

QUINTON CHURCH

Since England was re-converted to Christianity between 64 and 850 A.D. there would most likely have been a church building within the settlement. This would have been of daub and wattle construction and must have been destroyed and re-built many times. Even major archeological excavation would be unlikely to reveal evidence of it.

In 1225, the villagers of Wootton, who in times past had cleared the forest to the North as far as Hunsbury Hill for defence against the Danes, applied for a 'Licence to Assart' (cut down) the last remaining clumps of trees on their Southern boundary. This was the boundary with Quinton, which had been settled for far longer than its neighbour. The sudden change in the direction of the road between the two, from the straight and direct to the tight-twisting and meandering suggests that Quinton's Northern boundary was not merely traditional but closed, the forest marking it being reached only by the path winding around the ancient strips.

The greater part of the church as it now exists belongs to this thirteenth-century period but is a development of a much earlier building possibly the Tythe Barn, of which the South-West angle and the West window remain. The original stone building probably had an aisless Nave approximately of the same size as at present. At the same time, during the thirteenth century, the addition of a tower and a larger re-modelled chancel enabled Quinton to keep pace with her larger but much younger neighbours and the Piscina with a cinquefoiled head and circular bowl and the Mass Dial of the South door date from this period.

By 1428 Quinton had passed to John Longueville and Walter Bald and thence into the possession of John Dyve who had married Elizabeth, sister and heiress of John Longueville and who had levied a fine on 'Bald's Manor' in 1464.

The fifteenth century must have produced periods of heavy taxation and extremes of poverty. The Longuevilles, Lords of the Manor, were certainly not neutral during the long struggle between the houses of York and Lancaster. During this period the church was enlarged by the addition of a bellchamber stage to the tower and the Clerestory and new windows of cinquefoiled lights heralded and welcomed the new light of Renaissance and Reformation which was to illuminate the darkness of Feudalism. It could well be therefore that the fine levied on Bald's Manor in 1464 was to finance one or other of these projects.

Poverty had never been a stranger in Quinton and the Northampton Coroner's Scroll covering some two hundred cases between 1292 and 1315 records one of Quinton's most pathetic episodes.

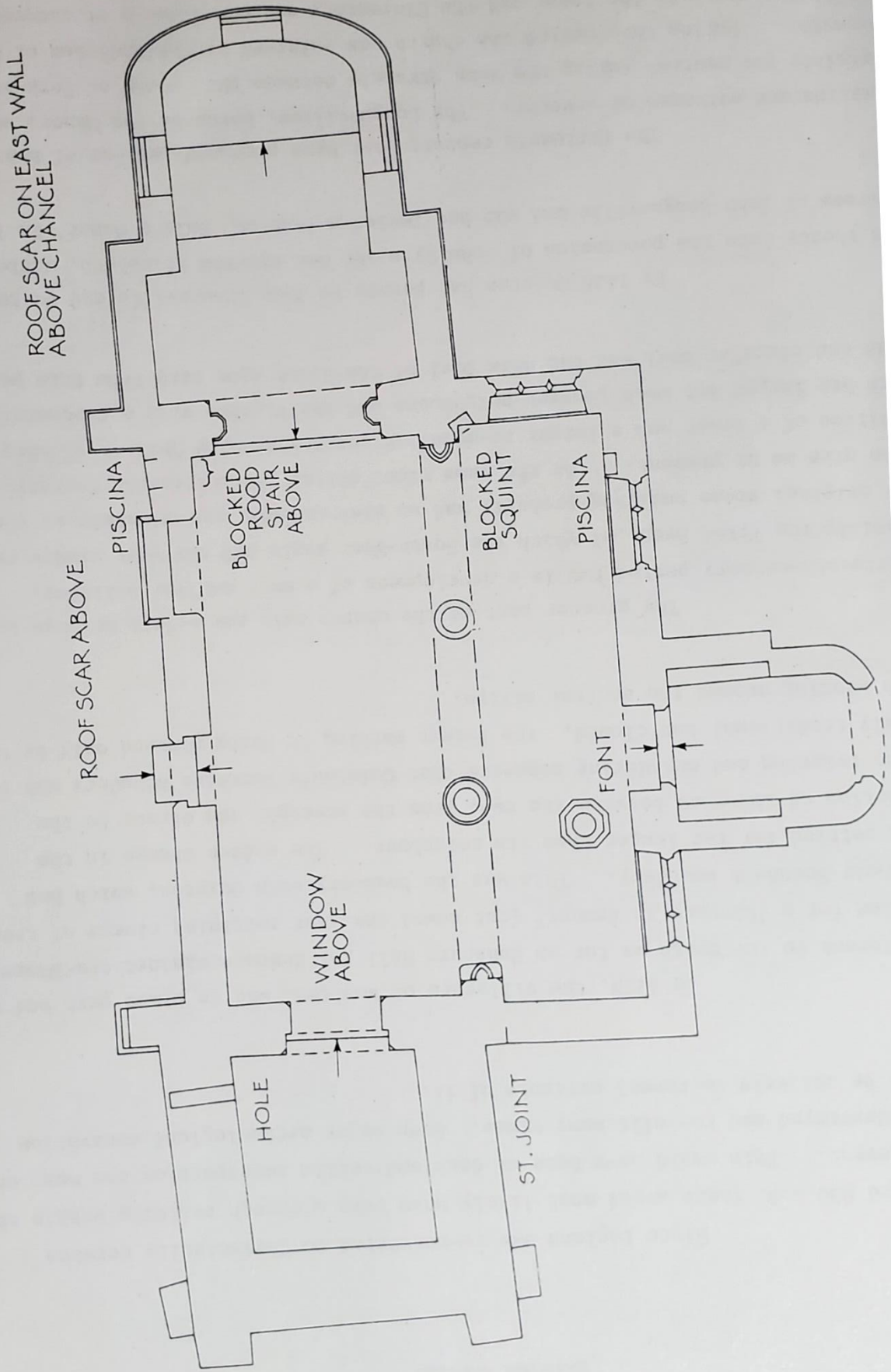
"One Osbert Scot of Quinton took sanctuary in the church of Saint John, Quinton, on the Tuesday before the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul he confessed before J. de Buk's (Coroner) and the four nearest townships. He adjured the realm of England and the port of Dover was assigned to him. He had no chattells."

Of what crime the hapless man was guilty there is no record, but in view of the date, 20th January, a hard winter and the Christmas and New Year feudal dues might well have reduced the peasant to the level of mere survival. Could there be a more poignant postscript to this pitiable episode than "He had no chattells."?

The square-headed rood-loft doorway high in the North-East corner of the Nave to which there must have been a substantial staircase from the now-blocked transept, bears silent witness to one of Quinton's former glories. The rood (Anglo-Saxon rod) properly means the cross without any figure on it. The great rood screens and lofts, one of which graced Quinton church often possessed among the intricate carving not merely a crucifix but also other figures connected with the crucifixion, such as the Virgin Mary and Saint John.

On October 10th, 1561, by Royal Decree, all rood lofts or screens were ordered to be abolished. It is not surprising that the inhabitants of Quinton suffered "some great distress and disquiet". Doubtless few, if any, understood the theological reasons behind what must have seemed to be yet another wave of legalised vandalism. There must have been many who could recall previous visits from "Crown Commissioners" for in those days of 'cuius regio, eius religio' the state: religion had been Catholic, Protestant, Catholic and Protestant again, all in the space of fourteen years.

GROUND PLAN - CHURCH OF S. JOHN THE BAPTIST - QUINTON.



EDWARD BAYLEY 1775-1813.

The greater part of the building as we see it today is the result of the major restoration undertaken during the incumbency of Edward Bayley. By 1787 the Montagues, Lords of the Manor of Quinton, were realising their assets. The more dynamic element of the English aristocracy were investing heavily in coal, iron and canals and were backing the engineer and the inventor. The Gunning family acquired the manor which enclosure and industrialisation had begun to depopulate. The Transeptal Chapel was in ruins, as must have been the Chancel. The services could have been held only in the South Aisle where Bayley and his depleted flock constituted a pathetic huddle.

The obstacles facing the modern restorer pale into insignificance beside those encountered then. The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars would probably have depleted both money and manpower in such a small hamlet. The responsibility for the maintenance of the Chancel had traditionally been the Rector's but the task of re-building and re-roofing both the Chancel and the Nave was indeed Herculean, particularly as much of the stone had been removed by opportunist thieves and the desperate poor.

Without the necessary material, finance or architectural skill the reconstruction of the old building was not even to be contemplated. The only possibility seems to have been to utilise all the available stone to the limit of locally available skills. A narrower Chancel with lowered roof-line and rounded East end appear to indicate that both stone and skills were at a minimal. The interior plastering almost certainly disguises what would otherwise offend by its crudity, a thesis substantiated by examination of the South Porch constructed of stone from the Transeptal Chapel.

It is tempting for us to conclude with regret that the restoration deprived us of a Squint and an aesthetically pleasing Mediaeval exterior. It would be more fair and realistic to applaud what was achieved and to surmise what was planned for "better days".

The crudely blocked North wall where the Transept had once stood was probably never intended as a permanent construction. Although superstition and the proximity of burial sounds prevented the restoration of a cruciform church via the extension of the North doorway, a church inscribed 'Populo' to the South and 'Deo' to the East surely intended a separate vestry entrance.

It may well have been only the adverse economic circumstances of the "Hungry Forties" which made the earlier restoration permanent.

LIST OF INCUMBENTS.

[Editor: I have amended this list slightly to reflect the spelling and dates on the 'List of Incumbents' board in the church – I have kept any post-nominals letters from Don's document]

- 1217 William de Mancestria
- 1221 Thomas de Leycestria
Radulphus
- 1274 Richard de Capella, subd
- 1301 Reginald de Stamford, Chaplin
- 1313 Mast. John Avenel, Acol.
- 1334 Will de Thrupmundeville
Will de Stokesbury
- 1342 Richard de Quenton
- 1348 Henry de Brokhole
- 1354 Stephen Kynnesman de Arthingworth, Priest
- 1361 John Aunfrey, Priest
- 1367 William Borneby, Priest
- 1377 Richard Peter de London
- 1380 William Furnais, Priest
Roger Slaitburne
- 1382 John de Loughton, Priest
- 1383 Sir Will Brayn de Pateshull, Priest
- 1394 Mast. Will Wotton, alias Luddelow, Priest
- 1397 John Morrell, Priest
- 1399 Thomas Lyng, Priest
- 1403 John Grantham, Chaplain
Roger Breton, Chaplain
- 1429 William Sewale, Priest
- 1467 Sir John Tabela, Priest
- 1471 Sir Richard Glover, Priest
- 1475 Sir John Martyn, Priest
Sir Attewell
- 1493 Sir Robert Hall
Mast. Henry Apwhyn
- 1493 Sir Robert Standysh, Chaplain
- 1511 Sir John Chaunterell, B.A.
- 1546 Sir John Ball, Priest

- 1547 Mr J. Chauntrell
John Johnson cl. M.A.
- 1586 Tobias Dalbie, Clerk
- 1606 Geoffrey Percival STB
- 1619 Edmund Easton M.A.
- 1621 Jeremiah Stephens B.D.
(appointed to Quinton by the Lords Commissioners)
- 1656 William Smith
- 1660 Jeremiah Stephens restored
- 1664 Joseph Bracegirdle
- 1717 Fulwood Hayden B.A.
- 1754 Thomas Watts B.A.
- 1775 Edward Bayley
- 1813 James Dyke Molesworth Mitchells
- 1839 Samuel Briggs Ward B.A.
- 1862 George Edward Cole M.A.
- 1877 Richard George Hancock
- 1887 Arthur Baskerville Polwhele B.A.
- 1927 T. George Stewart
- 1941 Louis Harry Corbet Hopkins M.A.B.D.
- 1964 Martin Edward Young M.A.
- 1978 Donald Scholey

NOTE

Between the 14th and 18th centuries are listed many incumbents whose names betray their Northamptonshire origin. The reasons for this phenomenon are inevitably connected with the stipend and the patronage. Even though clergy enjoyed the privileges accompanying literacy and numeracy and the status conferred by ordination, a small hamlet in Northamptonshire under a minor feudal overlord was not to be taken too seriously for too long. The emergence of titled priests is unlikely to have been a case of "the fool of the family entering the Church" but a way of ensuring both income and alliances during baronial wars. The practice was eradicated at the Protestant Reformation.



A FINE SOUTH-EASTERLY VIEW OF A MOST INTERESTING ENGLISH PARISH CHURCH



QUINTON CHURCH FROM THE NORTH EAST: severity of line and obscene scars testify to a tortured history



The first terracotta memorial of **JAMES DALGLEISH KELLIE MACCALLUM** and his wife **MARGARET**.

He is not the only Chief Constable of Northamptonshire to have chosen to reside in Quinton, though whether this is attributable to the desirability of the neighbourhood or to the criminal tendencies of the

local population remains problematic.



The north side: The outline of the earliest building with stunted tower and high transept can be clearly seen



NAVE AND SPLENDID CHANCEL ARCH: the blocked north doorway, Transeptal Chapel and Rood Loft Entrance are clearly visible



THE WEST WALL: the window now opening into the tower was, with the wall, a part of a much earlier building, whether this was a tythe barn or a primitive manor house is impossible to determine