

## **THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE**

### **The Medieval and Post Medieval Period**

In 1220 the present chancel, the chancel arch, the first arch and a small transept on the north side of the church was built. In 1230 a short narrow aisle of two bays was constructed in the south wall. In 1260 the north aisle was added with an arcade of three bays, and the south aisle was lengthened by two bays to the west. In 1290 the south aisle was widened to form a south chapel, and the north aisle was widened to its present size. The small arch at the west of the south chapel was built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

There is only one octagonal pillar in the church, one half of it dating from 1220 and the other from 1260. The other pillars which are all round were also of 13<sup>th</sup> century origin. The design of the fluted and scalloped collar of the pillar on the north side was probably copied by a stonemason in the 14<sup>th</sup> century from the first column on the south side.

The font dates from at least the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, and is a good example of an Early English circular stone font with a fine oak and iron bound lid. It was originally placed near the north door and had a wooden lid in the shape of a pyramid, which was raised by counter-balanced pulleys.

The south porch was added in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, whilst the outer archway of the porch was later restored using some 14<sup>th</sup> century stones. The doorway in the north wall also dates from this period, as does the small piscine with drain in the present memorial chapel.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century the archway at the west end of the church was constructed and the tower with the west window was added. The north aisle was shortened to its present length probably in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

On the west wall of the south aisle is a board giving details of the charity set up on 1645 which still benefits young people in the village.

The east window and that at the south-western end of the chancel date from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the other two windows in the chancel and sanctuary being 15<sup>th</sup> century work. The stained glass in these windows is Victorian. The east window of the memorial chapel is of 13<sup>th</sup> century origin, the two stained glass depictions of angels being of 14<sup>th</sup> century glass. The interior stonework of the two side windows in the chapel date from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but the exterior stonework is two centuries later. The window at the western end of the south aisle has a 14<sup>th</sup> century interior, but the exterior stonework is Victorian. The two windows at the eastern end of the north aisle were built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and those at the western end are 16<sup>th</sup> century.

### **The Victorian Heritage**

Pews had been introduced in 1828 to replace benches and stools, and some of the 19<sup>th</sup> century pews remain in the memorial chapel.

In 1857 the church was extensively renovated and restored. George Edmund Street, a well known and respected architect at that time, whose work includes the Law Courts in the Strand in London, was responsible for this work. Much of this restoration can still be seen in the chancel.

Tiles were laid in the nave, as were the present decorative tiles on the floor of the chancel extending into the sanctuary. Unfortunately the tiles cover a number of stone slabs and memorial tablets dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries; also at this time two 18<sup>th</sup> century vaults were covered over in the north aisle.

The stained glass of the east window was designed by Street, as was the reredos made of marble and alabaster. Both are regarded as particularly fine examples of his work. The Gray & Davison single manual pipe organ was installed and the vestry built on to the church at this time.

The small window in the south porch was also added although the niche in the porch dates from the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

The roof was removed and the present one constructed. The beams are of stained deal.

The wooden pulpit was replaced by the present one of Caen stone. A wooden rood screen was removed as was a painting of the Royal Coat of Arms of Queen Ann, dated 1706, which had been located on the wall above the chancel arch. A gallery at the west end of the church was also dismantled, and the font was moved from near the north door to the near the south door.

### **The Changes in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century**

After the 1914-1918 war the east end of the south aisle was turned into a memorial chapel. The carved wood panelling together with the Jacobean communion rail probably came from nearby Nether Winchendon House.

In 1993 the platform at the east end of the nave was constructed to facilitate greater flexibility in worship.

In 2005 the Victorian organ in the chancel was fully refurbished. To complement this instrument an electronic organ was installed in the nave in 1993, and this was replaced in 2003 by the present Clavinova.

In 1996 the area underneath the tower was rebuilt to provide a meeting room, a small kitchen area and a toilet with facilities for the disabled. To enable this to happen an additional floor was installed in the tower to provide a bell ringing platform – previously the bell-ringers used the ground floor area under the tower.

In 2009 an extensive refurbishment was undertaken. As well as general cleaning, painting and repair work the whole of the nave, the north and south aisles and the porch were re-floored with stone slabs in keeping with the church's medieval heritage. To provide easy disabled access a platform, level with the porch floor, with slopes running down east/west was added. The font was returned to its original position near the north door.

Oak benches and chairs with upholstered seats were purchased for use in the nave and north aisle where they replaced the Victorian pews. The poppy head carvings and some of the wood from these pews were incorporated into four new bookcases.

A new heating system was installed, the church was re-wired and provision was made for audio/visual systems.

### **The Bells**

The church has a peal of eight bells, six of which were cast by John Warner & Sons of London and dedicated in October 1884. These replaced bells hung in 1610-12, which in turn replaced the four earlier bells. In 1999 an additional two bells were cast by Whitechapel Bell Foundry, and hung by Whites of Appleton Church Bellhangers, thus completing the octave peal.

*(This history was compiled by members of the church using material from Histories of Buckinghamshire and research by the Venerable Dr. W.A.Strange MA who, at one time had lived in Cuddington.)*