

Thurlaston Church - A Brief History

The village has been variously called Thurlston, Thulston, Thurleston and eventually Thurlaston with numerous other variations through the ages.

The parish can be traced back to 1066 and the village further back. The Church building dates back to the twelfth century where it is thought to have founded by Hugh de Champagne. Another name associated with the parish is that of the Turviles, belonging with the hamlet of Normanton Turvile.

The Bell Tower

The Tower is Norman, built about 1100. It was damaged by lightning on the west side and was restored in 1897. A large quantity of new stone was put in, stone mullions were replaced and it was re-pointed from ground to summit.

A new lightning conductor and a steel flagstaff were added and a Red Ensign purchased for use on special occasions. New oak doors were fitted at the main entrance and to the oak screen, with cathedral glass and patent springs.



The Clock

There was a clock in the tower in the early 19th century but no record exists of how old it was. The present clock was purchased from Bensons of London in 1866. It arrived on 31st September 1866 and set to work on 26th January 1867. In 1897 it was repaired and the hands and dial re-gilded.

The Bells

The new peal of five bells first rang out over Thurlaston on 12th February 1882. They consisted of :

A new treble (note C) 2'7 1/2" weighing 6cwt 3qu 13 lb.

The old treble with the lettering "Omnia fiant ad Glorium Dei, Gloria Deo Soli. T Eayre AD 1746" (do all to the Glory of God, Glory to God alone) (note B flat) 2' 9" diameter weighing an estimated 7 3/4 cwts.

A new bell (note A) to replace one dated 1580. Diameter 2'11" weight 9cwt 2lbs.

The old tenor bell (note G), still the hour bell for the clock and inscribed "Soli Deo Gloria. Pax omnibus 1653 TM" (Glory to God and peace to all men) Diameter 3'5" estimated weight 13cwts.

New tenor bell (note F) inscribed "J Taylor & Co Bell founders Loughborough". Diameter 3'8" weight 17cwt 4lbs.

The North Aisle

In the early 1300s a portion of this aisle was set aside by Ralph de Turvile as a burial place for the Turvile family and other distinguished people - it was called the Turvile Chantry. In 1778-9 a wall with a door in it was built across the aisle to divide the chantry off from the rest of the church and the arch between the chancel and the chantry bricked up. This burial place was, at that time called 'Mr Grundy's Aisle' as he had now taken over the rights of the Turviles when he bought New Hall Park and he was Lord of the Manor of Thurlaston. After it was closed off from the rest of the church this part became neglected and was known as 'The Dark Chancel'. In 1832 it was described as being in a 'wretched state' as the Grundy family, who were supposed to keep it in repair in lieu of paying Church rates had failed to do so. In the early 1850s the condition of this area was very bad indeed. It was so dark inside that its contents could only be viewed with lighted candles. It had been used to store coal and several barrow loads of soil were taken away from the decaying remains of many years of Christmas hollies and evergreens which had been thrown away in there. Many monuments were damaged but the large tomb of John and Katherine Turvile was saved and moved, as were some of the other tombs in this area. The end wall (East) was unsafe and had to be demolished and rebuilt a few yards westward. The vestry was added a few years later.



The South Wall

The years 1778-9 witnessed a drastic change in the church. The south aisle was taken down and a new south wall to the Nave was built, with three plain windows in it. The walls of the Nave were lowered and a new slate roof put on.



The interior walls were plastered and a new main door, five feet wide, was put in, in its present position in the west wall of the belfry. A new inner door, from the belfry to the nave, was added and a new floor for the bell-ringers. The Turvile burial chantry at the east end of the north aisle was walled up to block it off from the rest of the aisle - a small door allowed access. The chantry was also blocked off from the chancel by the arches being filled in. A new quarry floor was laid and a new pulpit, reading desk and pews added.

East Window

Made by Waites of Newcastle and fitted in 1850. It was a gift of the Rector's sisters, the Misses Bruxner. The stonework and tracery is an enlarged copy of a window in Stoke Golding church. The five main windows contain the figures of -

Abraham, David, John the Baptist, Peter, Paul

And underneath each are scrolls of texts. The upper tracery contains representations of the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus.



The Passion 1860 - 1862

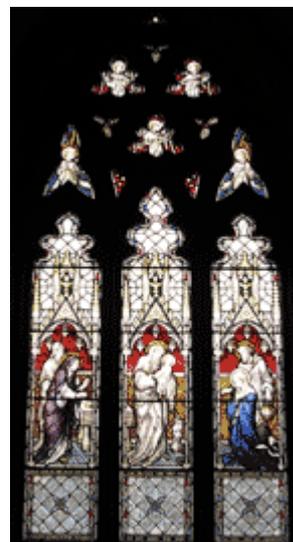
This window replaced one which was installed in 1778/9 when the new south wall was built. In the tracery at the top of the window are representations of the Passion and Crucifixion of Christ.

Adoration of the Magi

Completed in 1882, this window shows a representation of the three Kings paying homage to Jesus. The Bible quotation reads " All Kings shall fall before him - all nations shall serve him. Behold I make all things new, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end".

Presentation in the Temple

This depicts Anna on the left side, Simeon with Jesus in the centre and Mary on the right side. The bible quotation reads " Then he took him up into his arms and blessed God and said 'Lord. Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for my eyes have seen thy salvation". The tracery reads " He shall be great and shall be called 'The Son of the Highest' ".



The Annunciation

Purchased in 1882. The left hand window shows Mary with the words "Behold the handmaid of the Lord". The centre window shows a dove and white lilies with the words "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel". The right hand window portrays an angel with the words "Behold thy highly favoured of the Lord". Across the bottom of the window is written "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet"

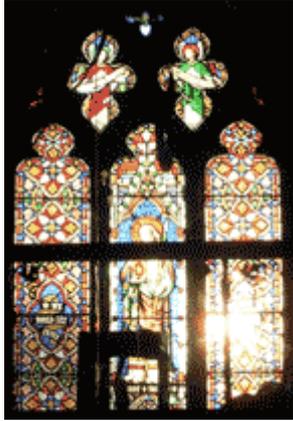
The Light of the World

Purchased in 1862 by Rev. G. Bruxner with £50 that had been presented to him by the people of Thurlaston in appreciation of all his work for the church. On the right hand of Christ are the words " Be zealous therefore and repent, behold I stand at the door and knock" (Rev. 3, v19-20). On the left hand are the words " Then spake Jesus again - I am the light of the world" (John 8, v12). The upper tracery contains representations of the Dove, Cherubim, Vine, Rose of Sharon and Lily of the Valley. At the bottom is the statement "This window was furnished with its present glass by the parishioners of Thurlaston in the summer of 1862 in grateful acknowledgement of the restoration of their church".



West Window

Possibly installed in 1850 when the other windows in the North Aisle were restored. The quotation at the bottom of the window reads: "The promise is made to you and your children, as many as the Lord our God shall call. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death".



The Bell Tower Window

Made by Waites of Newcastle and erected by parishioners in Thurlaston in 1860 as a memorial to Thomas Philip Craven M.A. who served 5 years as Curate of this parish. He died in 1860 in South Africa where he went for health reasons. The central figure is St. Thomas under which is the text "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed". On the right side is the wish of the Greeks "We would see Jesus", and on the left, the reply of St. Philip given to Nathaniel "Come and see". There is a plaque under the bell tower in Thomas Craven's memory.

North Aisle Windows

Restored in 1850. The old stained glass windows, which are decorated with the coats of arms of the Turvilles and Champaines, were replaced with plain glass.

The School

In 1832 Day School was held by Mr. and Mrs. Hall in a house near the Dog and Gun public house. About 80 children attended and there were 100 in Sunday School.

The first schoolroom was built by the Rector, Mr. Arkwright, in 1835 at his own expense. Later in 1835 a new schoolroom and school house were provided at a cost of £1,000 and in 1859 the Infant School was added at a cost of £500.



Churchyard

In 1832 there was a mud and brick wall at the eastern end. There were handsome iron gates at this end and also a white painted wooden gate. On the north side a new small gate was put in.

The Rectory stood on the western side, now the recreation ground, until 1845 when 'The Holt' was built as the new Rectory. Also in 1845 the various footpaths crossing from north to south were removed and New Road, now New Walk, was made as the western boundary.

The present stone wall was built in 1864 originally complete with iron railings.



The Bier House

The Bier House by the East gate. The bier house was restored in 2005 with the help of a local grant.



The Pulpit

The original pulpit, built in 1779, was replaced in 1860. The 'new' pulpit contains a few small panels of carved oak which are probably the remains of the old chancel screen.

Children's Oratory

This was originally a doorway which was blocked off, either in 1897, or 1850 during the restoration and repair of the North Aisle.

The Font



The font is most probably Victorian, put in around 1879. On each of the four sides are representations of the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke & John



War Memorial Wall Plaque

This plaque is dedicated to the villagers who fell in battle during the 20th Century. This is the only memorial in the village. There is one candle for each name and these are lit every year on Remembrance Sunday.



The Alms Dishes

The two alms dishes are made from oak & bell metal salvaged from a fire in York Minster on May 20th 1840. In the centre of the small dish is a plate bearing the ecclesiastical insignia of York, and a circular inscription giving the origin of the materials.



The Mausoleum



The effigies of Hugh Turville, who died on the feast of St Denis 1340, and his wife (with the coat of arms of the Turvilles) are found on a low alter-tomb. The figure is bare-headed, with a hood folded over the shoulder. The body clothing consists of a long belted over-tunic and an inner tunic. The hands hold a heart. At the feet is a mutilated animal, perhaps a dog.

Hugh Turville was a Member of Parliament which was held in Salisbury in 1347.

An inscription in Norman French next to his wife reads: "Here lies Agnes Turvyllle, who died on the seventh day of July in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ one thousand three hundred and forty nine (1349) - on whose soul may God have mercy".

The coats of arms of the Turvilles are cut into the 'body' of this lady.

The Organ

There was no organ in 1832 and hymns were accompanied by various instruments played by musicians in the ringing balcony in the tower. By 1875 there was an inferior organ which was replaced by the present one in 1886, donated by Miss Bruxner, daughter of the Rector. It has 736 pipes and was built by Peter Conachie & Co of Huddersfield and played at a service for the first time at the Harvest Festival, 3rd October 1886.

