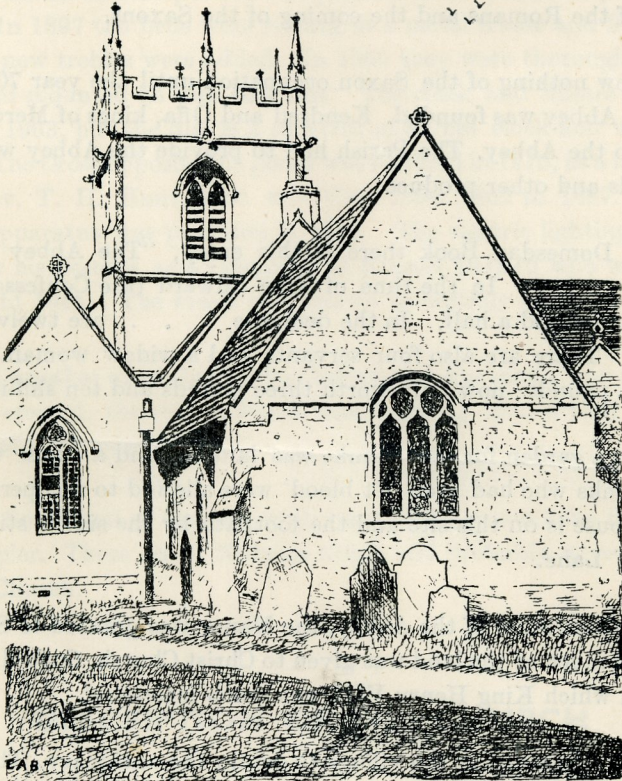


Notes on
Badsey and its Church



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PRICE - THREEPENCE

BADSEY AND ITS CHURCH

THAT parts of the Parish were inhabited before the Roman invasion is evident from the remains found on the higher parts of the Parish. These remains consist chiefly of rude pottery of the Iron Age. The Romans settled on the same spots. Coins of twenty Emperors, ranging from Claudius to Arcadius, have been found, as well as Samian pottery, brooches and other articles. Some pottery, very rough but evidently copies of the Roman ware, may belong to that dark period between the leaving of the Romans and the coming of the Saxons.

We know nothing of the Saxon occupation until the year 709, when Evesham Abbey was founded. Kendred and Offa, kings of Mercia, gave Badsey to the Abbey. The Parish had to provide the Abbey with eggs, beans, eels and other produce.

In the Domesday Book there is this entry, "The Abbey has also Baddesei . . . In the time of King Edward (the Confessor) there were six hides and a half. In the demesne . . . are twelve villans . . . There are also four servants and a widow woman. It was worth six pounds; now only worth three pounds and ten shillings."

In 1328 a garden for sick monks was laid out and a house was built where monks who had been 'let blood' were allowed to recuperate. The Manor House is on this site and the footpath by the side is still known as Monks' Lane.

At the dissolution of the Abbey, the Manor was granted to Sir Philip Hoby and much of the land was given to Christ Church, Oxford, the new college in which King Henry VIII was much interested.

There is not much in the village to detain the antiquary. The Manor House has been much changed since it was first built. The Stone House in the Cotswold style was built by Richard Hoby whose tomb is in the Chancel.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

WE have no record of any Church here before the Norman Conquest, but it most unlikely that there was none, though possibly it was only of wood. But in the 12th century a small stone Church was built. The Chancel was added in 1295 and was consecrated by the Bishop of St.

Asaph, as the Abbot of Evesham claimed to be exempt from the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Worcester. The Transept was built soon after. The Tower was not built until another century had gone by. There were originally only five bells but in 1706 they were turned into six. During the Commonwealth the gable over the East window had to be repaired. The Church, which had become somewhat dilapidated, was thoroughly restored in 1885 and a new south Aisle, Porch and Vestry were added. The Churchyard was extended to the main street in 1866, and the row of lime trees on the eastern portion was planted in 1879 and the yew hedge in 1884. In 1897 the bells were rehung in a metal frame and five years later two new trebles were added. In 1950 they were thoroughly overhauled and mounted on ball bearings. The clock and chimes were installed in 1903, but the dial is a survivor of an old clock and was fixed in 1788. The Cross opposite the porch was restored in 1910, as a memorial to the Rev. T. H. Hunt, who was Vicar from 1852 to 1887. A new heating apparatus was provided in 1945. The electric lighting was installed by his parents as a memorial to Ronald Ballard who was killed in action in 1941. The tower roof had to be entirely renewed in 1950.

In 1951 another extension to the Churchyard was made, and the Lych gate was erected, the cost of which was borne by Mrs. Arthur Sears in memory of her husband.

At the South end of the new wall, two carved stones have been built into the pier. These are of Norman origin and probably were from the original Church.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH

On entering the Church, notice the old door which, with the surrounding stones, was removed from its original position when the South wall was demolished and the new aisle built. On the eastern jamb, the remains of a Holy Water Stoup can be seen.

The hexagonal Font stem is a good specimen of the Decorated period. The bowl is modern. Opposite are the Memorials to those who fell in the two wars. To the east of these is an elaborate tablet to the memory of William Jarrett.

The linen fold panels of the Pulpit were purchased in 1529. The oak panelling round the Church, made from the old pews removed at the restoration, was placed on the walls in 1931 as a Memorial to Sir Julius Sladden, Churchwarden for 35 years. The old pews were given by William Seward who also gave the Altar and the Rails in 1730.

On the north side of the Sanctuary is the fine tomb of Richard Hoby, who died in 1616, and his wife Margaret. The figure of the lady is much worn away. This probably occurred when the gable collapsed in 1654. The tomb was erected by the daughter who married Richard Delabere. There is no inscription and apparently there never was one.

The East Window is of unusual character. When the gable was rebuilt, instead of renewing the old tracery, the builders used the old stones to make a round-headed top instead of the original pointed one. This was the fashion then. The general effect is remarkably good.

The transept used to be assigned to the use of the inhabitants of Aldington, and, as in the olden days they paid one third of the Church expenses, they had the privilege of electing a third Warden.

There are two pictures in the Church. The Raising of the Widow's Son, by Otto Venius (1556-1634), hangs on the north wall. The other, the Virgin and Child, is on the aisle wall. It is by Carlo Cignani.

The arch leading into the Tower is of the full height of the nave, and the Screen across the lower part commemorates the Victory at the end of the First World War. The large West Window contains the only fragment of old coloured glass left to us. A close inspection will reveal the picture of a Chalice, which is now fixed upside down.

A spiral stair leads to the Bell Chamber. There are eight Bells which, with the exception of the new trebles, were cast by Clark and Bushell of Evesham. The Tenor weighing just over 15 cwt., has the following inscription: "MVtaVIIt VIgILans In seX nos CVra robertI hILL IbI VIC gVL CLark effICIt arte sVa ano." This may be translated: "The watchful care of Robert Hill, Vicar here, changed us into six. Wm. Clark did the work by his own skill." The large letters being all Roman numerals, added up give the date, 1706.

The tower is of excellent design. It has eight pinnacles, some fine gargoyles and deeply recessed windows, and fine bold diagonal buttresses.