

St Mary the Virgin Church, Addington

– Church History

(Based on guidebook written by David Critchley – see end for details.)



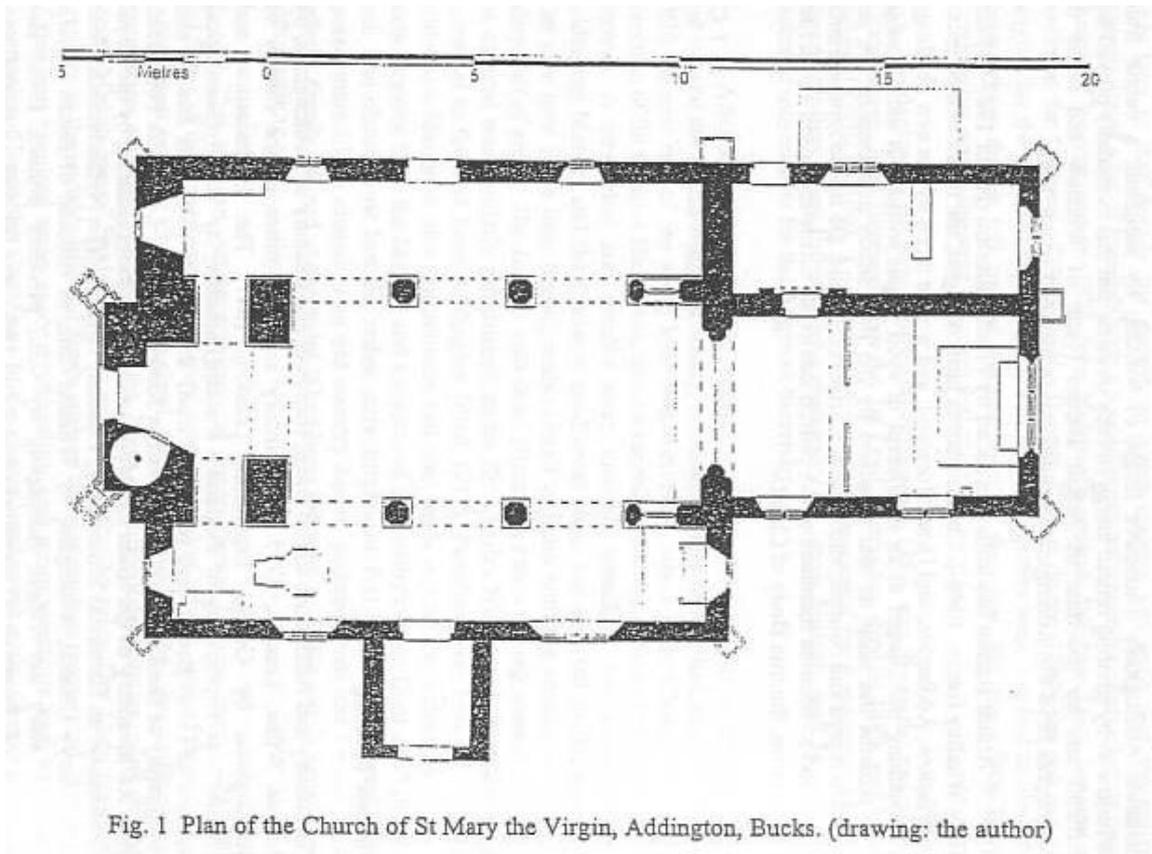
How Christianity first came to Addington remains a mystery but we can be sure that Saxons first built a church here. This Saxon church must have been demolished by the Normans to make way for a new church, probably some time in the 12th Century. The nave of this Norman church survives in outline within the present church and some of the original masonry may still survive in the tower. The north and south aisles were probably also added shortly after.

It was also in the 12th Century that one of the Lords of the Manor gave the church to the Knights of St John in order to aid pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. This gave the Order the right to appoint the Rector.

By the 13th Century the church was part of the diocese of Lincoln and the bell-tower was added because it was widely believed that devils could not abide the sound of consecrated bells. The first half of the 14th Century saw many alterations to the church, doubtless funded by the wool gathered from the sheep that now grazed Addington's fields. These included the rebuilding of the

BEQUESTS

Bequests made in parishioners' wills recreate for us something of the atmosphere of late mediaeval Catholicism as it flourished in Addington. **Richard Arden** (1484) asked to be buried before the image of St. Christopher and left two torches to the church. **Richard Gadbury** (1521) left a cow to the light to Our Lady in the chancel and a bushel of barley to each of the lights honouring the Trinity, St. John the Baptist, St. Dominic, SS. Margaret and Katherine and St. Nicholas. **Thomas Rose** (1538) left a bullock to the light to Our Lady, a bushel of barley to pay for a new font cloth, a field of peas to pay for torches and 12 pence to the singers at his burial. **Alice Clement** (1546) left a bushel of barley for the High Altar. **William Hall** (1547), a former rector of the parish, arranged for 10 cows to be purchased from which one third of the yearly profit of 10 shillings would provide money to pay for his soul and those of other parish benefactors, to pay for 8 Diriges and Masses to be said and to pay for a wax candle to burn before the Blessed Sacrament. A second third of this income was given towards church expenses and the final third to the poor.



aisles, new windows, the south door, new clerestory and flatter roofs.

The second half of the 14th Century was a more troubled period, since repeated outbreaks of the plague broke up the settled society that earlier generations had known. Once prosperity returned at the end of the 14th Century, and into the 15th, further improvements were made to the church including new windows and a new belfry on top of the tower. A new west door was installed providing access for the Blessed Sacrament during great processions such as Palm Sunday and Corpus Christi.

The Catholic parish of Addington was turned upside down in the middle of the 16th Century when King Henry VIII established his own church and commanded all churches in his kingdom to "destroy all superstitious images". This included the great Crucifixes and stone altars so that by 1553 Addington church was left with only its bells, a chalice and two napkins. In 1540, Henry confiscated English property owned by the Knights of St John and the right to appoint a rector passed to Richard Curson of Waterperry in Oxfordshire.

The accession of Queen Elizabeth I in 1558 led to yet another change of direction. She revived the 1552 prayer book and replaced the daily Mass with Morning and Evening Prayers on Sunday. A pulpit was created for the church in the north aisle, a reading desk in the nave, the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer were set up at the east end of the church and the royal arms were erected where the great Crucifix had once stood. Not everyone was prepared to accept Elizabeth's changes and in 1593 three

'recusants' (ie those refusing to attend the services of the Church of England) were recorded in Addington.

In 1633 William Laud became Archbishop of Canterbury, determined to restore some dignity and reverence to the services of the Church of England. For this purpose he sent commissioners to every parish with full powers to enforce changes. At Addington in 1635 it was reported that some of the male parishioners wore hats during Sunday services and two years later commissioners surveyed the church and identified a list of defects including the need for the church and tower to be replastered, some repairs required to the stonework, repairs to the seats and a new cover for the font.

The English Civil War broke out in 1642 and the village of Addington temporarily became home to several hundred dragoons from the Parliamentary army. The church still functioned but the Church of England was abolished and services had to be held in accordance with the new *Directory of Public Worship*. The return of the monarchy in 1660 restored the Church of England and worship continued as before. Stone memorials and gravestones began to appear in the church and churchyard. Many years previously, Addington had been sold to the Busby family and several generations later, in 1693, Dr Thomas Busby became rector. He also became Lord of the Manor, a Justice of the Peace and worked hard at modernising Addington by restoring the Tudor rectory, renovating the Manor House, completing the enclosure of the fields of the parish and restoring the church. Much of his work in the church has been replaced by subsequent redevelopment but it included memorials to his father and aunt, grave markers for family members, patching the tower and adding battlements, laying black and white Warwickshire stone paving in the chancel, new pews, oak panelling and communion rails and installing an elegant plaster ceiling.

During the second half of the 18th Century Addington was served either by incumbents of neighbouring parishes or by curates fresh from university. Several gravestones from this period

RICHARD TRIST (1780)

All you that come this stone to see
Look on these lines and think on me
Beneath now I am but clay
Here to remain till Judgement Day,
You Old and Young repent whilst in your Power
You know not how soon may be your last hour.

carried touching inscriptions – see panels. Meanwhile, life inside the church had changed little. In 1851 Sundays included Morning Prayer at 11am and Evening Prayer at 2pm or 2.30pm with Communion every second month.

ELIZABETH ADAMS (1804)

Let friends forbear to mourn and weep
While sweetly in the dust I sleep
This toilsome world I've left behind
A Crown of Glory for to find.

In 1845 the parish of Addington was transferred from Lincoln diocese to

Oxford and nine years later Addington Manor was bought by John Hubbard, a London merchant. He was a prominent member of the Oxford Movement which placed increased emphasis on ritual and on social responsibility and Addington allowed him to put his beliefs into practice. He improved the parish by draining fields, rebuilding farm labourers' cottages, rebuilding the church at a cost of £2,000, rebuilding the rectory and appointing a new curate in sympathy with his ideals. This new curate, Thomas Perry, reintroduced daily morning and evening prayer, accompanied on Sundays by Litany and Holy Communion. At Communion he restored the practice of mixing water with the wine and made the sign of the cross more prominent in the church and churchyard.

Restoration of the church was entrusted to the diocesan architect, G.E. Street who started work in 1857 with the church being ready for use again by the end of 1858 and rededicated by the bishop in 1859. Street demolished the old

chancel, porch, aisles and clerestory leaving only the tower, the nave arcades, the chancel arch and portions of the end walls.

Street built a completely new chancel and vestry and rebuilt the porch, aisles and clerestory. He inserted new windows and reinstalled old ones. He renewed the stonework of the tower where necessary and constructed new timber roofs. Inside the church he laid a new chancel floor, reredos, communion rails, choir stalls and priests' stalls. Candelabra and sconces were provided to light the



The Church in 1864

chancel and in the nave he installed a new floor, pulpit, lectern, font (with cover) and pews. New doors were provided, a new bell-frame and an organ. John Hubbard provided a collection of Dutch roundels from the 16th and 17th Centuries illustrating scenes from the Old and New Testaments, and the Apocrypha. These roundels were incorporated into quarried windows by Powells of London who also installed additional clerestory glass. The east window, a wonderful example of Victorian stained glass at its best, was installed a few years later. Outside, the churchyard was extended, a new lych gate provided and trees and shrubs were planted.

Restoration of the fabric of the church was only the start, however, and in 1868 John Hubbard appointed the incumbent curate, Arthur Baker, as rector – the first resident rector in the parish since 1792. In 1870 the treble bell was recast and by a little later in that decade the growth in hymn singing was such that the parish commissioned a set of hymnals. By the 1890s Holy Communion was being sung by priest and choir. John Hubbard (by then the 1st Lord Addington) died in 1889 and his daughter Lucy (a nun) in 1893 – see picture of

her memorial stone.

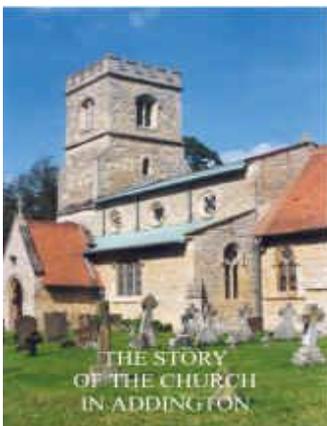


Memorial to Lucy Hubbard

After the First World War, Addington continued along its Anglo-Catholic path. In 1926 the east end of the south aisle was converted into a Lady Chapel as a memorial to the war dead. A new altar and reredos were installed, panelling was brought from Addington Manor and the frame of mediaeval glass was inserted in the window. In 1930 the chancel was similarly refurbished as a memorial to the 2nd Lord Addington including more panelling, a new communion rail and a replica of Dr. Busby's stone floor of 1710 was laid. The church now lost the rather stark brightness that Street has created and looked more like a chapel in an old country house, perhaps even one owned by a Catholic family. The rector at this time was Gerard Olivier (father of late actor Laurence Olivier) and he was an Anglo-Catholic, one of those trying to recreate a catholic Church of England. He abandoned the

1662 Prayer Book for communion services and used for the Mass a liturgy incorporating parts of the Sarum Missal. Our Lady resumed her place in the life of the parish and feasts such as the Assumption reappeared. Gerald Olivier was succeeded by Perceval Scott but when he retired in 1941 it was decided that a separate rector for Addington could no longer be afforded and the parish was joined with that of neighbouring Winslow. Today, Addington is one of three parishes forming the Benefice of Winslow with Great Horwood and Addington. Services are held every month on average, conducted by one of the ministry team.

Over two thousand years ago the Archangel Gabriel's greeting set in motion the Incarnation of Our Lord. Since then each generation has passed the Gospel on to its successor and this has inspired, and continues to inspire, the parish of Addington. Long may it continue to do so!



This history of the church was taken from the guidebook 'The Story of the Church in Addington' written by local author David Critchley in 2000. Copies are available at a cost of £2.50 (inc P&P).

The guidebook can be obtained by sending a cheque or postal order made out to "Addington Parochial Church Council" for the appropriate sum in pounds sterling to:

Hon. Secretary, Addington PCC, c/o The Vicarage, Vicarage Road, Winslow, Buckingham, MK18 3BJ, United Kingdom.