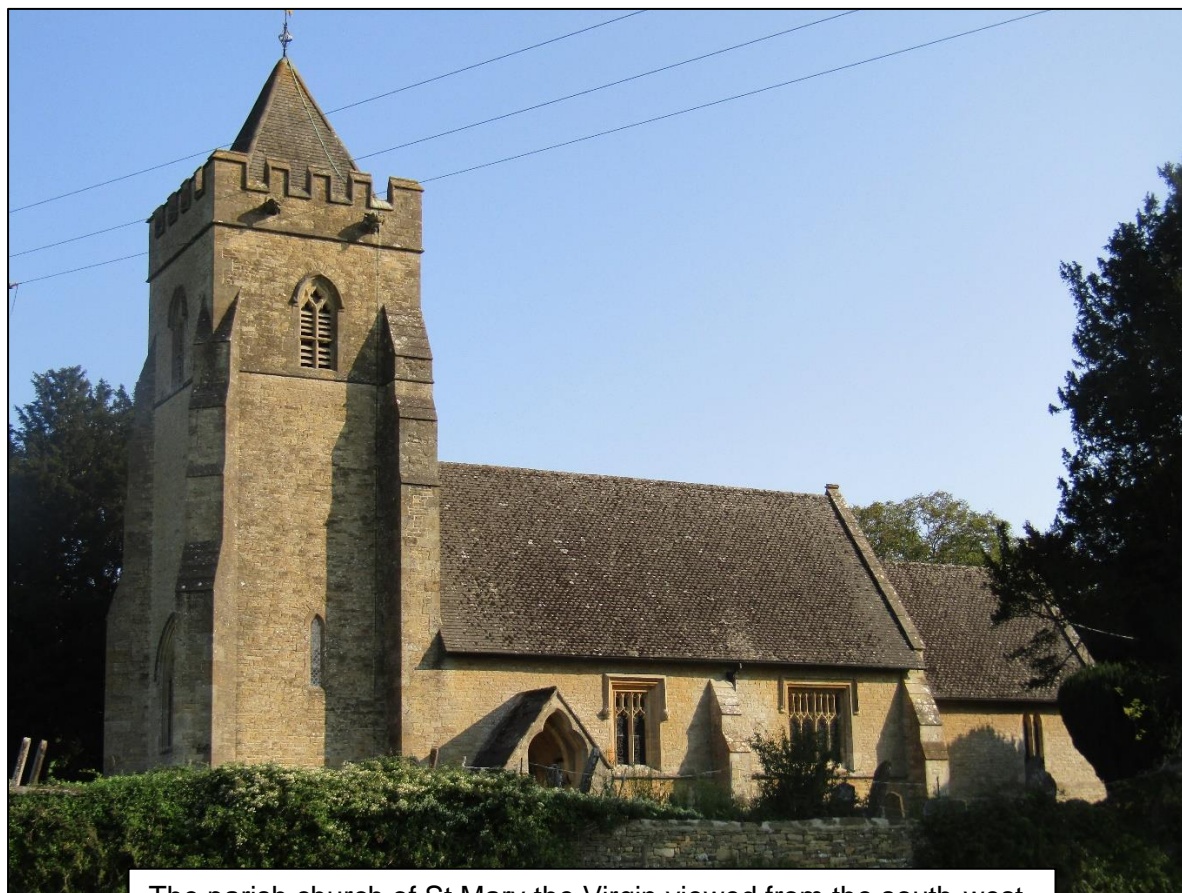




## VCH Oxfordshire Texts in Progress

# Salford

## Religious History



The parish church of St Mary the Virgin viewed from the south-west.

Salford church (restored and enlarged in 1853–4) existed by the 12th century, the living becoming a rectory in the lord's gift until the advowson was sold in or before the 1770s. It was initially very poorly endowed, but from the Middle Ages seems to have been moderately well served by either resident rectors or their chaplains and curates, accommodated in a (sometimes dilapidated) rectory house adjoining the churchyard. In the 19th and 20th centuries the advowson belonged to members of the Nash Skillicorne family, some of whom presented themselves as rectors, whilst others (although non-resident) maintained an interest in the church and were commemorated in the chancel. Protestant Dissent became firmly established only in the early 19th century, a Wesleyan Methodist chapel opening in 1847 and continuing until 1992.

## Church Origins and Parochial Organization

The church was probably founded in the 11th or 12th century by one of the lords of Salford's principal manor, whose successors retained the advowson. By the 1240s (although at first very meagrely endowed) it was an independent rectory with baptismal and presumably burial rights,<sup>1</sup> and its dedication to St Mary the Virgin was established by 1486.<sup>2</sup> The church's status remained unchanged until 1930, when the rectories of Salford and Little Rollright (previously held together in plurality) were combined as a united benefice, and in 1980 that was joined to the benefice of Cornwell and Little Compton (Warws.) with Chastleton, becoming part of an even larger Chipping Norton united benefice in 2001.<sup>3</sup> In 2002 Salford joined a new ecclesiastical parish comprising the 'five villages' of Chastleton, Cornwell, Little Compton, Little Rollright, and Salford,<sup>4</sup> remaining part of Chipping Norton deanery throughout.<sup>5</sup>

## Advowson and Endowment

The patronage descended with the principal manor (and later with the combined manorial estate) from the 13th century until at least 1725,<sup>6</sup> save for a brief period in the late 13th and early 14th century when it was held with a detached portion by relatives of the lord.<sup>7</sup> Patrons occasionally granted single turns to others, including John Hall of South Newington in 1552, Edmund Ansley of Cornwell (who presented in 1562), and John Clarson and Matthew Goodwin, who together presented the latter's son John Goodwin in 1710.<sup>8</sup> In 1770 the advowson was advertised for sale,<sup>9</sup> and between 1779 and 1826 three successive rectors (Lionel Kirkham, Thomas Nash, and Richard Skillicorne) each presented themselves to the living.<sup>10</sup> From Skillicorne (d. 1834) the advowson passed to his son William Nash Skillicorne (d. 1887) of Cheltenham (Glos.),<sup>11</sup> who left it to three trustees: his widow Mary Ann (d. 1914), his son William Nash Skillicorne (d. 1915) of Cheltenham, and the Cheltenham

<sup>1</sup> Below (advowson; endowment; Middle Ages). The font is 12th-cent.: below (church archit.).

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m. Hen. VII*, I, p. 52; cf. OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 178.7.

<sup>3</sup> OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 1992; c 1782/3; *ibid.* DIOC/1/C/6/23/1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* DIOC/1/C/6/23/1; [www.achurchnearyou.com/church/5979/about-us/](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/5979/about-us/) (accessed Sept. 2020).

<sup>5</sup> Lunt (ed.), *Val. Norw.* 311; Youngs, *Admin. Units*, I, 404.

<sup>6</sup> e.g. *Oxon. Fines*, p. 140; *Rot. Grosseteste*, 485; TNA, CP 25/1/293/72, no. 386; *Cal. Inq. p.m. Hen. VII*, I, p. 52; Bodl. MS dd Dawkins, C29/ID1/1–13; above, landownership.

<sup>7</sup> Lincs. Arch. REG/2, f. 151; TNA, CP 25/1/189/14, no. 47; above, landownership.

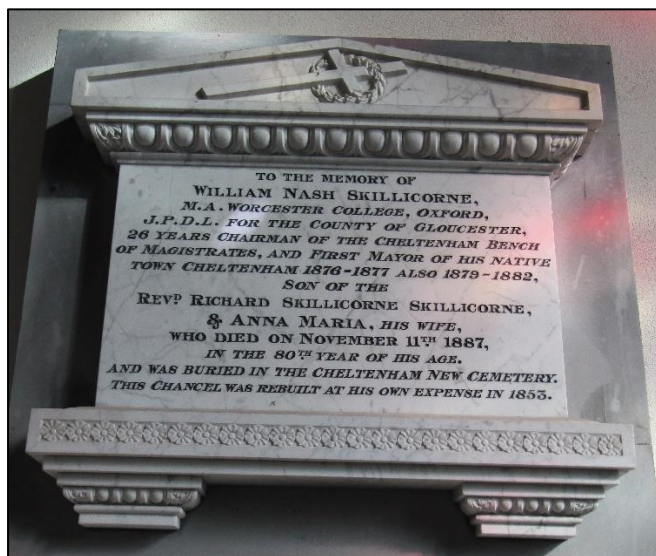
<sup>8</sup> Pearce, 'Clergy', 17, 19; OHC, *Cal. Presentation Deeds*, nos. 73, 599; *ibid.* MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 105, pp. 209, 210, 235; c 2198, no. 2; *Par. Colln* III, 249.

<sup>9</sup> *Reading Mercury*, 6 Aug. 1770; Oxf. Jnl Syn. 15 Aug. 1770; neither vendor nor purchaser is named.

<sup>10</sup> OHC, *Cal. Presentation Deeds*, nos. 600–602; below (relig. life).

<sup>11</sup> *PO Dir. Oxon.* (1847–77); *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1883); L. Wright, 'An Oxfordshire Clerical Family: Eynsham and Salford, 1750–1928', *Eynsham Record* 6 (1989), 26–36; memorials in chancel.

solicitor William Neale Bubb, who was sole patron in 1916<sup>12</sup> and perhaps still in 1924.<sup>13</sup> By 1925 the patronage belonged to Elizabeth Nash Skillicorne of Cheltenham (sister of William d. 1915), who was patron at the union with Little Rollright in 1930. Her share (two turns in three) passed on her death in 1934 to her distant relative Barbara Nash of Martley (Worcs.),<sup>14</sup> on whose death in 1975 her executors transferred her two turns to the bishop.<sup>15</sup>



Memorial commemorating the patron William Nash Skillicorne (d. 1887) and recording that the chancel was rebuilt in 1853 'at his own expense'.

The medieval rectory was among the poorest in the deanery, said to be 'scarcely worth serving' in 1254 when its annual value was only £1 10s.<sup>16</sup> That rose to £2 13s. 4d. by 1341 and £10 13s. 4d. by 1526,<sup>17</sup> but was only £10 0s. 9d. (£9 11s. 1d. clear) in 1535, derived from tithes, oblations, and glebe.<sup>18</sup> By the 1680s the rector's tithes were worth £29 17s. 2d. a year,<sup>19</sup> excluding the Bartletts tithes belonging to Chipping Norton rectory,<sup>20</sup> while the glebe (presumably expanded since the Middle Ages) comprised two open-field yardlands and rights in the commons and lot meadows.<sup>21</sup> At the enclosure of 1696, which was expected to increase tithe income, c.17 a. of poor-quality glebe on Salford hill was

<sup>12</sup> OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1991; memorials in chancel. In 1905 the Revd Thos Miller presented his son and namesake to the rectory as patron for a turn: OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1991; cf. *Oxf. Jnl*, 23 Sept. 1905, 3 Feb. 1906.

<sup>13</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1920–4 edns), naming Wm Nash Bubb presumably in error for Wm Neale Bubb, who lived until 1932: *Cheltenham Chron.* 13 Feb. 1932.

<sup>14</sup> OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1992; *Glos. Echo*, 21 Aug. 1925; *Cheltenham Chron.* 2 March 1935.

<sup>15</sup> OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 1992; c 1782/3; *ibid.* DIOC/1/C/6/23/1.

<sup>16</sup> 'vix valet servitium': Lunt (ed.), *Val. Norw.* 311.

<sup>17</sup> *Nonarum Inquisitiones*, 140; *Subsidy* 1526, 265. There is no *Tax. Eccl.* entry.

<sup>18</sup> *Valor Eccl.* II, 181. For 16th-cent. leases of glebe and tithes, above, social hist. (1500–1800).

<sup>19</sup> OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. b 111, no. 15.

<sup>20</sup> Above, landownership (other estates); cf. *Par. Colln* I, 90; *Secker's Visit.* 44.

<sup>21</sup> OHC, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 41, f. 89; *ibid.* BOR4/36/17D/1.

exchanged for 34 a. of newly enclosed land,<sup>22</sup> and at the later enclosure of 1770 another 24 a. were allotted for glebe and 150 a. for the rector's tithes, along with a 4s. 3d. rent charge.<sup>23</sup>

Immediately after enclosure the glebe totalled 213 a.,<sup>24</sup> increased to 221 a. by 1808 perhaps through purchases by the rector Thomas Nash.<sup>25</sup> From 1785 or earlier the land was mostly leased as a single farm, for which Parsonage or Rectory Farmhouse was erected some time after 1808;<sup>26</sup> that was sold with 194 a. in 1918 after a period of sequestration, leaving 14 a. of glebe in 1929.<sup>27</sup> The rectory's total income (£300 gross in 1814 and £251 net in 1842)<sup>28</sup> came almost entirely from glebe in 1896, yielding £313 gross.<sup>29</sup> Net income fell to £192 in 1924, but rose to £300 in 1931 following the union with Little Rollright, and to £642 in 1967.<sup>30</sup>

## Rectory House

A parsonage house was mentioned in 1637, standing probably just east of the churchyard on the site of its surviving 19th-century successor.<sup>31</sup> In the 1660s it was taxed on four hearths, and in 1686 it contained six bays, the curtilage including a large walled garden, a five-bayed barn, and a four-bayed stable.<sup>32</sup> The house itself was 'very ancient', however, and in the 1690s the rector Alexander Charnelhouse was repeatedly pressed to undertake urgent repairs.<sup>33</sup> His successor John Goodwin (1710–25) replaced it with a 'very good' house built at his 'sole charge',<sup>34</sup> but by 1783 (after a period let to tenants) that too was 'much out of repair', its 'ruinous and uninhabitable state' causing the rector Thomas Nash (instituted in 1800) at first to live elsewhere.<sup>35</sup> Following failed efforts in 1804–5 to purchase the empty Salford House, Nash instead rebuilt the rectory house, which was completed in 1809 after

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2198, no. 2; above, econ. hist.

<sup>23</sup> OHC, Chipping Norton & Salford enclo. award.

<sup>24</sup> Salford survey, 1771 (photocopy in possession of Joy Timms, Salford).

<sup>25</sup> OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 449, f. 32 and v.; ibid. c 2289; articles of agreement 28 Aug. 1801 (in possession of Joy Timms). Cf., however, OHC, QSD/L/233, which suggests that Nash leased his acquired land separately from the glebe farm.

<sup>26</sup> OHC, QSD/L/233; above, landscape etc. (settlement).

<sup>27</sup> OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 1991–2; *Sale Cat., Parsonage Farm* (1919): copy in possession of Joy Timms; below (since 1800).

<sup>28</sup> OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. b 31, f. 1; *Lewis, Topog. Dict. England* (1842 edn), IV, 4.

<sup>29</sup> OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 362, f. 354.

<sup>30</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1924–39 edns); *Crockford's Clerical Dir.* (1967–8), 1712.

<sup>31</sup> OHC, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 13, f. 211; below.

<sup>32</sup> TNA, E 179/255/4; *Hearth Tax Oxon.* 166; OHC, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 41, f. 89.

<sup>33</sup> OHC, MSS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 23, ff. 129v.–130; c 25, ff. 96v., 99; c 33, f. 202; ibid. MS Oxf. Dioc. c 456, ff. 25–28.

<sup>34</sup> *Par. Colln*, III, 249. For an undated plan possibly showing the new ho., OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 456, f. 28.

<sup>35</sup> Oxf. Jnl Syn. 14 Oct. 1775; OHC, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 97, ff. 34–6, 50–4; ibid. MS Oxf. Dioc. c 429, f. 109; below (since 1800).



delays attributed to the area's lack of 'workmen and experienced tradesmen'.<sup>36</sup> The building is in Georgian style, with 2½ storeys, a hipped blue slate roof, and four symmetrical chimneys, its stuccoed south front featuring a moulded eaves cornice, three bays of sash windows, and a central doorway with a fluted frieze and fanlight.<sup>37</sup> Few alterations were made before 1975, when it was sold and became a private house.<sup>38</sup>



The former rectory house (Old Rectory) built for Thomas Nash and completed in 1809.

## Religious Life

### *The Middle Ages*

Salford's first recorded rector was Martin de Swafham, instituted in 1245 when still only in subdeacon's orders.<sup>39</sup> William Jordan 'of Witney', who may have held land in Salford by military service, exchanged the benefice in 1306 with the vicar of Witney Richard Lambert,<sup>40</sup> who in 1323 was licensed to study for two years and to farm the benefice; he was succeeded the following year, however, by the graduate John de Hornle, an experienced churchman who had previously been rector of Cornwell, and who in 1337 exchanged benefices with John de Lee, rector of Nuneham Courtenay.<sup>41</sup> Later medieval rectors were

<sup>36</sup> OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 429, ff. 47, 109; c 657, f. 17; c 658, ff. 64, 68; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 97, f. 72 For Salford Ho., above, landownership.

<sup>37</sup> NHLE, no. 1367830; Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 450.

<sup>38</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, 24 May 1975; *Daily Telegraph*, 11 Jun. 1975.

<sup>39</sup> *Rot. Grosseteste*, 485.

<sup>40</sup> Lincs. Arch. REG/2, f. 151; *VCH Oxon.* XIV, 133; *Feudal Aids*, IV, 161 (a third of a knight's fee held by Wm of Witney).

<sup>41</sup> *Reg. Burghersh*, II, 92; III, 32; Emden, *OU Reg. to 1500*, II, 966.

mostly non-graduates, presumably reflecting the living's poverty.<sup>42</sup> Exceptions were John Compton (who resigned as rector in 1424), and possibly Thomas Harrison (rector 1456–68), who studied canon law at Oxford University.<sup>43</sup> Harrison's successor John Jakes received an annual pension of 5 marks (£3 6s. 8d.) on his resignation in 1482.<sup>44</sup>



Salford's two medieval cross bases: in the churchyard (left) and near Chapel Lane (right).

Records of assistant clergy are few, although a chaplain named Martin 'atte Grene' of Salford acquired property in Oxford in the 1330s, and by his will (proved in the plague year of 1349) requested burial with the Friars Minors in Oxford and left 12*d.* to the roofers of Salford church.<sup>45</sup> In 1526 the curate John Domvile (serving under Richard Maurice, rector 1523–36) received a £5 6*d.* 8*d.* stipend,<sup>46</sup> and other curates (Thomas Hargrave and John Boulter) were mentioned in 1530 and 1531.<sup>47</sup> Alterations to the church throughout the medieval period (including addition of a west tower and clerestory) imply investment by parishioners,<sup>48</sup> and two late medieval stone crosses in the parish (one in the churchyard and

<sup>42</sup> e.g. *Reg. Chichele*, I, 332; Lincs. Arch. REG/IX, f. 273v.; REG/XI, f. 334v.; REG/XVII, f. 59v.; REG/XX, f. 244; REG/22, f. 222v., 230.

<sup>43</sup> Emden, *OU Reg. to 1500*, I, 475; II, 881; Lincs. Arch. REG/20, f. 230v. (calling Harrison only *dominus*).

<sup>44</sup> Lincs. Arch. REG/20, f. 244; REG/22, f. 222v.

<sup>45</sup> Bodl. MS Chart. Oxon. a 1 (also mentioning his 'little daughter'); J.H.S. Johnson (ed.), *Salford: More History of a Cotswold Village* (Salford Hist. Group, 1985), 20; cf. *VCH Oxon.* II, 122–37.

<sup>46</sup> *Subsidy 1526*, 265; for Maurice, Lincs. Arch. REG/26, f. 178; REG/27, f. 194v.

<sup>47</sup> *Visit. Dioc. Linc.* II, 46; OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 178.56.

<sup>48</sup> Below (church archit.).

the other in the village, of which only stumps and their bases survive) perhaps indicate communal processions.<sup>49</sup> Two parishioners in 1529 and 1531 left (respectively) a cow to the church for masses, and money for the church bells and for a trental of masses at Oxford Blackfriars,<sup>50</sup> while in 1530 an Over Norton man held lands given to support a lamp before the crucifix in Salford church, although he was refusing to pay.<sup>51</sup>

### ***The Reformation to 1800***

Richard Maurice was deprived for unknown reasons in 1536,<sup>52</sup> to be succeeded by the non-resident Matthew Smith (d. 1548), canon and prebendary of Lincoln cathedral and first principal of Brasenose College, Oxford.<sup>53</sup> His curate at Salford was Richard Allmark, who later became rector (1552–61), and to whom Smith left a featherbed and ‘half a quarter’s wages’ of 14s. 2d., implying an annual stipend of £5 13s. 4d.<sup>54</sup>

Lands worth 2s. a year given for maintenance of a lamp were seized in 1548,<sup>55</sup> followed presumably by other church goods and images. Allmark weathered the religious changes of the 1550s, however, and subscribed to the Elizabethan religious settlement, dying in post and requesting burial in his native Wigginton.<sup>56</sup> Of five further rectors known before 1710,<sup>57</sup> all resided save for John Gilbert (1625–60), who visited Salford only three or four times a year, employed curates, and claimed to arrange alms-giving.<sup>58</sup> William Wincott (1600–24) was sued in 1603 by the vicar of his former parish of Feckenham (Worcs.) for the cost of repairs to its vicarage house,<sup>59</sup> and from 1689 the long-serving Alexander Charnelhouse (1660–1710) was repeatedly in conflict with his churchwarden John Kite, who presented him in the church court for offences including conducting a clandestine marriage, stopping up a church way, and failure to repair the parsonage house.<sup>60</sup> In 1700 the rectory was sequestrated, perhaps remaining so until Charnelhouse’s death.<sup>61</sup> Charnelhouse

<sup>49</sup> NHLE, nos. 1200226; 1300850; Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 450; B.J. Marples, ‘The Medieval Crosses of Oxfordshire’, *Oxoniensia* 38 (1973), 308.

<sup>50</sup> OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 178.7; 178.56; *VCH Oxon.* II, 120.

<sup>51</sup> *Visit. Dioc. Linc.* II, 46.

<sup>52</sup> Lincs. Arch. REG/27, f. 194v.

<sup>53</sup> Emden, *OU Reg. 1501–40*, 523–4; *Fasti 1300–1541*, I, 32; *VCH Oxon.* III, 208, 214; OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 179.276.

<sup>54</sup> OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 179.276; 179.288; Pearce, ‘Clergy’, 17–18.

<sup>55</sup> *Chant. Cert.* 37. Perhaps that mentioned in 1530: above (Middle Ages).

<sup>56</sup> Pearce, ‘Clergy’, 17–18; OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 184.24.

<sup>57</sup> Those not mentioned below were John Green (1562–93) and Lawrence Hill (1593–1600): Pearce, ‘Clergy’, 18–19. For residence, Peel, *Register*, II, 135; OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 191.50, 30/3/25.

<sup>58</sup> OHC, Cal. Presentation Deeds, nos. 73–4; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 13, f. 211. For curates, *ibid.* MS Wills Oxon. 199.369; TNA, PROB 11/255/277 (Jn Norgrove); *Prot. Retns*, 97 (Wm Roberts).

<sup>59</sup> Pearce, ‘Clergy’, 19; *Oxf. Ch. Ct Deposits 1603–6*, pp. 8–9.

<sup>60</sup> OHC, Cal. Presentation Deeds, nos. 74, 599; *ibid.* MSS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 23, ff. 129v.–130; c 24, f. 68; c 33, ff. 196–203.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* MSS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 24, f. 106; c 25, ff. 96v., 99.

likened his congregation to 'sheep ... exceeding subject to stray', though in the 1670s–80s he claimed there were no Dissenters (Protestant or Catholic) among them.<sup>62</sup>

Subsequent 18th-century rectors were all Oxford graduates,<sup>63</sup> John Goodwin (1710–25) suffering sequestration of the rectory in 1722 because of his debts.<sup>64</sup> His successor Richard Plasted served the parish mostly unassisted for 54 years until his death in 1779, requesting burial 'under the communion table'.<sup>65</sup> Throughout that period he maintained two Sunday services including one with a sermon, along with Lenten catechism and three or four communions a year, attracting 12–20 communicants.<sup>66</sup> Lionel Kirkham (1779–1800) held the livings of Heythrop and (from 1788) Tadmarton in plurality with Salford,<sup>67</sup> and at first was usually absent. His curates included William Somerscales (d. 1781) and John Roberts (fl. 1785), who received £45–£50 for serving Salford and Heythrop, and both also served Little Rollright. Kirkham later generally resided, although he was twice presented by the churchwardens for neglect of duty following reduction to a single Sunday service in 1789,<sup>68</sup> and the same year he only narrowly avoided sequestration for debt, reaching an agreement with his creditors for staged repayments.<sup>69</sup> Dissent remained small-scale under Plasted, with only one or two Catholics or Quakers (including the miller) noted at any one time.<sup>70</sup> Under Kirkham, however, three Salford houses were licensed for Nonconformist meetings c.1797–9, probably by Methodists.<sup>71</sup>

Around 1720 the church was 'neat but small',<sup>72</sup> and lack of space caused friction in 1716 when the yeoman George Wheeler applied to erect a private pew. Twelve leading parishioners (including Sir James Chamberlayne of Salford House) petitioned the bishop to reject the application, pointing out that Wheeler already had four seats 'seldom used by his own family', that the new pew would require removal of seats around the font designated for the poor, and that a gallery constructed for the poor only a few years earlier had been appropriated by wealthier parishioners for their own burgeoning households. Pressure was exacerbated by the nine Bartletts households, which attended Salford rather than Chipping Norton church. Nevertheless, a faculty was granted.<sup>73</sup> Cramped conditions presumably

<sup>62</sup> *Bp Fell and Nonconf.* pp. xxxiii, 28–9; *Compton Census*, ed. Whiteman, 422.

<sup>63</sup> *Alum. Oxon. 1500–1714*, II, 585; *1715–1886*, II, 799; III, 1121.

<sup>64</sup> OHC, Cal. Presentation Deeds, no. 599; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2261, item a; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 138, ff. 2–4.

<sup>65</sup> OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. d 560, f. 21; TNA, PROB 11/1050/260; memorial in chancel.

<sup>66</sup> *Secker's Visit.* 129; OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 557, f. 1; d 560, f. 21; d 563, f. 21.

<sup>67</sup> D. McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy 1777–1869* (1960), 49.

<sup>68</sup> OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 327, pp. 109–10; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 97, f. 43; *ibid.* MS Wills Oxon. 109.59; above, Little Rollright, relig. hist.

<sup>69</sup> OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 2289, nos. 9–10.

<sup>70</sup> *Secker's Visit.* 129; OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 557, f. 1; d 560, f. 21; d 563, f. 21.

<sup>71</sup> OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 644, ff. 40, 44, 49; below (since 1800).

<sup>72</sup> *Par. Colln* III, 249.

<sup>73</sup> OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 105, ff. 35–36; c 456, f. 30.



persisted in 1755, when repairs ordered by the archdeacon included repainting the Sentences and Ten Commandments and providing a new font cover and parish register,<sup>74</sup> the old register having apparently been destroyed by fire.<sup>75</sup>

### **Since 1800**

In 1800 the patron Thomas Nash, a doctor of divinity, presented himself to the living, but although occasionally resident after rebuilding the rectory house in 1806–9, he lived mostly elsewhere, either at his other benefices of Eynsham, Great Witcombe (Glos.), and Chelmarsh (Salop.),<sup>76</sup> or (more often) on his own estate at Forthampton (Glos.).<sup>77</sup> Until 1808 he engaged the vicar of Chipping Norton (Thomas Evans) to serve Salford at £30 a year,<sup>78</sup> and from 1811 was assisted by his son Richard Skillicorne, who had changed his surname by royal licence in 1803 in order to inherit the Cheltenham spa developed by his grandfather. Skillicorne was licensed in 1814 with a £50 stipend and use of the rectory house with 12 a. of land,<sup>79</sup> and on his father's death in 1826 presented himself to the rectory, continuing as Salford's rector and Little Rollright's curate until his own death in 1834.<sup>80</sup> A Sunday school was established in 1827,<sup>81</sup> but for most of those 34 years the church was served only once on Sunday (sometimes twice in summer), with four communions a year, and fewer than 20 communicants.<sup>82</sup>

Combined with Nash's absences, that pattern probably contributed to increasing Dissent. A few 'innocent and industrious' Quakers from the parish attended meetings in Chipping Norton in the 1800s–1810s, and Chipping Norton Methodists held licenced worship in Salford itself by 1801, although Nash conceded that they 'behave themselves peacefully and often attend Divine Service'.<sup>83</sup> A small purpose-built Wesleyan chapel on the Chipping Norton circuit opened in what became Chapel Lane in 1847, constructed of rubblestone and slate and with tall sash windows. Its congregations on Census Sunday in 1851 numbered 40

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. d 13, f. 14.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. par. reg. transcript.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. Cal. Presentation Deeds, no. 601; *Alum. Oxon. 1715–1886*; *VCH Oxon.* XII, 149; McClatchey, *Oxon. Clergy*, 54, 58; above (rectory ho.).

<sup>77</sup> OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 429, ff. 47, 109; c 657, f. 17; d 577, f. 70; d 581, f. 60; *VCH Glos.* VIII, 203.

<sup>78</sup> OHC, par. reg. transcript; ibid. MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 327, p. 278; d 567, f. 79; above, Chipping Norton, relig. hist.

<sup>79</sup> OHC, par. reg. transcript; ibid. MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 97, f. 83; ibid. MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 705, f. 231; c 2289, no. 8; *London Gaz.* 3 May 1803, p. 526; J. Hodsdon, 'Sea and Spa: The Two Careers of Captain Henry Skillicorne (1678/9–1763)', *Trans. Bristol & Glos. Archaeol. Soc.* 136 (2018), 261.

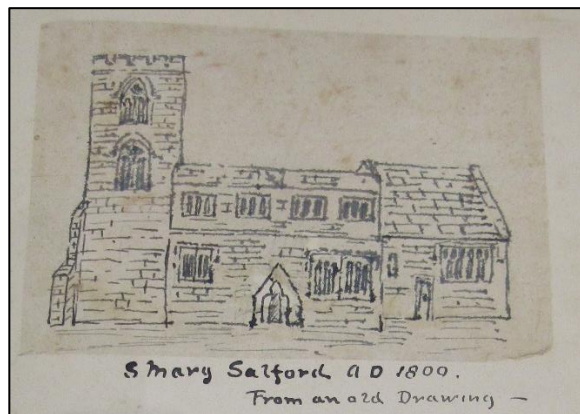
<sup>80</sup> OHC, Cal. Presentation Deeds, nos. 602–3; TNA, PROB 11/1843/162; memorial in chancel.

<sup>81</sup> *Happenings in a Victorian Cotswold Village* (Salford Hist. Group, 1982), 4; OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. b 38, f. 164.

<sup>82</sup> OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. b 38, f. 164; d 567, f. 79; d 571, f. 69; d 573, f. 65; d 577, f. 40.

<sup>83</sup> OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 327, p. 278; d 571, f. 69; d 573, f. 65; d 577, f. 70; c 646, f. 183; above, social. hist. (since 1800).

in the afternoon and 61 in the evening, comparable to those at the parish church, which had 48 in the morning and 72 in the afternoon, including 19–20 Sunday school children.<sup>84</sup> A 'room' used by Primitive Methodists was mentioned in 1869.<sup>85</sup>



Left: the former Wesleyan Methodist chapel (Old Chapel), opened in 1847 and closed in 1992. Right: sketch of Salford church 'AD 1800 from an old drawing' (before restoration) by the rector Richard Nash Bricknell c.1880. Source: OHC, PAR227/10/MS/2.

The rector by then was William Stevens (1834–70), who held Little Rollright in plurality from 1836,<sup>86</sup> but resided and served in person for almost three decades. In 1854 he oversaw the church's restoration and enlargement, which created c.200 sittings of which 100 were free.<sup>87</sup> In 1863, however, his longstanding and increasingly scandalous alcoholism caused the bishop to threaten him with removal,<sup>88</sup> and thereafter he left his parishes in the care of the resident curate De Lisle de Beauvoir Dobrée, who introduced a night school and monthly communions (for which he procured new plate).<sup>89</sup>

Following Stevens' death William Nash Skillicorne presented his nephew Richard Nash Bricknell (rector 1871–90), who kept a diary throughout his incumbency, started a register of churchings (for women after childbirth), and for seven years was also Little Rollright's curate.<sup>90</sup> He was succeeded by Charles Cotterill Ward (1890–1905), a deeply divisive figure whose removal was demanded in 1892 in a letter written by the lord William

<sup>84</sup> *Ch. and Chapel, 1851*, pp. 86–7; HER, PRN 4075; C. Stell, *Inv. Nonconf. Chapels and Meeting Houses in Central Eng.* (1986), 180.

<sup>85</sup> OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 335, f. 335.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* Cal. Presentation Deeds, no. 603; McClatchey, *Oxon. Clergy*, 69.

<sup>87</sup> OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. b 41, f. 190; *Wilb. Visit.* 124; TNA, RG 9/912; *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1883); below (church archit.).

<sup>88</sup> *Wilb. Dioc. Bks.* 265; *Wilb. Letter Bks.* 392; above, Little Rollright, relig. hist.

<sup>89</sup> OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 332, f. 374; c 335, f. 335; *ibid.* PAR227/10/MS/1, f. 4v.; Evans, *Ch. Plate*, 149.

<sup>90</sup> OHC, PAR227/10/MS/2, ff. 1v.–2, 55; *Happenings*, 1, 5, 24; cf. Wright, 'Oxon. Clerical Fam.'. The register of churchings (OHC, PAR227/1/R10/1) was kept up until 1891 with a further eight entered between 1920 and 1927.

Dawkins and signed by 50 parishioners, detailing his misconduct and describing him as ‘a constant source of ill feeling and an object of dislike and contempt’.<sup>91</sup> Meanwhile Protestant Nonconformity remained strong, and was buoyed by itinerant preachers, one of whom pitched his tent in Salford for a month in 1880.<sup>92</sup> From 1897 some Methodist burials were in the parish churchyard (the funerals conducted by Methodist ministers),<sup>93</sup> although in 1892 Ward was accused of withholding charitable relief to two parishioners solely because they were chapel-goers.<sup>94</sup>

From 1908 Little Rollright was held in plurality with Salford.<sup>95</sup> Thomas Miller (rector 1905–14), whose wife played the organ and ran the morning Sunday school, was succeeded by Arthur Callis (1914–28), a former headmaster who kept up the weekly communions introduced by Miller.<sup>96</sup> Between 1916 and 1918 the rectory was sequestrated to recover £348 in debts, however, Callis being allowed only £130 from the £225 net annual income. Edwin Strand (1928–48) presided at four services each Sunday in 1929, when evensong attracted 20–50 people, and in 1930 he became the first incumbent of the new Salford and Little Rollright benefice.<sup>97</sup> His successor Thomas Hyslop (1948–75)<sup>98</sup> did ‘splendid work in rescuing Salford from a condition of extreme neglect and feebleness’,<sup>99</sup> and following intensive fundraising the church was reroofed and repaired, and the organ restored.<sup>100</sup>

From 1975 Salford no longer had resident clergy, and from 1980 the parish was included in ever larger benefices,<sup>101</sup> Sunday worship in 2021 comprising a monthly communion service with hymns.<sup>102</sup> The Wesleyan chapel, whose minister William Kyle shared the rectory house with Hyslop from 1954,<sup>103</sup> closed in 1992, when the building was sold for conversion into a house.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>91</sup> OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1991, presentations (1890, 1905), letters (1892).

<sup>92</sup> OHC, PAR227/10/MS/2, f. 25; *Happenings*, 15.

<sup>93</sup> OHC, par. reg. transcript.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1991, letter 31 Oct. 1892.

<sup>95</sup> *Oxf. Jnl*, 8 Feb. 1908; above, Little Rollright, relig. hist.

<sup>96</sup> OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1991, presentations; *Gore's Visit.* 268–9, 519–20; cf. OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 368, f. 339.

<sup>97</sup> OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 1991, sequestration pps (1916–18), presentation (1928); c 1992, letter of 1929, order in council (1930), presentation (1948).

<sup>98</sup> *Crockford's Clerical Dir.* (accessed online Nov. 2020), s.v. Thos Hyslop.

<sup>99</sup> Letter from bp of Dorchester (17 March 1950) in VCH Oxon. files.

<sup>100</sup> *Church Times*, 29 Dec. 1950; *Oxf. Times*, 1 June 1962; below (church archit.).

<sup>101</sup> Above (paroch. organizn; rectory ho.).

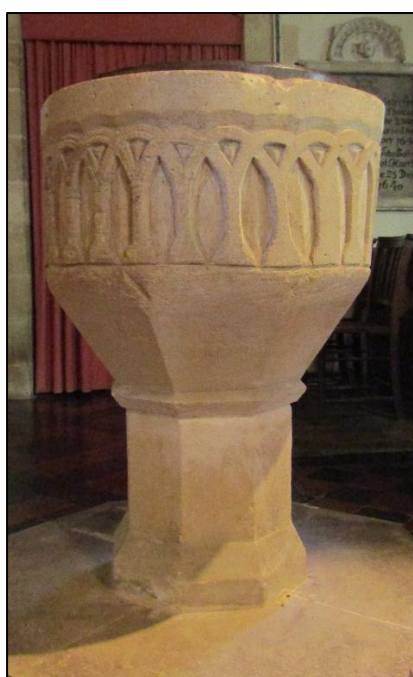
<sup>102</sup> [www.stmaryscnorton.com](http://www.stmaryscnorton.com) (accessed May 2021).

<sup>103</sup> *Banbury Advertiser*, 28 July 1954.

<sup>104</sup> OHC, NM1/28/A1/1–3; NM1/28/D/1.

## Church Architecture

Salford church was largely rebuilt in the 1850s, retaining or reusing much medieval fabric. In its present-day form it is a moderate-sized building of local rubblestone with ashlar dressings and tiled roofs, comprising two-bay chancel with 19th-century north vestry, three-bay nave with south porch and 19th-century north aisle, and west tower.<sup>105</sup> The present concrete roof tiles replace earlier stone slates. The building began probably as a small 12th-century church comprising chancel and aisleless nave, which was altered and perhaps extended eastwards c.1300. The south porch was added around the same time, the west tower in the late 14th century, and new windows and a (now lost) nave clerestory in the 15th or early 16th century.



Surviving Norman features: the font with intersecting blind arcading (left); and the tympanum with hoodmould over the north aisle doorway (below).



Surviving Norman features include a round limestone font carved with intersecting Romanesque blind arcading, set on a later octagonal base. Broadly contemporary are the north and south nave doorways (both moved to their present locations in 1854), of which perhaps only the shafts and scalloped capitals are original on the south side. The north doorway, now reset in the north aisle, has a tympanum with an encircled Maltese cross flanked by a lion and a centaur, and a hoodmould terminating in beasts' heads. The 'small, plain Norman' chancel arch has not survived. The chancel itself was altered and possibly

<sup>105</sup> This and following paragraph based on: NHLE, no. 1053310 (accessed Sept. 2020); Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 449; Parker, *Eccl. Topog.* no. 82; *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1883 and later edns); *Oxf. Jnl*, 2 July 1892. For a SE view in 1821, Bodl. MS Top. Oxon. a 68, no. 441.



extended c.1300, when a cusped low-side window was inserted in the south-western corner, and the nave's stone-roofed south porch (also moved in 1854) is of similar date, with a trefoil-arched entrance. The late 14th-century battlemented and buttressed west tower (originally of three stages) has a north-east stair turret and mostly Decorated windows, those in the belfry of two lights with trefoil heads, and those in the west wall of three lights with reticulated tracery. The chancel's similar Victorian three-light east window may have copied a medieval original. Before restoration, the church also had several square-headed Perpendicular windows with hoodmoulds, including a row of three on the south side of the nave in the now lost clerestory. Two similar windows survive in the nave south wall.

Church bells were mentioned in 1531 and six bellringers in 1601, though the present ring of five bells was cast in 1687 by Henry and Matthew Bagley.<sup>106</sup> A church clock existed by 1727,<sup>107</sup> but otherwise few significant changes were made in the 17th and 18th centuries. Repairs to stonework, windows, floors, and roofs ('in many places') were ordered in 1755,<sup>108</sup> but in 1826 both nave and chancel were 'in a bad state', and by 1843 the roof suffered partial decay and the bells were unfit for use.<sup>109</sup>

A major two-part restoration was carried out in 1853–4 to designs by G.E. Street. Chancel repairs in 1853, paid for by the patron William Nash Skillicorne, introduced a new scissor-braced roof, a new tiled floor, and a pointed north doorway opening into a new lean-to vestry, while a priest's doorway and four-light Perpendicular window in the south wall were removed. The rest of the church was restored in 1854 at a cost of £1,845, of which £80 came from grants. Most of the walls were rebuilt and some medieval features moved, including windows, both Norman doorways, and the south porch. The Perpendicular nave clerestory was replaced with a lower, steeper-pitched king-post roof, and the nave's north wall was pierced to create a three-bay arcade with two round columns in Early English style, opening into a low north aisle lit by paired trefoil-headed windows. The tower was rebuilt and crowned with a pyramidal roof, some windows being removed and its three stages converted into two, while new, pointed tower and chancel arches were constructed. Box pews and galleries in the nave and tower made way for low bench pews and an octagonal stone pulpit, the nave floor was newly tiled, and two 17th-century memorials were reset in the new north aisle.<sup>110</sup>

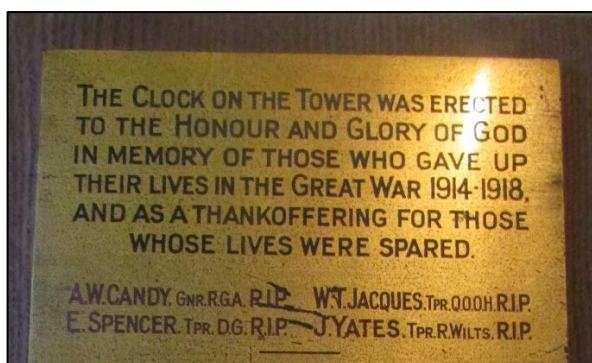
<sup>106</sup> OHC, MSS Wills Oxon 178.56, 191.50; *Ch. Bells Oxon.* IV, 365–6.

<sup>107</sup> OHC, PAR227/5/A1/1, f. 12.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. d 13, f. 14.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. c 97, f. 106; c 42, f. 147 and v.

<sup>110</sup> NHLE, no. 1053310; Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 449; *Oxf. Jnl*, 2 July 1892; OHC, PAR227/11/F1/1; *ibid.* MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 748, f. 100v.; d 794, f. 71; memorial in chancel to W.N. Skillicorne (d. 1887).



The church interior: nave and north aisle (top left), chancel (top right), and upper part of the brass Roll of Honour (bottom left).

In 1873 William Nash Skillicorne fitted the chancel's east window with stained glass by Hardman & Co. (commemorating his parents, the rector Richard Skillicorne and his wife), and in 1875 a pipe organ by Nicholson of Worcester was installed at a cost of £80.<sup>111</sup> The nave's south-east window received stained glass by Jones & Willis in 1901,<sup>112</sup> and in 1920 a tower clock and brass Roll of Honour were erected as First World War memorials.<sup>113</sup> A Second World War memorial tablet was unveiled in 1951.<sup>114</sup> In 1948 the incoming rector Thomas Hyslop arrived to find the church roof full of holes and the organ unplayable; the roof was fixed in 1949 (when heating and electric lighting were also installed), and the organ was restored in 1951.<sup>115</sup> Later alterations were mostly remedial, save for stained glass (by Powell & Sons) fitted in the nave's south-west window in 1960.<sup>116</sup> All five bells were retuned and rehung in 1990, having been out of action for 50 years.<sup>117</sup> The churchyard was extended four times between 1876 and 1937.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>111</sup> OHC, PAR227/10/MS/2, ff. 7, 12; *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1903); *Happenings*, 6–7.

<sup>112</sup> *Oxf. Jnl*, 13 Apr. 1901.

<sup>113</sup> OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1991, faculty; *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1920).

<sup>114</sup> OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1992, faculty.

<sup>115</sup> *Oxf. Times*, 1 June 1962; OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1992, faculties.

<sup>116</sup> OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 1992, faculties 1954–72; c 1782/3, faculties 1986–2000.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.* c 1782/3, faculty (1989); *Oxf. Mail*, 7 March 1990.

<sup>118</sup> *Happenings*, 8, 15; OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 1991, deeds of 1879, 1902; c 1992, deed of 1937.