

CHURCHES IN THE HORMEADS

FORWARD

It gives a great sense of pleasure and privilege to be able to write this word. Having read carefully the script one realises what a rich heritage we have received in these two most attractive churches. Such features as the intertwining of Church and Village; the various stages of structural development of the buildings; the continuity of Christian ministry through the succeeding generations of clergy; and the provision and care of the churches by parishioners are all clearly portrayed. The Church is firmly rooted in history just as Jesus, the son of God, the One we love and serve, was born at a particular time and place. He is also present today, the Risen and Glorified Saviour. These Churches are "living" and continue to provide worship and inspiration for the inhabitants of Great and Little Hormead. Jesus also opens up for us an eternal perspective. We intend to hand on the torch of Christian love and care to the next generation through these Churches. May God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit bless you all as you enjoy this guide and the buildings and people it describes.

Gerald Drew (Priest-in-Charge)

July 1991

THE HORMEADS

The villages of Great and Little Hormead with the hamlet of Hare Street, are situated in the rich cereal belt of the eastern part of Hertfordshire, near the Essex and Cambridge borders. They are two to three miles east of Buntingford which is situated on the London to Cambridge road, the A10. Once this was an entirely agricultural community with all the Hormead residents working on the land apart from some complementary traders in Hare Street. Of the present 555 adult inhabitants most of the working population commutes to London, Ware, Hertford, Bishop's Stortford, Royston and further afield.

Five vills in the Domesday Book of 1086 represented the small groups of population, amounting to no more than 250 people in Hormead. There was no 'Great' or 'Little' Hormead then, though Hare Street (as Langeport, a long town) later became divided among three parishes: Layston, Great and Little Hormead. The two Hormeads became one benefice in 1886 and when Layston parish was dismantled in 1938, the whole of Hare Street was incorporated in The Hormeads.

At the time of Domesday, there was only one priest present in the five vills, in the vill later identified as Little Hormead where the first church was built on manor land. Before a century had passed, a second church was erected just 520 yards away on another manor's land. Both Little and Great Hormead churches were situated very close to Little Hormead Bury and Great Hormead Bury, the manor houses. This was convenient for the lords of the manors to attend services, but most inconvenient for villagers and clergy all of whom lived at least a quarter of a mile away.

Services are held in both buildings, but because the church at Little Hormead lacks heat and light, it is only used in the warmer months.

ST. NICHOLAS, GREAT HORMEAD

The church was constructed in flint rubble with stone dressings over a period of years, beginning c 1200.

THE NAVE

Built in the 13th century or earlier, this is the oldest part of the present building. It was lengthened by a west bay in the first half of the 14th century. The nave clerestory with 3 openings each side with 2-light trefoil head windows, was added in the late 14th century when the tower was built.

New pews were installed between November 1849 and January 1851, being paid for by James White Higgins (1782-1854) of Furnivals Inn, London) while Lord of Hormead Manor. With the flooring of encaustic and glazed red tiles, this cost him between £250 and £300 (with a contribution of £25 from Charles Eyre of Hormead Hall). His wall memorial is in the north chancel.

Six carved head corbels – perhaps portraits of contemporary 13th century villagers or workmen – support wall posts of the former open timber roof now sealed between tie-beams.

The font, late 12th century, is a plan octagonal basin set on a thick circular stem encircled by eight circular shafts. The font cover was purchased in 1849. The Rev. Charles Coulson initiated a restoration programme in 1849, for which subscriptions amounting to £42-5-0d were collected, £2-10-0d came from old materials and he made up the balance of £11-1-2d to the sum of £55-16-2d. From this were purchased ‘The Pulpit – Communion Table – rails and chairs – the Lecturn – Font cover, kneeling stools, carpetc &c.’

Behind the lecturn there is a medallion portrait of Betty, Lady Romer, placed there by her husband in November 1917. Sir Robert Romer, Lord Justice of Appeal, lived at The Bury 1900-1911. Lady Romer and the Reverend R.Y. Whytehead were instrumental in building the Parish Room in 1905 at a cost of £170. Sir Robert owned the first motor car in the village. It was delivered, along with a mechanic to instruct his chauffeur how to maintain and drive it.

Two new churchwardens’ wands were donated by Ian Lawrence on his retirement after 20 years as churchwarden of Great Hormead in March 1985.

THE CHANCEL

The original chancel was rebuilt by Blomfield of Buntingford, during the second restoration, 1872-74, while the Rev. Charles Coulson was the vicar. At the same time, the organ chamber was built and the south porch added. It was left to The Reverend George Smith to provide a new organ. He spent £800 on beautifying the church while he was vicar here 1890-1901, including the organ, heating, three coronas for lighting, a clock, new altar cloth and frontal. The village choir was trained by him and he held evening classes four times a week beside visiting the school daily. A stained glass window commemorating his life, by Clayton and Bell of Oxford Street,

is in the north aisle. An electric blower for the organ was installed in memory of Arthur Oyler on 16 June 1954 – he lived at Hormead Hall from 1912 to 1945 and was for many years vicar's warden at St Nicholas.

The cartouche over the door to the organ chamber in the chancel is decorated with three hop poles, the emblem of the Houblon (French for hop-pole) family who owned Hormead Hall from 1696 to 1911.

In the chancel there is a white and grey marble wall monument to Lt-Col. Edward Stables who died at Waterloo, 1815. He was Lord of the Manor of Hormead and largely rebuilt The Bury in 1812. His horse was brought back from Waterloo to end its days grazing the pastures near the Bury.

The east windows on the north of the chancel commemorate the Gould family of Hormead Bury (1835-1876). The south chancel window was placed there in memory of Robert and Martha Palmer, owners of Ashdown House in Hare Street from 1827-1844, for whom the new house was built in 1832/3.

The marble memorial with a picture of Mary and the boy Jesus was for Harriet, wife of Archdeacon Allen, who lived at Hormeadbury.

At least five people were buried under the floor of the chancel but their memorial stones were removed during the restoration of 1849.

SOUTH AISLE

The 4-bay south aisle, added to the nave in the early 14th century, has some delightfully grotesque head corbels and a 15th century door.

The organ chamber arch is 19th century. Two stained glass windows were put in position in memory of Hormead Bury residents and their children.

The Hayden brothers' wall memorial is a tribute to two Hare Street men whose enterprising father, Henry, came from Barkway c.1740, bought an orchard and built The Bakery in 1747/8. His elder son, Henry, re-faced it in 1805, and a second son, William was the owner of a house (later known as The Beehive) from 1818-33. A diamond-shaped stone is set in the floor of the middle aisle bearing the initials 'WH HH' (covered by the carpet) opposite the wall memorial.

The only memorial to a member of the remarkable Brand family is on the west wall by the south door. Many wealthy generations of Brands lived here and both built and bought large properties in the villages. They owned Hare Street House, The Swan, Parsonage Farm, Hormead Bury Farm, Brick House, a house called Luttes and another 'in Smith's Hill' now Horseshoe Hill. The family was in the Hormeads from the 15th century to the mid 18th century. William, to whom the black and white memorial was placed in the church 1746/7 (with an heraldic helmet for the spike above the memorial), was among the last Brands here.

NORTH AISLE

The late 13th century north aisle and arcade, has a door, and 4 stained glass windows. A new vestry was created in 1974 by enclosing an area including the window in memory of Frederick Moule of Hare Street who lived at Japonica Cottage. Fred Moule came to Hare Street c. 1860 and acquired many cottages, leaving them to his son Fred who had The Bakery which was owned by the Moule family (1901-81).

One of the north aisle windows commemorates another Ashdown House owner. The Piper family followed the Palmers at Ashdown House in 1844 and remained until 1891, during which time Francis Caton Piper had a brickfield in the middle of Hare Street.

The earliest memorial in the church is the brass plate inserted into the wall of the north aisle. It was put there by order of William Delawood recording a bequest to the poor of Great Hornead in his will dated 1694. William Delawood, a London merchant who was born at Hornead Hall in 1632, left his estate here to two brothers, Isaac and Abraham Houblon, also London merchants and members of a Huguenot family. They were two of the first directors of the newly-established Bank of England in 1694. Their brother Sir John Houblon was the first Governor. Samuel Pepys (the diarist, who rode through Hare Street on several occasions when en route to Cambridge or Brampton his home near Huntingdon) was a friend of the Houblon brothers whom he called 'gentlemen whom I honour mightily' (1 January 1669).

A small table with a frontal made by Hornead children is at the east end of this aisle.

THE TOWER

Late in the 14th century the tower was built over the west bay of the lengthened nave and in the 15th century a top was added to the tower creating a three-stage tower.

In 1966 the screen across the tower dividing it from the nave was extended to fill the arch and it was glassed in.

The apertures in the original screen were backed with hardboard and decorated with five painted and gilded shields (from left to right)

- The coat of arms of St. John's College, Cambridge, since 1722 the patron of the livings of both Great and Little Hornead
- The symbol of St Mary the Virgin (a heart transfixed by a sword), patron saint of Little Hornead
- The symbol of Christ the King, Chi Rho, surmounted by a crown of gold
- The symbol of St. Nicholas, Bishop and patron saint of Great Hornead. Three gold balls or purses
- The coat of arms of the Diocese of St. Albans.

The enclosed ground floor of the tower was used as a vestry where a fireproof wall safe was installed in 1924.

The second stage is the bell-ringing floor where the ropes emerge through garter holes in the roof from the bell-chamber above. The clock is also on this floor. This was put in the tower by the Rev. George Smith at a cost of £140 to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, 1897. The third stage has louvred 2-light openings on each face for the sound of the six bells to ring out.

The top of the tower, added in the 15th century, was built with embattlements and a pyramidal tile roof and diagonal buttresses. Robert Cage (died 1655) Lord of Hormead Manor, 'obtained a ring of six excellent Bells in this Church' and it was probably he who gave bells 4-6 to make up the ring of six.

The bells, with their inscriptions are:

- The treble bell, made by Richard Keene at Royston, 4¾cwt, diameter 29" "William Bull, c.w. 1701". William Bull was tenant farmer at Hormead Hall and churchwarden.
- Made by 'C & G MEARS, Founder, London 1845' weighing 5¾cwt, is 31" diameter
- 'SONORO SONO MEO SONO DEO Dec. 1606', made by Robert Oldfield of Hertford, 6¾cwt and 33" diameter. The oldest bell whose inscription may be translated: "I, loud sounding, sound with my voice to God."
- 'MILES GRAYE WILLIAM HARBERT ME FECIT 1626' 8cwt and 36½" diameter
- 'MILES GRAYE ME FECIT' 9¾cwt and 39" diameter.
- 'MILES GRAYE ME FECIT' 1623 13cwt and 43" diameter. The tenor bell, made by the Colchester firm where William Harbert was the foreman to Miles Graye.

The bells were all re-tuned and re-hung in an iron frame in 1952.

The church clock uses the bells for striking the hour and quarters. The hour is struck on the tenor bell and the quarters chimed on bells 1,2,3 and 4.

Six new bell-ropes were purchased 4 September 1790 for £2-10-0d but an added expense was incurred for 'John Boswell was paid 8d for bringing them'. In 1982 a new set of six ropes cost £179.

ST. MARY, LITTLE HORMEAD

The church was built of flint rubble, with stone dressing, good cubic ashlar, over a period of years beginning 11th-12th centuries.

THE NAVE

The tall, narrow Norman nave was built 11th-12th century. The original roof, constructed in a similar manner to the roofs of Peterborough Cathedral and Waltham Abbey, all late 11th-12th century constructions, were the subject of an article in Hertfordshire Archaeology 9, 1983-6: 185-9, after an inspection of the Little Hormead roof was carried out in 1984.

At the west end of the nave a large 19th century window of cinquefoiled lights was placed under a square head. The coat of arms was inserted at the request of Commander John Herapath who lived at Black Ditches, 1953-89.

On the wall by the south door there is an incised graffito of a head with a 15th century head-dress. It has been suggested that it may have been drawn by a pilgrim passing through the village on his way to Walsingham. The font is early 14th century oolite, octagonal with a rose on seven panels and fleur de lys. It was placed in the church c.1450.

The most remarkable feature of this very early church is the original 12th century north door with its decorative metal strap work including a dragon and bird, and rough-headed nails. Since 1925 this has not been used as the entrance door to the church, but preserved inside, first in Great then Little Hornead church. It has been carefully cleaned on several occasions, the last before it was exhibited at the Hayward Gallery, London, 1984, in an exhibition of 'English Romanesque Art 1066-1200'. The north doorway was blocked when the door was removed.

The south window is 15th century like that in the south wall of the chancel. The north window is inscribed underneath for Nathan Warren of Little Horneadbury, who died in 1862 and was a churchwarden.

THE PORCH

Red brick south porch with another Newell memorial: 'In memory of Sally only daughter of Robert and Mary Newell. She died July 23rd 1838. Aged 17 years.' Robert Newell had married Mary Alexander at Little Hornead in 1813.

THE CHANCEL

The wide 12th century chancel arch has a coat of arms of Charles (II) dated 1660 hanging over it – indicating Little Hornead's royalist sympathies at the time of the Civil War.

The chancel, was rebuilt c.1220 and its east end wall again rebuilt in 1888, including a triple lancet window, when the chancel was shortened by a few feet. Retained in the original constructions were the 15th century piscina at the south-east corner and two 13th century lancet windows in the south wall between which a priest's door was inserted. The walls are immensely strong for the size of the building, being 2'10" in thickness.

In the chancel there are four memorials to the Newell family. The Reverent Robert Hasell Newell (1778-1852) was Rector of Little Hornead from 1813-1852 and Vicar of Great Hornead 1817-43. He was a Fellow of St. John's College 1800-14 and Dean 1809-14. A talented amateur artist, one of his sketchbooks containing several drawings of Little Hornead church and houses is preserved at Hertford Museum. He illustrated an edition of Goldsmith's Poems in 1811 and both wrote and illustrated Letters on the scenery of North Wales. In his 'Tithe Book' he noted 'In the Spring of

1819 the Chancel of LH church was repaired and beautified at my expence. For painting Pews Pulpit Communion Table and Rails, east window frame & whitewashing & for the two tables of The Commandt paid Houchin painter of Buntnd £12-0-6½, green baize for lining pews etc £1-8-0, Carpenter' bill 18-10d, matting for pew 7-6d.'

In 1679 'an handsom Reading-Desk was set up in the chancel, by John Ginn, churchwarden, at the charge of the parishioners.'

People buried in the chancel include the Rev. Thomas Cockshutt, rector from 1798-1812; Rev. Thomas Doo, rector 1719-39; and Mrs Hannah Cornell, wife of William Cornell of Newsells Bury who died in 1812. She was born Hannah Randall and her family were tenants of Little Hormead Bury from c1742-1779.

BELL TURRET

The bell turret, or campanile, was built over the west end in the 15th century and reconstructed in 1888. It is timber, with a pyramidal roof. Two bells for chiming are housed in the turret. One, dating from 1400 is among the oldest bells in Hertfordshire and has the inscription 'Sancta Margarita, ora pro nobis', St. Margaret pray for us. The diameter of this bell is 25½ inches. By 1522 Hormede Parva owned 'ij belles in the steple'.

CHARITIES

Great Hormead Charity received income from three sources:

- William Delawood who died at Hormead Hall 24 April 1696 and was buried in the chancel, bequeathed £10 p.a. forever to the poor of the parish of Great Hormead. The record of this charity is inscribed on a brass plate on the wall of the north aisle.
- A Michaelmas Rental was left to provide income from 9 acres of land in Great Hormead to distribute to the poor
- Hormead Parsonage farm paid £1 a year to the poor.

Little Hormead has The Porter Charity, established by the will of John Walls Porter in 1823 to provide for the Rector & Churchwardens to have the interest from his estate to set up a trust:

'to apply the interest at midsummer and Christmas in the purchase of bread and clothing...among the poor...in putting out a poor boy belonging to the said Parish of Little Hormead as an apprentice to any trade or business.'

John Walls Porter received a large sum of money from his father John Walls who had found two saddlebags of gold and silver coins in 1797. They were lying in a ditch by Cuthroat Lane leading from the King's Highway across the fields to Little Hormead church. As he lay dying, Porter told the Rev. R.H. Newell how his father had come by the money, offering the residue of it, nearly £2000, to the Rector for the church and a charity. Newell refused it, so Porter left a trust for the charity in his will.

Both the Great and Little Hornead Charities are still in existence, mainly used for Christmas gifts for older residents.

PARISH REGISTERS

Registers of births, marriages and deaths, were first kept under a mandate of 1538 by Thomas Cromwell. He was Henry VIII's adviser, both with regard to making the King Head of the Church of England, and the dissolution of the monasteries. Great Hornead has a complete run of registers from 1538, those for Little Hornead commence in 1588. The Great Hornead registers are in Latin up to 1618, written in Elizabethan handwriting on vellum. The Little Hornead registers are in English throughout. Both have been transcribed and put into alphabetical order of surname and may be consulted at the Hertfordshire Record Office.

CHURCH SILVER

This is in safe keeping in the bank. The oldest piece is an Elizabethan silver communion cup given by Nathaniel Pryor, churchwarden of Great Hornead in 1740. It is hallmarked London 1566 maker: IP i.e. John Pikenynge. A George II silver chalice is marked 'Hornead Parva 1740' and is hallmarked the same year, made by Thomas Whipham and William Williams. Of the four pattens, the oldest is hallmarked 1680, made by T.C.' Two Victorian pieces: a salver 27" in diameter and a tazza diameter 7". A more recent piece is an Elizabeth II patten, diameter 6½", hallmarked London 1962, maker 'R.G.' inscribed on the bottom of the rim: 'S. Nicholas Great Hornead. In memory of Ernest George Balls, Churchwarden 1946-1959.' The most recent acquisition is a ciborium bought from a legacy of Mrs G. Holmes of Lamorna, Hare Street, who died in 1981.

CHURCHYARDS

The churchyards are a haven for wild-life, especially in the spring-time when many birds are singing and flowers are blooming, so care is taken not to mow too early in the season.

New gates for Great Hornead were made by a Waltham Cross firm in 1915 at a cost of £18-10-0d and put in place February 1916.

The grave inscriptions were recorded in 1984 but it is known that some 18th century stones have been lost, which is a pity since they were the ones with epitaph rhymes, e.g.

"Repent with speed
Make no delay
For when God calls
You must away."

RECTORS AND VICARS

Little Hornead had a Rector in charge of the parish while Great Hornead had a Vicar. A rector received all the tithes (hence the large tithe barn at Glebe House, the

old rectory, to accommodate the tenth of all wheat, barley, hay, wood, wool, lambs, calves, piglets, etc) and paid for the upkeep of the chancel. Where the rectorial tithes were partly diverted to the support of a monastery in the Middle Ages, or a college, or private person, the priest had the title of Vicar. Whichever layman (convent, college or private person) received the tithes, he had the right to seats in the chancel for himself and family and also the duty of repairing the chancel.

The advowson is the right of patronage or appointing a clergyman to a parish. This right, in feudal times, was held by the Lord of the Manor over the church on his estates, since he had built the church and given the glebe land to support both church and priest. After 1164, however, the right could be bequeathed or sold; so some Lords left the advowson to a monastery which then collected the tithes and in return sent a monk to take the services. When a monastery failed to supply the priest, the bishop intervened to make the monastery provide a vicarage with glebe land so that there could be a vicar (vicarius means to care) to live in the parish and care for the people. The vicar was allowed the small tithes for his stipend while the monastery kept the great tithes; the difference being between small items difficult to collect, like eggs, fruit, honey, and the profitable crops of hay and corn from the glebe lands.

The first Rector whose name we know was Hugh de St Leodegarius who was appointed to Little Hornead in 1315 and the first Vicar we know of was William Freeman, a priest from the chantry at Foulmere, presented in December 1335 by Blackmore Priory who then had the advowson. At this early date our clergy were Roman Catholic monks, trained in monasteries. The career of Thomas Burne is a typical example. He was an Augustan friar who trained at Oxford Convent 1435-52 before gaining his degree of Bachelor of Theology in 1452 and then was granted a Papal Dispensation to hold a benefice with cure of souls and came to Great Hornead 1 September 1470. He moved on to another parish in 1476.

One of our earliest records of the churches in the Horneads is included in an ecclesiastical taxation made by order of Pope Nicholas IV, 1291-2 when the vicarage of Great Hornead was valued at £8 per annum and the Rectory of Little Hornead at £6-13-4d. Great Hornead, however, was due to pay the Prior and Convent of St. Lawrence, Blackmore £1-5-0d and the Abbot of Walden 7/- in rent from the £8.

The Little Hornead advowson was sold and resold to various people, but the Great Hornead advowson remained with the Prior and Convent of St Lawrence of Blackmore until Henry VIII intervened. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries the King granted Great Hornead to Thomas Brand Esq., in 1546.

At this time the clergy had to choose to conform to Henry's new Church of England or become alienated if they adhered to the old faith. The problem in both Little and Great Hornead was even more acute under the reign of his daughter, Catholic Mary, who attempted to reverse her father's reforms. During her reign Nicholas Browne was both Vicar and Rector in Hornead and he, with many other incumbents, was dismissed from his livings c1555 either because they had married 'or otherwise slanderously disordered or abused themselves.' There were similar problems during the Commonwealth period, 1649-1660, when puritans replaced outstayed orthodox clergy.

The Brand family held the advowson of Great Hormead from 1546-1813. Thomas Brand had the strange idea of sharing it between 3 sons, one of whom soon died leaving his third to a brother who thus had two-thirds. Since they had the gift of the living of Great Hormead in their hands, they had to take it in turns – 2 turns to one Brand, one turn to another. This curious situation was finally terminated when all three thirds came into the possession of St. John's College, Cambridge. In 1722 the College acquired two-thirds plus the advowson of Little Hormead (valued at £165 in 1694) and in 1813 paid £104 for the one-third share.

Many colleges owned advowsons. In the 17th century all the fellows of a college may have been clergymen and many livings belonging to the colleges were bought in order to provide a source of income for fellows retiring from active college work. From 1790 until 1944, with one exception, all the Vicars appointed by St. John's College to the living of Great Hormead, and every Rector of Little Hormead from 1730, were its own graduates. The advowson of the Hormeads remains in the gift of the Masters and Fellows of the College of St. John, Cambridge, to this day.

When Little Hormead was combined with Great Hormead parish by order in council under Queen Victoria, 1886, many parishioners objected, yet it was no novelty for the 2 parishes to be served by the same parson. William Brown, Rector of Little Hormead at the time of the merger, was of the opinion that the job at Little Hormead was 'a sinecure'.

It is not surprising that the church authorities had also thought this and in an age when plurality of livings was allowed, our clergy were also shared with neighbouring parishes – Layston, Royston, etc. Or acted as curates in other parishes. The list of vicars and rectors shows when our own two parishes shared one minister.

GREAT HORMEAD VICARS

William Freman	1336-
William Moyse	1367
Nicholas at Lane	-1382
Robert Coventry alias Crawford	1382-1383
Thomas Tichmersh	1383-1385
Nicholas Hadham	1385-1386
Nicholas Bacon	1386-
John Herle	1393-1394
John Holgate	1394-
John Spicer	1398-1399
John Percy	1399-
Thomas Skele	- 1439
Robert Bennet	1439
Robert Stepyngley	1439-1444
Robert Hunderwood	1444-1448
Walter Dale	1445-1448
Thomas Simpson	1454-1455
William Pyke	1455-1470
Thomas Burne	1470-1476
Roger Robinson	1476-
Thomas Lancaster	1482-
John Jenkinson	c 1521-1546
William Kytchyn	1546-
Nicholas Browne (depr)	-1555

LITTLE HORMEAD VICARS

Hugh de St Leodegarius	1315-
Richard de Pykering	1330-
Walter Trevelin	-1365
Stephen Kinesman	1365-1371
William Hornby	-1384
Thomas Fenhow alias Mildehall	1384-1385
Peter Pykeryng	1385-1390
Thomas Hawkeswell	1390-
Reginald Denys	-1454
Adam Oliver	-1469
Thomas Blower	1469-1476
John Woodward (d)	1476-1493
Richard Norton	1493-
Thomas Laynd (d)	- 1517
Nicholas Browne (depr)	1517-1555

John Rogers	1555-1562	James Lodge (Vbraughing)	1555-1557
Richard Columbell	1562-1563	Nicholas H Aspynall ditto.	1557-
William Hudson (d)	1563-1574	John Ffawcett (d)	1578-1583
John Diason (d)	1574-1584	Christopher Bainbrigge (d)	1583-1604
Robert Reeve (depr)	1584-1595	Edward Howden	1604-1646
Thomas Taylor	1595-1618	William Moore (d)	1646-1647
Richard Moore	1618-1619	Samuel Ball	-1652
Joseph Scrubie (d)	1619-1661	George Swathe	-1660
William Cage (d)	1661-1679	William Cage (d)	1660-1679
Joshua Green (d)	1679-1714	Stephen Nye (d)	1678-1719
Arthur Windus	1714-1721	Thomas Doo (d)	1719-1730
Thomas Doo (d)	1721-1730	Leonard Chappelow (d)	1730-1768
William Jephson (d)	1730-1762		
Leonard Chappelow (d)	1762-1768		
Richard Scales (d)	1768-1786d.	Richard Scales (d)	1768-1786
Henry Roper	1786-1790	Thomas Drake	1786-1790
Thomas Barnard	-1794	Thomas Cockshutt (d)	1791-1812
Thomas Sparhawke (d)	1794-1797		
Gregory Bateman	1797-1800		
Zachary Brooke	1800-1842	Robert Hasell Newell	1813-1852
Charles Coulsen	1842-1874	(+ curate of GH)	1817-1842
James Slade ffoster Chamberlain	1874-1881	William Brown	1852-1866
John A. Byron Bone	1881-1890	John Arthur Byron Bone	1886-1890

GREAT WITH LITTLE HORMEAD CLERGY

George Smith	1890-1901
Robert Yates Whytehead	1903-1906
Frank Harvey Francis	1907-1912
Francis Garden Mitchell	1913-1923
William Lisle Shepherd	1923-1930
William James Crofton Griffiths	1930-1938
Norman Posnett	1938-1943
Herbert Cecil Sandall (d)	1943-1944
Stanley Mortimer Wheeler	1944-1950
John Augustus Hancock (+ Rector of Wyddial)	1951-1955
Arthur Blackwall Lea (Vicar of Brent Pelham with Meesden)	1953-1957
Murdoch Edgcumbe Dahl (Rector of Wyddial)	1956-1965
Frank Leonard Morris (Rector of Wyddial)	
(Vicar of Brent Pelham w. Meesden & Anstey with Rev. J. Spread as acting curate)	1965-1990
Gerald Arthur Drew (priest-in-charge of Great with Little Hormead, Wyddial, Anstey, Brent Pelham, Meesden)	1990-

Notes:

(d. = died. Depr. = deprived of the living)

1. **Hudson** had to take the Brands to court to establish the vicar's right to fortie shillings a year due from the Parsonage Farm Lands.
2. **Ffawcett** was buried in the chancel of St John's College, Cambridge.
3. **Reeve** was deprived for holding 2 livings, unlicensed, for 6 months.
4. **Taylor**'s wife was called Misericordianna – shortened to Merry. He was described as 'a large, big-voiced man – his speech was full of long phrases

- with but little in them. He was very pompous, and given to preaching long sermons of more than ordinary length even of those days.’
5. **Scruble** was a ‘man of inferior manners, small and untidy. He lived undistinguished and unknown, fortunate in finding a resting-place in Hormead.’
 6. **Cage** was frequently taken to court for not keeping a watercourse clear, not paying constable’s rates, but also went to testify in favour of a widow.
 7. **Green** also refused to pay the constable’s rate.
 8. **Windus** was simultaneously Rector of Kelshall.
 9. **Nye** took part in controversies on the Trinity: was also noted as a ‘unitarian’.
 10. **Doo** was a ‘refined gentleman and scholar, exceedingly firm and exact.’
 11. **Chappelow** was author of an arabic grammar and lectured at Cambridge.
 12. **Drake** was simultaneously Rector of Hadleigh, Suffolk.
 13. **Cockshutt** acted as curate to GH 1792-1812. He was buried in LH chancel.
 14. **Sparhawke** was also Rector of Hinxworth 1795-7.
 15. **Brooke** was an absent vicar, leased the vicarage which fell into disrepair.
 16. **Coulson** lived at Owles while he rebuilt the vicarage and moved in Christmas 1845. He also built the school, which opened January 1846.
 17. **Brown** was author of *Notes on the Lexicon of Hesychius*.
 18. **Smith** was headmaster of Doncaster Grammar School immediately prior to coming to Hormead. Late into the ministry, he was a remarkably good vicar.
 19. **Sandall** was for many years in Rhodesia, including a period in Salisbury Cathedral, and served through the first world war as a padre.
 20. **Morris** was appointed Honorary Canon, St. Albans, October 1985. Moved from Coulson’s vicarage to present vicarage in 1981.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to record our thanks to the staff of the Hertfordshire Record Office, the Hertfordshire Local Studies Library, and the Hertford Museum for their help and for permission to reproduce their material. The meticulously accurate line drawings have been executed specifically for this history by Mr Kenneth Gibson, a former churchwarden, to whom we are particularly grateful. The brochure was written by Christine Jackson and designed by Norman Oliver.

On 7th February 2008, the new Church Room was opened by The Bishop of St. Albans – this is the text of the commemorative booklet.

St. Nicholas Church – Introduction to the new building.

One of the challenges that faces rural churches is how to adapt their historic buildings so that they can meet the needs of the 21st century. Ever since 1997 this parish has faced that challenge head on. The vision for the need for new facilities has had to be

balanced with the desire to respect and, if possible, enhance our beautiful parish church. We have been very conscious of the importance of the building and the environment that has been handed down in trust to us by previous generations.

We believe that, with the guidance of a committed, experienced architect, the hard work and patient leadership of our small local team, and the helpful advice from outside organisations, we have now achieved the best possible solution. It is my hope that you will agree with this.

In 1873, when the Bishop of Rochester rededicated St. Nicholas following a major restoration, he spoke of the vision the Church needs if it is to move forward to meet new challenges. It is our belief that, with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ, this new Church Room will be used to the glory of God and for the service of future generations. Teaching the Christian faith is central to the mission and ministry of the Church.

Carol Kimberley
Priest-in-Charge

Historical Role

St. Nicholas Church, Great Hornead, is a grade II* listed building, undoubtedly the most significant of the many listed buildings in the Hornead Conservation Area. It dates back to the 13th century or earlier and has been at the heart of life in our village community ever since.

The Church is situated less than half a mile from the much smaller, even older, Church of St. Mary, Little Hornead. There is evidence in the Domesday Book of a priest serving the population of Hornead from St Mary's (there is no "Little and Great" distinction then). It seems likely that in the late 1200s the owner of the Manor House decided that an additional, larger church was needed by local inhabitants and built the present nave as a church near his own house, installing his own priest.

In the early part of the life of St. Nicholas Church, the owners of the ancient Manor House (today renamed the Bury) provided strong patronage. In 1722, the advoswon was sold to St John's College, Cambridge, which then found and appointed the Church's Rectors for the next 200 years.

Meanwhile the owners of the Bury continued to give informal support to St. Nicholas right through to the 1940s after which the Bury fell into increasing disrepair, until it was retored ten years ago. St. John's College is still our formal Patron.

Today St Nicholas Church is one of six churches within the united Benefice of Anstey, Brent Pelham, Hornead, Meesden and Wyddial, all served by one priest. With a population more than twice as big as Anstey, the next largest village, the church and its congregation fulfill a significant extra role as the "lead" church in the Benefice.

Architectural history

In the 13th century St. Nicholas consisted of the nave alone. Afterwards, it was extended steadily during the next 200 years in chronological order by the north aisle, a west bay to the nave, the south aisle, the lower tower and clerestory and the upper tower.

During this time some 60 corbels were included both inside and outside. Interestingly, several are significant for grotesqueness rather than beauty. The font is from the late 12th century, now supported by Victorian circular shafts. The set of 6 bells was completed by 1630 and is still rung regularly. For the next two centuries little, except patching, was done and the fabric deteriorated seriously.

Three quality, Victorian restorations followed, the first in 1849, but the main one in 1870/73, guided by the well-known architect, Sir Arthur Blomfield, who was Diocesan Architect (of our then Rochester Diocese), the building Gibbon of Buntingford and the Revd Charles Colson (Rector 1840-74).

The main architectural alterations were:

- The chancel was completely rebuilt starting from new foundations
- The window at the east end of the south side was removed and the nearby vestry was demolished.
- A larger organ chamber/vestry replacement was added at the east end of the south aisle/south of the chancel
- The entrance porch was rebuilt (smaller) and it seems likely the tower steeple was added
- All window frames were replaced with new ones and plain cathedral glass inserted
- The main arch between chancel and nave was completely rebuilt
- Most of the other internal pillars, arches and walls were either rebuilt or resurfaced
- Most of the external flintwork, stonework and some of the buttresses were added or restored
- The present interior furniture (choir stalls, pews, lectern and pulpit) was all made and installed.

Under the influence of the Revd George Smith there was a third period of Victorian improvement in 1890-1891, including installation of a new organ and clock.

All but one of the windows were re-glazed with stained glass as memorials to local people, designed by various experts of the day (e.g. Clayton & Bell, Harry Burrow, Westlake).

The result is that St. Nicholas church is now predominantly Victorian. Large arches and narrow but high aisles generate a feeling that the nave and aisles comprise one united central area. This forms an exact square, adding to the beauty and feeling of spaciousness which the worshipper experiences. The Victorians, by their restoration, not only rescued a badly decaying building, creating the very fine facilities used for worship today but rejuvenated the life of their generation of Church people, as their Bishop's visionary sermon at the time predicted.

Historical significance of emerging needs

Today more than 20% of all village families are still active in the life of our Church, and contribute to the sharply rising cost of maintaining it (the Electoral Roll number is 93 and 62 families from the parish's 310 houses give regularly). The future of the St. Nicholas Church building itself depends on these families. A higher proportion of the population expects to be baptized, married and buried "in our church". St. Nicholas is still a key focus for promoting much-needed Christian teaching among young children and adults and helping in other ways to build up the community and bind it closer together.

After spending £110,000 in 1993/1998 bringing the church building up to standard in time for the new millennium, the PCC identified the coming challenge and, by 2002, had decided the best way to meet it. Five years of wide consultation, raising funds and obtaining planning permission have followed.

These extra facilities will play a key part in effecting the changes of attitude and practice we need to make. This strategy is endorsed by current Church leadership initiatives such as St Albans' Diocese "Vision for Action", encouraging parishes to focus on and think creatively about Mission, Ministry, Church buildings, Stewardship and Children and young people.

An Architectural appreciation

The design of the new building defers to the church, but does not ape it. Employing quality architecture of today, it uses the opportunity to continue the evolutionary story of the church throughout the ages, both physically and spiritually.

The Herts Architects Panel considered the St Nicholas design would "add to the character and appearance of the church". A national professional assessment came from the national design committee of Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE – successor to the Fine Arts Commission), which "would like to see it built."

Inside the church, the only change worshippers and visitors will see is more light in the room under the tower. Outside, only a small part of the new building is visible from the road and entrances. The glass link ensures that, from the whole churchyard except its most distant arc, views of the external shape and fabric of the Church remain uninterrupted. A new west door, inserted where many churches already have a door, is the only fabric alternation needed in the Church itself. Finally, as phase 2, we will develop tower room facilities, when we have experience of using the new room.

The West Window

The west window, which oversees the entrance to the new Church rooms, commemorates the life of the Revd Charles Colson, who not only presided over the main church building restoration, but founded and built the local primary school. It is a reassuring thought that, as made clear by this memorial, he loved children and would clearly have been delighted by the new facilities provided for the present generation.

Conclusion

Meeting this challenge is an important part of the vision that drives the present congregation forward. We have taken the greatest care both to conserve the past traditions of the building and also to create new facilities to ensure that it has a bright and prayerful future to the glory of God and the benefit of local people.

Our Vote of Thanks

Introduction

To create new facilities for welcome and education by building in context on to a medieval church, even with modern architecture, is expensive. The new building cost £290,000 and fees and other expenses were another £70,000 approximately. These costs, which started six years ago, included some items as commissioning a model and diverting the route the Hertfordshire Way footpath takes through the churchyard.

Fund raising to support this development has therefore been a considerable challenge, particularly when costs of building grew substantially during the last four years. Approaches have been wide-ranging and, as the opening ceremony is held, there are many people and trusts the PCC and The Friends of St Nicholas Trust wish to acknowledge and thank.

These include

Foundation Funds – without which the whole project would have been impossible:

Peter Foundation legacy	£ 81,909
Patrick Frost Foundation	£100,000
PCC Building Fund Reserves	£ 5,990
Emmeline Boughey Donation	£ 6,675
Total	£194,574

Peter Fountain was a member of the original Project Team, but unfortunately died before it could be completed; One of the Friends' Trustees, who is also a trustee of the Patrick Frost Foundation brought our appeal to the attention of his co-trustees; The Emmeline Boughey Donation was a 1997 gift of £2,500, invested and realised by the PCC in 2007.

Grants, Donations and Others

Trust Name	Grants	Correspondent
South Square Trust	£1,750	Antony Woodall
The Drapers Charitable Trust	£1,500	Antony Woodall
SHA Charitable Fund	£1,000	The Earl of Kimberley
Garfield Weston Foundation	£5,000	Friends Trustees
JJF Charitable Fund	£250	Antony Woodall
Allchurches Trust	£200	Friends Trustees
Lennox & Wyfold Foundation	£1,000	Antony Woodall

Beatrice Laing Foundation	£3,500	Friends Trustees
Church & Community Fund	£2,000	Friends Trustees
Sir Jeremiah Colman Trust	£500	Antony Woodall
Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust	£1,500	Friends Trustees
Total	£18,200	

The Allchurches Trust is a charitable arm of our Insurers, Ecclesiastical Insurance; the Church & Community Fund is a central Church of England Fund; and the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Historic Churches Trust made a grant specifically to restore internal access to the tower stairs.

Parish Donors (P) and Donors from outside the Parish (E)

Emmeline Boughey (P)	The Earl and Revd Countess of Kimberley (P)
Sir George and Lady Bull (E)	Tom Luckock (E)
Andrew Coote (P)	Mary and Norman Oliver (P)
Annette Farrimond (E)	Robarts Family (P)
Joanna Holder (E)	Patricia Sherwood (P)
Margie de Courcy-Ireland (E)	Gary & Linda Stratton (P)
Antony Woodall (P)	Total: £42,568

One of the gifts was to The Furnishing Fund, recently opened to provide necessary equipment – tables, chairs, catering utensils, etc.

Thanksgiving Donations

Vivien Elvidge	In memoriam, for the life of Nora Margaret Smith
Irene Graham	For the marriage of Annabel & Patrick Davies
Michael Johnson	In memoriam, for the life of Ron Johnson
Carol Norris	In memoriam, for the lives of Jack & Joy Herapath
Bill & Edith Stock	In memoriam, for the life of Catherine Russell
Brian & Rita Stone	In memoriam, for the life of Evelyn Driver
Roger & Alison Wade	In memoriam for the life of Catherine Russell
June Wyld	In memoriam for the life of Ian Wyld
Total	£3,567

Other Donors

The remaining funds of approximately £90,000 have been provided from PCC and Friends income (1997-2007), not required for other purposes, by income tax recovered and by guarantees from two donors who agreed to meet any modest funding gap at the end of the project. There are therefore many other people to thank for their contributions, through stewardship giving, through collection plate gifts and for support of the Pig Roast Harvest Festival and other Friends events.

Services

A final thank you to those who designed, built and provided other services for the building:

Architects
Peter & Stephen Melvin, Atelier MLM
Structural Engineers
Scott Nelson, Dewhurst Macfarlane and Partners
Quantity Surveyor
Robert Martell, Robert Martell & Partners
Builders
Bakers of Danbury Ltd
Bakers of Danbury Project & Site Management Team
Ron Lowe, Terence Barber, Matthew Edwards, Craig Austin, Nicholas Bunn
Local Liaison with the builders
Geoff Abbey
Churchwarden / Friends Treasurer
Norman Oliver
Churchwarden / User Group Input
Linda Stratton
Project Team Members
Donald Jones, David Garrett
Friends Secretarial Help
Margaret Garrett
Maker of the model church
Percy Mark
Annual Pig Roast Organisers
Alex Cater and others

The Victorian dedication

Text – Psalm 122 v9

“Because of the House of the Lord our God I will seek thy good”

“...What if God should revive His work in the midst of the years and there should come into the gates of this ancient church, from the very day of its re-opening, more reverent and devout worshippers, children instructed in the law of the Lord, fathers and mothers sbringng their children to the Lord’s table, men and women full of good works and alms deeds, aye, even some of those who were divided from them by long estrangement and separation, rejoicing with them? “Brethren, we believe too little, we hope too little, even as we love too little. If we believe more, and love more, we shall hope more...”

...Dear brethren, we have done this work, which we dedicate to God to day for your soul’s salvation, to help to build you up in the faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ. This place, where prayer has been made for centuries past, shall be we hope for centuries to come a placce of refuge for sin laden souls, a place of comfort to mourners, of help to them that wrestle with their heart sin, of safety from the assaults of temptation, of quiet unobtrusive, uninterrupted uplifting of hands and hearts to the God of our salvation. And surely such places we need in this busy, talking, striving world in which we live.”

Extracts from the Bishop of Rochester's sermon, when he re-dedicated St. Nicholas, after its restoration by the Victorians in 1873.