

## RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE 2023

### **January 2023: ST. LEODEGARIUS' CHURCH, Old Basford**

Twelve members of the group visited the Church of St. Leodegarius, who is known in France as St. Leger. We were given a warm welcome by its vicar, Rev. Lydia Corbett. Recently the church has been closed and neglected, however, the interior has now been restored, becoming the centre of its community about a year ago.

The church may possibly have existed in 1086, as a priest was documented in that year. In about 1175, the income of the church was used to endow a Cistercian priory at Catesby founded by Robert de Basford, or de Ashby. Saxon stones have been found hidden in the Chancel, and a Norman arch existed between the Nave and a Norman Tower. The Chancel walls leaning out are from that time. The nave was rebuilt in about 1200 with arcades, north and south aisles and lancet windows. The present clustered columns were inserted about 50 years later. A Lady Chapel was introduced in about 1340, the Nave walls later in that century were raised and a clerestory added. In the south doorway, there is a Pax or kissing stone, known to have been in use c 1250.

In 1859, the Tower collapsed, just before the church was due to re-opened after repairs. The new Tower was erected in the Early English style, topped off with eight tall pinnacles. Other alterations were made in 1859-60. In 1900 the roofs were almost renewed following a fire ruined the Chancel. A Vestry was added, incorporating the priest's doorway. In 1974 the Organ and Organ Screen were set alight through vandalism. The centre of the Tower roof consists of a lead-covered pyramid. The Nave, Chancel and the North and South Aisles are all covered with grey Welsh slate, dating from either 1858-59 or 1901.

Mike Johnson

### **February 2023: ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, CLIFTON**

Nine members of the group visited the Church of St. Mary the Village in Clifton Village, which is situated by the River Trent, on the opposite side of the A453\* to the 20th century estate. We were given a warm welcome and hospitality by the vicar, Reverend Lydia Cartwright and Churchwarden, Ronald, who answered any questions and pointed out features of historical interest. Refreshments were later provided.

A priest and the church are mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086). " In CLIFTON [in Nottingham] had 2½ carucates of land to the geld. [There is] land for 5 ploughs. There William has 2 ploughs in desmesne: and 4 sokemen and 19 villans and 8 bordars having a plough., There is a priest and a church, and 1 mill [rendering] 12d and 12 acres of meadow TRE worth £16; now £9."

A large cruciform stone building has Transitional, Perpendicular and Decorated styles. Consisting of a Chancel, Transepts, and a Nave with an arcade of four bays, aisles and a tall central Tower. The 14th century south Arcade has octagonal piers.

The much-restored Chancel was enlarged in 1476, when Sir Robert Clifton, when he founded a chantry college. Other restoration have been by Cottingham in 1846, by Hodgson Fowler, 1873-4, by Bodley in 1884, C.G. Pace, 1965 and Ronald Sims in 1975-59, when the church was reordered with the sanctuary under the tower, and the Chancel arch glazed to form a separate Chapel. An altar stone rescued from the Sacred Mission at Kelham rests on the pre-Reformation altar.

A stained glass window dating from 1898 depicts St. Oswald and St. Alban. There is also a memorial to Sir Jukes Grenville Clifton. The Marcussen organ of 1973 has acoustics designed by David Jones.

There are several memorials to the Clifton Family, an alabaster of the late 14th century (Sir Gervase?), Dame Alice Neville on a tomb chest and Sir Gervase (d 1587) and his two wives

also on a tomb chest. In the south Transept is a flagstone for Joseph the Black Prince who was a black family servant (d. 1685).

Mike Johnson

### **Notes:**

**BORDAR:** (from Old French borde, a wooden hut.) A cottager a peasant of lower economic status than a VILLAN. Since Domesday Book distinguishes bordars from COTTARS and both from COTSETS. There must have been some distinction between them not now readily apparent. All three are also commonly associated with towns.

**CARUCATE** (from Latin carucu, a plough. A ploughland notionally the area which could be ploughed with an eight ox train, used in the north and east as a unit of assessment to tax instead of HIDE.

**COTSET** (Old English kotsetla, a cottage-dweller) A cottager.

**COTTAR** (from Old English kot, A cottager

**DANEGELD** (Old English) Originally the tribute money paid to the invading Danish armies at the time of Æthelræd II. Subsequently used for HEREGELD

**GELD** (Old English, money, tax) The English land-tax (DANEGELD, HEREGELD) assessed on the HIDE.

**HEREGELD** (Old English here, army + tax, tax) An annual tax raised to pay the standing fleet from 1012 to 1051, and reinstated by William I

**HIDE** (Old English, hid, hida) The standard unit of assessment to tax, especially GELD. Notionally the amount of land which would support a household: divided into four VIRGATES

**VILLAN** (Latin villanus, a villager, which translates Old English tunsman. A peasant of higher economic status than a BORDAR and living in a village. Notionally unfree because subject to the manorial COURT.

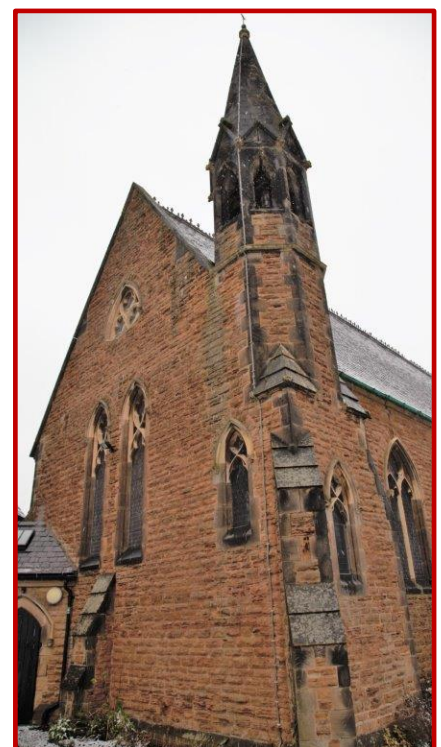
**VIRGATE** (Latin virgate, from virga, a rod) One-quarter of a HIDE; the equivalent of the English YARDLAND.

### **March 2023: CHRISTCHURCH, CINDERHILL**

Eleven members visited Christchurch, Cinderhill, where they were given a warm welcome and hospitality by Michael Elliott, churchwarden, and his wife, Pat, a reader in the church, with refreshments on arrival. This was appreciated by the group, having encountered snowy conditions to get there. Pat gave a potted history of the church, before exploration the Nave and Chancel.

In the early Victorian age, Cinderhill was a small village, north-west of Nottingham, on the narrow turnpike road to Alfreton. Robert Hall, who lived at Basford Hall at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, had developed a new method of using chlorine to speed up the bleaching process, and his lime kilns gave Cinderhill its name, and a lot of employment. In 1842, Babbington Colliery, then called "Cinder Hill Pit" was sunk on the outskirts of the village by Thomas North, a Town Councillor who now lived in Basford Hall, developed the coalfield, and further pits sunk.

As the miners went to work on foot, Mr. North built cottages to house the miners, so they lived nearer to their work.



The sinking of the pits and the building of the cottages took about ten years. Churchgoing was an important element of life, and the nearest churches were St. Leodegarius church in Old Basford, and St. Mary's Church, Bulwell.

The Vicar of Basford, Rev. H.R. Pitman, and Mr. North, who was churchwarden decided to build a new church in the heart of the village, next to the main road, and opposite the wooded grounds of Basford Hall. In the meantime, services were held in a temporarily dedicated room next to the old Red Lion Inn. The Duke of Newcastle, then the War Minister, and just back from the Crimea War laid the foundation stone in 1855.

The Duke, the largest landowner in the area, donated enough land for the church, plus £200. In the following three to four years, £2,000 was raised. Nottingham was then in the Diocese of Lincoln, and on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June 1856, the Bishop consecrated the church, which has a nave 62ft by 21ft, the Aisle 52ft by 9ft. The height of the Nave is 42ft. with framed rafters and collared beams, the chancel has framed rafters and curved braces.

The north Aisle was divided from the Nave by four arches resting on octagonal piers of Ancaster stone and bordered by Minton tiles. The floor of the Nave and Aisles were tiled and the Church heated by a stove at the West End with a perforated iron flue running down the length of the Church.

The original Pulpit was built of Ancaster stone, designed and carved by a local man, Thomas Earp, living at that time in London. Unfortunately after 100 years, the stone had become badly eroded and at the Church's Centenary, another pulpit was in use. The new pulpit, is made of oak, pentagonal, with a dedication to Churchwarden, George Vickers who died 17<sup>th</sup> November 1956.

The hexagonal Font, made of Caen stone was given by Mr. North's mining engineer at Babbington, John Thomas Woodhouse. There are three bells, and were supplied by Danks and Nixon of Nottingham; they were rehung by Taylors of Loughborough in 1945. In 1998, they were examined by Pemberton's Bellhangers, the bells were considered satisfactory, but the fittings and bell chamber required attention. Until money can be raised and the Bell Tower made safe the bells will remain silent.

Mike Johnson

