apparently been replaced with a simple surplice.⁸¹



A page from a pre-Reformation illuminated Latin missal used to bind the parish overseers' accounts in the 1560s. Source: OHC, PAR287/5/F1/1.

Thomas Singleton (rector 1596–1610) was another absentee pluralist and Oxford academic, becoming principal of Brasenose College and university vice-chancellor. He resigned the living in favour of his relative Isaac Singleton (1610–16), but nevertheless endowed a Whitchurch parish charity under his will.⁸² Under both Singletons Whitchurch was served by the resident curate Peter Winder, a native of Cumberland and a former student of Brasenose College, who in 1610 (with others) contributed 5s. towards the cost of a new pulpit.⁸³ On his death the following year he was commemorated by a funerary brass depicting him kneeling at an altar.⁸⁴ Other monuments were erected to leading parishioners, notably that in the chancel to Richard Lybbe (d. 1599) of Hardwick and his wife Joan, featuring two painted effigies kneeling at a prayer desk.⁸⁵

The longest incumbency of the 17th century was that of Henry Whistler (1616–72), a cousin of the lord of the manor John Whistler, who had unsuccessfully attempted to present

⁸¹ Ibid. PAR287/5/F1/1, ff. 32, 49, and binding.

⁸² *Alumni Oxon. 1500–1714*; Spencer Pearce, 'Clergy', 138–9; TNA, PROB 11/125/32; above, social hist. (welfare).

⁸³ OHC, par. reg. transcript, p. 1 and App. B; *ibid.* MS Wills Oxon. 193.387.

⁸⁴ *Par. Colln.* III, 341; Manning, 'Monumental Brasses', 306.

⁸⁵ *Par. Colln.* III, 339–40. Moved from the N to the S wall in 1901: below (church archit.).

him to the living in 1611.⁸⁶ An academic and pluralist, he was both a Puritan and a supporter of Oliver Cromwell, to whom he dedicated a treatise on infant baptism in 1653.⁸⁷ Although normally resident (and marrying in the church in 1636),⁸⁸ he nonetheless employed curates: Thomas Stansall served for more than 15 years from c.1618,⁸⁹ during which time a new silver chalice and paten were given,⁹⁰ while John Reade, curate by 1640, was married at Whitchurch in 1652 and died in 1654.⁹¹ Roman Catholic recusancy emerged in the same period, focused on the Hyde family resident in the Berkshire part of the parish: two thirds of Francis Hyde's manor was seized for recusancy in 1627,⁹² while four out of six Whitchurch recusants fined in 1624 were Hyde family members.⁹³ No papists or other Dissenters were reported later in the century, however.⁹⁴

1660–1840

Whistler's successors were mainly graduates and pluralists, and though some resided most employed curates. Edmund Major (rector 1672–85) was succeeded by Luke Beaulieu (1685–1723), a French Huguenot and religious writer who was also chaplain to the judge George Jeffreys and (later) to John Fell, bishop of Oxford.⁹⁵ Samuel Walker (1723–68) lived at Whitchurch House (then the manor house) following his marriage to the widowed Anne Whistler in 1726, an event commemorated by the gift of an inscribed silver almsplate to the church.⁹⁶ Both Andrew Etty (rector 1768–84) and Robert Stebbing (1784–94) were former curates under Walker, and held other livings,⁹⁷ Etty residing at Selbourne (Hants.), and Stebbing at Beaconsfield (Bucks.).⁹⁸ Etty's son James (rector 1794–1805) initially lived with Stebbing at Beaconsfield, where he was curate,⁹⁹ but moved to Whitchurch in 1804 after the rectory house was rebuilt, dying insolvent the following year.¹⁰⁰ Hugh Moises (1805–22) and

⁸⁶ Spencer Pearce, 'Clergy', 139; R.F. Whistler, 'The Annals of an English Family', *Sussex Archaeol. Collns* 35 (1887), pedigree facing p. 60; grave slab in church stating he was rector for 56 years.

⁸⁷ *Alumni Oxon. 1500–1714* (containing some errors); H. Whistler, *Aime at an up-shot for infant baptisme ...* (1653), copy in Bodl.

⁸⁸ *Hearth Tax Oxon.* 5; OHC, F XIV/1, f.22; *ibid.* par. reg. transcript.

⁸⁹ OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 196.210, 199.80.

⁹⁰ Evans, *Ch. Plate*, 178 (dated 1630); although cf. Slatter, *Whitchurch*, 132, claiming that the chalice is hallmarked 1570.

⁹¹ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 173/4/19; *ibid.* par. reg. transcript.

⁹² *VCH Berks.* III, 420–1.

⁹³ H.E. Salter, 'Recusants in Oxfordshire, 1603–33', *OAS Rep.* 69 (1924), 40–8.

⁹⁴ *Compton Census*, ed. Whiteman, 425. For later Catholicism (focused on Mapledurham), below.

⁹⁵ *Alumni Oxon. 1500–1715*; *ODNB*, s.v. Beaulieu.

⁹⁶ *Secker's Visit.* 170; OHC, par. reg. transcript, marriage 1726; Evans, *Ch. Plate*, 179; above, landownership (Whitchurch).

⁹⁷ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. b 70, f. 829; *Alumni Oxon. 1715–1886*.

⁹⁸ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 563, f. 175; c 327, p. 39.

⁹⁹ *Alumni Oxon. 1715–1886*; OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 327, pp. 29, 225.

¹⁰⁰ OHC, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 27, ff. 164–70, 220–1; above (rectory ho.).

the American William Hammond (1823–39) both paid closer attention to the parish, living chiefly at the rectory house. Moises remained resident despite becoming vicar of East Farleigh (Kent) from 1812, and seems not to have employed curates at Whitchurch, while Hammond held no other benefice and served in person.¹⁰¹

Curates besides Etty and Stebbing included Edward Peach, who in 1737 married into the Wallis family of Walliscote,¹⁰² and in 1738 occupied a glebe house (possibly the ‘vicarage’) and received a 40-guinea stipend from the rector.¹⁰³ He was probably succeeded by the writer and translator Richard Graves, a friend of the poet and lord of the manor Anthony Whistler.¹⁰⁴ From c.1771 until his death in 1803 the curacy was held for £50 a year by John Lichfield, who lived at Goring Heath almshouse initially with his father, who was chaplain there. From 1785 Lichfield was almshouse chaplain in his own right, and for much of the time was also rector of Aston Tirrold (Berks.). The succeeding almshouse chaplain, Robert Baker, was curate of Whitchurch in 1804.¹⁰⁵

Such arrangements ensured that the church was reasonably well served, with (by 1738) two Sunday services including one with a sermon, prayers on Wednesdays, Fridays, and holy days, and communion five times a year, rising to seven times in the 1830s. By then communicants numbered 46–71 and the congregation 120–200 (excluding Sunday scholars).¹⁰⁶ An additional charity sermon was preached on St Thomas’s day (21 December) from c.1740, replacing a short-lived Good Friday sermon.¹⁰⁷ Absenteeism was reportedly a problem among the ‘ordinary rank’ throughout the 18th century, although rectors offered no explanation other than apathy.¹⁰⁸ Another factor may have been distance, since by 1834 inhabitants of Whitchurch Hill were more likely to attend the nearer Goring Heath almshouse chapel than their own parish church.¹⁰⁹ Protestant Dissent, which was apparently negligible throughout the 18th century,¹¹⁰ gained a little in strength after 1800, with seven or eight ‘chiefly Baptists’ noted in 1823, and open-air preachers from Reading visiting in 1834.¹¹¹ By contrast Roman Catholicism, focused on the private chapel at Mapledurham, declined

¹⁰¹ *Alumni Oxon. 1715–1886*; OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 573, f. 139; d 579, f. 119; d 581, f. 143; b 39, f. 367. The rectory ho. was again rebuilt in 1835 (above).

¹⁰² OHC, par. reg. transcript, marriage 1736/7; above, landownership (other estates).

¹⁰³ *Secker’s Visit.* 170; above (rectory ho.).

¹⁰⁴ *ODNB*, s.v. Ric. Graves; above, landownership (Whitchurch).

¹⁰⁵ OHC, PAR287/4/F/1, f. 65v.; *ibid.* MSS Oxf. Dioc. b 18, f. 83; d 563, f. 175; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 154, f. 30; above, Goring, relig. hist.

¹⁰⁶ *Secker’s Visit.* 170; OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. b 39, f. 367; b 41, f. 239.

¹⁰⁷ *Secker’s Visit.* 171; OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. d 557, f. 152; above, social hist. (welfare).

¹⁰⁸ e.g. *Secker’s Visit.* 170; OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 557, f. 152; b 18, f. 83.

¹⁰⁹ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. b 39, f. 367; cf. above, social hist. (educ.).

¹¹⁰ e.g. OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. d 557, f. 152; d 565, f. 221, noting one or two ‘Presbyterians’.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* d 581, f. 143; b 39, f. 367.

sharply, the nine Catholics recorded in 1767 and 12 in 1780 dwindling by 1805 to a solitary Frenchman, and none thereafter.¹¹²

Continued Anglican support was reflected in gifts of plate, notably a silver-gilt chalice and paten (both hallmarked 1683) given in memory of Anthony Rider (d. 1677), 'Londoner',¹¹³ and a silver flagon (refashioned as an almsplate in 1885) and cup given by members of the Twysden family of Hardwick in 1725 and 1743.¹¹⁴ Other church possessions in 1759 included two surplices, two communion table covers, and a velvet pulpit cloth and cushion.¹¹⁵ New crimson altar and pulpit cloths were bought in 1814, when the Commandments, Lord's Prayer, and Creed were suitably displayed, the pulpit's sounding board painted, and the royal arms renewed.¹¹⁶ Some changes to church fabric proved controversial. In the 1680s several parishioners complained that the new west gallery was detrimental to worship, since the 'pacing up and down' of those occupying it prevented those sitting beneath from hearing services and sermons.¹¹⁷ Almost 140 years later a second gallery was built in the easternmost north chapel to accommodate the Sunday school children who had previously been seated in the chancel, an arrangement also found to be 'noisy and inconvenient'.¹¹⁸

Since 1840

Later rectors were experienced resident churchmen who mostly served in person. Under Edward Moore (1840–80) the church was enlarged in 1858, increasing accommodation from 219 sittings (including 54 free) to 400 (211 free),¹¹⁹ while a small churchyard extension taken from the rectory garden was consecrated in 1868.¹²⁰ Bishop Wilberforce thought that Moore read 'well, but too dramatically' and that he had 'little hold over the parish',¹²¹ although he nevertheless introduced a second Sunday sermon and monthly communions, presiding over flourishing Sunday schools and a stable congregation which averaged 300–400 over the two

¹¹² *Retn Papists 1767*, 118; OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. b 101, ff. 101, 251; c 327, p. 225; d 573, f. 139; above, Mapledurham, relig. hist. Possibly they were concentrated in the Berkshire part of the parish as earlier.

¹¹³ Evans, *Ch. Plate*, 179; OHC, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 27, ff. 133–4; OHC, par. reg. transcript, burial 1676/7; grave slab in nave.

¹¹⁴ Slatter, *Whitchurch*, 131–3; Evans, *Ch. Plate*, 179–80; above, landownership (Hardwick).

¹¹⁵ OHC, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 27, ff. 133–4.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. PAR287/2/A/1, p. 96.

¹¹⁷ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 29, ff. 74–81v.; c 456, ff. 134–6; ibid. MSS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 27, ff. 131–2; c 33, ff. 364–6.

¹¹⁸ OHC, PAR287/2/A/1, pp. 110–11; cf. *Whitchurch Parish Mag.* (Mar. 1902): copy in OHC, P221/3/PR/1.

¹¹⁹ *Alumni Oxon. 1715–1886*; Bodl. MS Top. Oxon. c 104, f. 469; below (church archit.).

¹²⁰ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2070/1.

¹²¹ *Wilb. Dioc. Bks*, 310.

Sunday services.¹²² He seems, however, to have shown little concern over the new Wesleyan Methodist chapel at Whitchurch Hill, which opened on the Reading circuit in 1849 with seating for 100, and attracted 40 and 50 people to its two Sunday services in 1851.¹²³ Moore died in 1880 aged 87, having in his later years employed Reginald Molyneux as assistant curate, for whom Hillside was built in the village.¹²⁴

John Slatter (1880–99), author of a book on Whitchurch's history,¹²⁵ oversaw the construction and consecration in 1883 of St John's church at Whitchurch Hill, needed both as a chapel of ease for the 'uphill' residents of the parish (in opposition to the Methodist chapel), and as a funerary chapel for the new cemetery which surrounded it, the parish churchyard itself being thenceforth closed to burials.¹²⁶ Soon after the cemetery's opening it was agreed that certain Goring parishioners could also be buried there.¹²⁷ The new church had a single Sunday afternoon service (with sermon) and a monthly communion, and was served by an assistant curate paid £120–£160 out of the rector's income. The curate also oversaw a Sunday school held in the nearby St John's Room (opened in 1889). At the parish church weekly communions and weekday matins services were introduced,¹²⁸ although by the 1890s the congregation was 'stationary', Dissent having allegedly 'rendered some politically opposed to the church'.¹²⁹ By contrast worshippers at the Methodist chapel were occasionally too numerous to fit inside the building, where there was a flourishing Sunday school and choir, although attendance fell away after 1900, and the chapel closed in 1915.¹³⁰

Twentieth-century rectors also resided, although few stayed much more than a decade, with the notable exception of Richard Hughes (1979–2000), author of a church history.¹³¹ Henry Trotter (1899–1914) oversaw improvements at the parish church and introduced extra Sunday services both there and at St John's, resulting in a 'very decided increase' in attendance.¹³² His successor Edward Baverstock (1914–33) placed an old carved crucifix in the parish church in 1916 as a tribute to those serving in the First World

¹²² *Wilb. Visit.* 161; OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 332, f. 461; c 341, f. 468.

¹²³ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 647, ff. 92, 108; *Ch. and Chapel, 1851*, p. 112. Moore made little mention of it in his visitation returns.

¹²⁴ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 335, f. 423; c 344, f. 445; d 761, p. 128; *ibid.* par. reg. transcript, burial 1880; above, landscape etc. (settlement).

¹²⁵ *Alumni Oxon. 1715–1886*; OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2069; Slatter, *Whitchurch*.

¹²⁶ Slatter, *Whitchurch*, 134–5; J.H. Baker, *Whitchurch-on-Thames: The Story of a Thames-side Village* (1956), 32, 34–6; below (church archit.).

¹²⁷ Above, Goring, relig. hist.

¹²⁸ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 350, f. 450; c 362, f. 448; d 761, p. 128; Baker, *Whitchurch*, 36. For St John's Room, above, social hist. (since 1800).

¹²⁹ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 356, f. 446; c 362, f. 448.

¹³⁰ V.M. Ayres and K.J. Sanders, *'As Stupid as Oxen': A History of the Reading and Silchester Methodist Circuit* (1988), 18–19.

¹³¹ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2069; Hughes, *St Mary's Church*.

¹³² OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 368, f. 437; below (church archit.).

War.¹³³ From 1906 the assistant curate lived in a house at Whitchurch Hill (Old Parsonage), built to designs by William Douglas Carøe on land given by John Foster of Coombe Park; after the Second World War the post of curate became redundant, however, and the house was sold in 1968.¹³⁴ In 2003 the parish became part of Langtree united benefice and team ministry, the team rector living in Checkendon, although Whitchurch retained a resident associate priest, and in 2018 weekly services at St Mary's and St John's churches catered for both traditional and family worship. The bell ringers and choir met regularly, and a parish meeting room known as the Old Stables was used for prayer and Bible study groups and other activities.¹³⁵



The former curate's house at Whitchurch Hill (Old Parsonage) (left) and the Coombe Park Roman Catholic chapel before demolition in 2014 (right, courtesy of WGGHS).

From 1950 a Nissen hut forming part of the Coombe Park refugee camp was used as a Roman Catholic chapel, served by a visiting Polish priest from Reading. The chapel moved into a nearby converted house in 1956 and remained in use until the early 1990s, but thereafter it became dilapidated and was demolished in 2014. The chapel bell was transferred to the Sacred Heart Roman Catholic church in Reading.¹³⁶

¹³³ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2069; Baker, *Whitchurch*, 29; inscription on crucifix.

¹³⁴ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2070/2; *ibid.* RDC6/3/Y3/35.

¹³⁵ www.langtreechurches.org; www.whitchurchonthames.com (both accessed Jul. 2018).

¹³⁶ Baker, *Whitchurch*, 48; memories of Anna Szczeponek (2016), at www.whitchurchonthames.com (accessed Jul. 2018).

Church Architecture

St Mary the Virgin, Whitchurch

The present-day parish church is largely the result of Victorian rebuilding, although fragments of the medieval fabric remain. In its current form it comprises chancel with attached south vestry and north chapel; a four-bay nave with south porch and long north aisle, which connects with the chancel's north chapel under a continuous roof; and a substantial, formerly timber-framed west bellcote surmounted by a splay-footed spire. Both the bellcote and spire are now faced with wooden shingles, but the rest is of flint on a stone base, with limestone dressings and a plain tile roof.¹³⁷

The Norman south doorway with naïve stone head (below) and Perpendicular south porch with replica of the medieval stone panel depicting the Rood as the Tree of Life (right).



The 12th-century church was probably a simple structure comprising nave and chancel, the latter narrower than the nave. Parts of the nave's original south wall survive, including the south doorway, which has a Norman arch of two unchamfered orders with a reset naïve carved stone head above. Until the Victorian rebuilding two small Norman

¹³⁷ Unless indicated, this and following based on: Pevsner, *Oxon.* 838–9; NHLE, no. 1059494; 'Church Notes Oxon.', *Archaeol. Jnl* 44 (1887), 400; Parker, *Eccl. Topog.* no. 175; Baker, *Whitchurch*, 21–31; Hughes, *St Mary's Church*; R. Noble (ed. P. Hawley), 'Footprints & Cyphers': *A Collected Edition of Robert Noble's Articles on Whitchurch Village History* (WGHHS, 2001), 106–18. For illustrations before rebuilding, Bodl. MSS Top. Oxon. c 336, f. 176 (exterior from SE, 1801); Top. Gen. c 112, f. 119 (exterior from SSE, c.1840).

windows existed high up in the nave's east wall on either side of the chancel arch,¹³⁸ which may itself have been Norman.¹³⁹ The presence of Decorated and Perpendicular windows in the old church points to 14th- and 15th-century refenestration and possibly a rebuilding of the chancel, together with the addition of two north chapels which were replaced by the single north aisle in 1858. Of those the larger, eastern chapel adjoined the western part of the chancel.¹⁴⁰ The most complete late medieval (probably 15th-century) survivals are the principal timbers of the nave roof and the Perpendicular south porch, which has four-centred inner and outer doorways, the former set into the Norman arch. The outer doorway, with a hoodmould flanked by angels bearing shields, had above it a carved stone panel depicting the Rood as the Tree of Life, now replaced by a modern replica.¹⁴¹ Medieval painted glass of a bishop in the sanctuary window is of unknown provenance but was present c.1810,¹⁴² while glass depicting a Whitchurch miller (with a bow and a quiver of arrows) was observed in the 'middle south window of the church at the bottom' in 1644, but has since been lost.¹⁴³ By 1552 (when three bells were recorded) the church presumably also possessed its timber-framed west bell-turret, which when illustrated in 1801 was painted white and had louvres and a short spire.¹⁴⁴ One bell was broken in 1558, and that or another was repaired in 1577,¹⁴⁵ while in 1624 the ring was increased to five by the Reading bellfounder Ellis Knight.¹⁴⁶

Later changes were largely cosmetic or remedial, although in 1681 the churchwardens erected a wooden west gallery and a ceiling in the nave 'for warmth, hearing, and ornament',¹⁴⁷ prompting disputes with some parishioners.¹⁴⁸ The bell-turret was repaired in 1790 and the treble bell recast,¹⁴⁹ and by 1801 the chancel's east end had been entirely rebuilt in brick presumably at the rector's expense, featuring a plain round-headed east window with a decorative oval of brickwork above.¹⁵⁰ Internally, the south porch was used as a vestry, its outer doorway having been blocked for that purpose,¹⁵¹ and in 1817 a second gallery was erected in the easternmost north chapel, with ten new pews beneath it. Further

¹³⁸ Illustrated in Bodl. MSS Top. Oxon. c 336, f. 176; Top. Gen. c 112, f. 119.

¹³⁹ *PO Dir. Oxon.* (1847); although cf. 'Church Notes Oxon.', 400, describing it as 'modern'.

¹⁴⁰ W. Fletcher, *A Tour Round Reading* (1840), 26; Slatter, *Whitchurch*, 123–4; *Whitchurch Parish Mag.* (Mar. 1902): copy in OHC, P221/3/PR/1; cf. Manning, 'Monumental Brasses', 306.

¹⁴¹ In 2000: below (this section).

¹⁴² Bodl. MS Top. Oxon. b 75, f. 198; cf. Baker, *Whitchurch*, 29, suggesting the bishop is St Birinus.

¹⁴³ BL, Harley MS 965, p. 68 (John Peytowe, possibly the mill lessee Jn Pate).

¹⁴⁴ *Chant. Cert.* 100; Bodl. MS Top. Oxon. c 336, f. 176.

¹⁴⁵ Berks. RO, D/A1/132/131; OHC, PAR287/5/F1/1, f. 43v.

¹⁴⁶ *Ch. Bells Oxon.* IV, 440–2.

¹⁴⁷ *Par. Colln* III, 341; OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 29, ff. 74–81v.; c 456, f. 135.

¹⁴⁸ Above (1660–1840).

¹⁴⁹ OHC, MSS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 27, f. 135; c 112, f. 303; *ibid.* PAR287/4/F1/1, f. 103; *Ch. Bells Oxon.* IV, 440–2.

¹⁵⁰ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon. c 336, f. 176.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.* b 75, f. 178; cf. Fletcher, *Tour*, 26.

repewing in 1818 increased the total number from 32 to 34, clearly all large box pews: only two were not privately owned,¹⁵² and their arrangement was ‘most objectionable, being of all sizes and shapes looking in various directions, but of uniform height and unsightliness’.¹⁵³

The church interior as restored by Henry Woodyer in 1858: the chancel arch and chancel looking east (below) and nave looking west (right), showing the four cast-iron columns inserted in 1863 to support the weight of the bell-turret.



Under the rector Edward Moore the chancel's east end was rebuilt in flint and stone in 1851, with a new three-light east window,¹⁵⁴ and the south doorway was reopened in 1854.¹⁵⁵ A more ambitious restoration costing £3,000 followed in 1858, to designs by Henry Woodyer. The nave arcade was entirely rebuilt in Early English style, featuring moulded arches, while a single buttressed north aisle with geometric and lancet windows replaced the two north chapels, its eastern end incorporating a new north chapel extending part-way alongside the chancel. A vestry was added onto the chancel's south side, and the bell-turret was rebuilt, gaining a clock and a new, taller spire. Internally the chancel arch was rebuilt to include three star-shaped openings, and the chancel itself was ‘beautified’ with floor tiles and a reredos of embossed tiles. In the nave, an octagonal stone font with reticulated tracery around its base replaced a ‘modern’ predecessor, while the box pews and galleries were replaced with oak and deal seating, and the 17th-century ceiling was removed to expose the mostly medieval roof timbers, which were repaired. The various new windows were filled with stained glass by John Hardman & Co. over the following years, while the churchyard

¹⁵² OHC, PAR287/2/A/1, pp. 110–22; *ibid.* P221/3/PR/1.

¹⁵³ *Reading Mercury*, 13 Nov. 1858. The total number of sittings was 211 (above, since 1840).

¹⁵⁴ *Gardner's Dir. Oxon.* (1852); HE Arch., card 5015_017 (ground plan of church, 1857).

¹⁵⁵ *Wilb. Visit.* 162.

lychgate was perhaps also part of Woodyer's scheme.¹⁵⁶ Dry rot proved problematic in the 1860s owing to 'Woodyer's neglect of providing any ventilation',¹⁵⁷ and in 1863 the four oak pillars supporting the bell-turret were replaced with four cast-iron columns made at William Hood's Reading foundry.¹⁵⁸ A sixth bell was added in 1878.¹⁵⁹

A second restoration in 1901 was overseen by the Reading architect S.S. Stallwood, who fitted new tracery and stained glass (both by C.E. Kempe) in the chancel's east window. He also moved the organ (described as 'large and excellent' in 1869) from the nave's west end to the north chapel, where it was rebuilt by J.W. Walker & Sons of London, and was included within a new choir vestry formed by screening off the north chapel from the north aisle. Oak panelling was fitted in the chancel¹⁶⁰ and extended in 1910 and 1948, concealing Woodyer's tiled reredos, which was uncovered in 1997. A carved oak pulpit on a stone base (both by Kempe) was installed in 1910,¹⁶¹ and four of the six bells were recast in 1912, while First and Second World War memorials were painted onto parts of the chancel panelling.¹⁶² Electric organ-blowing equipment was given in the 1940s,¹⁶³ and the north door received an inner porch of timber and glass in 1975. Restoration works in 2000 included conserving and remounting the medieval brasses, and replacing the medieval carving of the Rood in the south porch with a replica by Michael Groser.¹⁶⁴ The original remained on display in the north aisle in 2018.

St John the Baptist, Whitchurch Hill

St John's church was built and consecrated in 1883, on land given the previous year by Charles Lawrence Weare Gardiner of Goring. Designed by Francis Bacon and costing £1,891 to erect and furnish (borne mostly by Gardiner and the rector John Slatter), it is a simple building of flint and stone with tiled roofs and paired lancet windows, comprising chancel and nave in one, with an apsidal east end and a north vestry. Internally the walls are faced with variegated brick, with ornament largely restricted to blind arcading on slender

¹⁵⁶ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon. c 104, f. 469; OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. b 70, f. 829; HE Arch., cards 5015_017; 5015_048 (specification for bell-turret and spire, 1858); 5015_036 (Woodyer's design for font cover, 1858); *Reading Mercury*, 13 Nov. 1858; *The Builder*, 20 Nov. 1858; NHLE, no. 1180663 (lychgate) (accessed online Jul. 2018); *Ch. Bells Oxon.* IV, 440–2; dedicatory inscriptions for stained glass windows. For the previous font, Parker, *Eccl. Topog.* no. 175.

¹⁵⁷ *Wilb. Dioc. Bks*, p. 311.

¹⁵⁸ Noble, *Footprints & Cyphers*, 118.

¹⁵⁹ *Ch. Bells Oxon.* IV, 440–2.

¹⁶⁰ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 2069, faculty, specification, and drawings (1901); c 368, f. 437; *PO Dir. Oxon.* (1869).

¹⁶¹ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2069, faculties (1910, 1948); plaque on pulpit; Hughes, *St Mary's Church*, 99.

¹⁶² *Ch. Bells Oxon.* IV, 440–2.

¹⁶³ Inscription on choir vestry screen.

¹⁶⁴ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2069, faculties (1974, 2000).

columns in the apse, a circular quatrefoil window opening into the vestry, and an octagonal font supported on columns. Stained glass in the apse's east window (triple lancets depicting Christ flanked by St John the Evangelist and St John the Baptist) was given by C.L.W. Gardiner in memory of his parents. The church's 230 sittings (all free) were initially provided on chairs.¹⁶⁵

Re-seating with wooden pews in 1910 was accompanied by the gift of altar rails and choir stalls by Charles Palmer of Bozedown House,¹⁶⁶ who in 1920 paid for an added south porch as a First World War memorial. Timber-framed with herringbone brick infill, that has a steep-pitched tiled roof with a canopy housing a single bell, first cast in 1921 and replaced in 1951. The architect was G.F. Turner,¹⁶⁷ who also designed the churchyard lychgate erected by Palmer's family in his memory in 1938.¹⁶⁸ An organ by J.W. Walker & Sons of London was installed in 1911,¹⁶⁹ and in 1950 wrought-iron gates and panels were added to the altar rails in memory of Whitchurch Hill inhabitants killed in the two World Wars.¹⁷⁰



St John the Baptist, Whitchurch Hill: from the south-west showing the south porch added in 1920 (top left), from the north-east showing the apse and vestry (top right), and interior looking east into the apse (bottom left).

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. c 2070/1, conveyance (1882) and consecration pps (1883); Pevsner, *Oxon.* 839; *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1887 edn); Slatter, *Whitchurch*, 134–5; Baker, *Whitchurch*, 34–6; dedication of apse windows.

¹⁶⁶ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2069, faculty (1910); *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1911 edn).

¹⁶⁷ Tablet inside porch; OHC, RDC6/3/Y1/204; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2069, faculty (1951); *Ch. Bells Oxon.* IV, 442.

¹⁶⁸ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2069, faculty (1938); *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1939 edn).

¹⁶⁹ *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1911 edn); Baker, *Whitchurch*, 35.

¹⁷⁰ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2069, faculties (1930, 1938, 1950, 1957, 1961).