

# A SHORT GUIDE TO THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, CHADDESSEN

## THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The Domesday Book gives a few details as to the state of Chaddesden in 1086 when it records: *'Land of Henry de Ferrers. In Cededsene 4½ carucates and 2 parts of 1 bovate of land taxable.<sup>1</sup> Land for as many ploughs. 11 sokemen (freemen), 10 villeins (villagers) and 5 bordars (smallholders) now have 6 ploughs. Meadow, 28 acres. Woodland pasture ½ league long and 5 furlongs wide; underwood as much.<sup>2</sup> Value before 1066 £4; now £3.'*

That there was no church here until later is suggested by a document of 1291 which records only Spondon Church and its chapel – the chapel presumably being that of Stanley, which contains items of Norman work whereas Chaddesden does not.



**The church from the south-west**

The first mention of a chapel at Chaddesden occurs in 1347 when Roger Norbury, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, granted rights of burial to the chapel of Chaddesden, as the inhabitants pleaded that due to their distance from the mother church at Spondon and because floods took place at different times of the year, it was often necessary to keep corpses unburied for many days at a time. The request was granted subject to the whole of the burial fees being paid to the Vicar of Spondon. In all probability, therefore, the chapel had been founded some years previous to 1347.

Henry de Chaddesden, Archdeacon of Leicester died in 1354 and was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral. His cousins Nicholas and Geoffrey de Chaddesden were the executors of his will

along with Henry de Landa, a chaplain, and they established a chantry in the little chapel at Chaddesden, where three priests were to sing masses for the souls of Henry de Chaddesden, his ancestors, benefactors and all the faithful departed. With the chantry priests and the parish priest all working from within the same building, it was not long before the original chapel was considerably enlarged to create much-needed additional space.

Between the years 1354–1362 various lands in Horsley, Derby and Chaddesden were granted to the new chantry to provide for its upkeep. In 1374 Nicholas and Geoffrey de Chaddesden endowed the chantry with a tenement in London and later appointed a fourth chaplain. In 1381 the same benefactors gave three messuages, two tofts, 128 acres of arable land and 6 acres of meadow at Derby, Breadsall and Chaddesden to the chantry. An interesting point to note here is that the Chaddesden Enclosure Map of 1792 shows a large field containing about 12 acres called '*Chantrey Close*' near to the present Football Academy on Morley Road.

The records of All Saints' Church, Derby, relate that in 1532 a church ale was held in Chaddesden in order to raise funds towards the completion of All Saints' tower. The ale was made by Thomas Parker and Thomas Hornby '*whose sum mounted to xxv li viij s vj d and thereof spendeth there in necessary expences xxxiiij s x d.*' It can easily be seen that the net profit was £23 13s 8d – a large sum for those days.

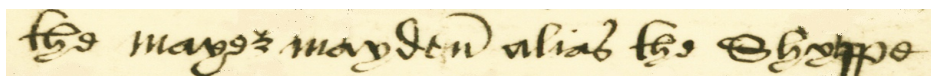
The Reformation of the Church of England begun by King Henry VIII resulted in the dissolution of the monasteries and chantries and the confiscation of their property. The Chantry Roll drawn up in 1546

1 Carucate – Approx. 120 acres; Bovate – Approx. 15 acres.

2 League – A variable length, typically around 1½ miles.

to facilitate this process noted that the chapel at Chaddesden '*is distante from the parisshe churche of Spondon a myle and more also there is a ryver betwyxte them which ryver at every small flodde doth flowe so highe that no man kan escape over itt sometyme by the space of iij or v dayes, for whyche cause the sayd Chappell was fyrste founded.*'

In 1550 most of the chantry's assets were sold by the Crown to Sir Edward Moleneux and Robert Brooke for £463; at the same time other property previously belonging to the chantry was sold to Humphrey Cave and William Byrton for just over £5, this included an inn on the old London Bridge in St. Magnus' Parish variously called The Mermaids or The Ship. Now the chantry was no more and its priests pensioned off, but the chapel and the parish priest carried on much as before serving the people of Chaddesden; in return the minister received tithes on certain items produced in the parish – originally these would have been stored in one of the two tithe barns (the first mention of a tithe barn occurring in an indenture of 1528 whilst at least one was still in existence in 1704).



### **Part of a 16th-century document referring to the chantry's property on London Bridge**

The Chaddesden Enclosure Award of 1793 refers indirectly to the church, for in this document two allotments were made to Thomas Manlove, the Vicar of Spondon (Chaddesden at this time still being subject to the mother church). The first allotment, number 47, judged by the Enclosure Commissioners to be of the net value of £33 p.a., contained 21a 2r 30p '*situate lying and being in the said Derby field at a place there called Willow bed flatt*' and was granted in lieu of all the vicarial or small tithes; the second allotment, number 47a, contained only 0a 3r 10p and was given to Thomas Manlove and his successors as '*an equivalent to and full compensation for all his Common right belonging to his Glebe Lands within the said Liberty of Chaddesden.*'

The next century witnessed the restoration of Chaddesden Church in 1857–1859. Judging by contemporary reports this appears to have been sympathetically carried out (for more information see the section on Structural Details), which unfortunately was not often the case with Victorian restorations in general.

The Second World War had adverse effects for the church. In 1940 two bombs fell nearby, the force of the blast destroying much of the stained glass in the east windows – see the Structural Details section below. After the war, with the construction of large new housing estates in the north west of the parish, a new church, St. Philip's, was built in 1954–1955 and as a consecration gift St. Mary's Church gave the smaller of its two old fonts to the new church. The 1980s saw the development of the huge Oakwood housing estate when part of St. Mary's ecclesiastical parish was transferred to the new Church on Oakwood.

The church floor was relaid in 1975–1976 and it is interesting to compare the £6,000 bill for this particular project with the £1,700 cost for the major restoration of 1857–59 described below, especially as the nineteenth-century restoration involved much more work! During 1976, the contractors relaying the floor found a vault of the Wilmot family in the north aisle (between the monument of Sir Edward Wilmot Bt. and the north door), this vault was covered by large slabs which in turn were covered when the new floor was put down. Two skulls and a quantity of bones were also found just in front of the screen where they were left. More recent work has included the rebuilding of the south wall of the churchyard in three phases between 2010–2017 and major roof repairs in 2019.

One point worth mentioning concerns the actual dedication of the church itself; although named after St. Mary the Virgin since at least the eighteenth century, the will of William Harryson (1538) one of the chantry priests mentions '*ye chapell of sent John baptyst in chasdyn*' and the will of William Newton refers to '*the churche of sent John baptyst in chadisden*' (1540). The confusion perhaps stems from the dedication of a mediaeval chantry altar inside the church being mistaken for that of the church itself.

## STRUCTURAL DETAILS ETC

As mentioned above, a chantry was established here after the death of Henry de Chaddesden in 1354; the mid fourteenth-century architecture of the chancel and aisles pointing to a substantial enlargement of the building westwards to accommodate the chantry priests.

The small length of bevelled masonry below the piscina at the east end of the north aisle suggests that the stonework above it once formed part of an external wall-face of the original chapel, which probably consisted of just a nave and chancel.

Examples of the original Decorated style windows remain in the north wall of the chancel and in the north and east walls of the north aisle; externally the north doorway shows evidence that it once possessed a high-pitch porch.

In the Perpendicular period (possibly about 1450 A.D.) the church was enlarged again by further extending the north and south aisles to the west, making them flush with the west face of the tower as can be seen in the sketch plan. The west window of the north aisle together with the earlier east window of the south aisle and the nearby window in the south wall of the chancel are good examples of Perpendicular workmanship – tradition relating that the last two mentioned windows were brought here from Dale Abbey.

The large three-staged tower was also built c.1450 with apparently no buried foundations. Externally over its west door are two coats of arms carved in the stone, that on the left hand pertains to the Sacheverell family whereas that on the right hand appears to be unknown.

Smaller details worth looking for inside the church include the stone gospel-desk (with a little cupboard below) on the north wall of the chancel and just a few feet to the west a recess which probably once held the church plate. At the east ends of both aisles are sedile and piscina niches of comparable design, no doubt for the use of the chantry priests serving the side altars.<sup>3</sup> In the south wall of the chancel just a few yards away is another richly carved sedile and piscina.



Stone gospel-desk



Sedile and piscina in the chancel

The remnants of a rare seventeenth-century wall painting can be seen on the wall plaster above the small doorway in the south wall of the chancel. It comprises two concentric circles formed by small ochre-coloured dots. The space in-between the two circles is filled by an interlaced design of some sort. The inner circle, which is slightly more than a yard in diameter, contains seven short lines of Black Letter text, which I finally managed to decipher in 2008. It is a quote from the Book of Revelation, Chapter 3, Verse 20: '*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*' The bottom line of the text includes a date which, although partially eroded, appears to be 1623. It seems probable that the wall painting was intended to inspire participants in the Communion service at the point in time when the communion table stood at the lower (western) end of the chancel.

<sup>3</sup> Sedile – A stone seat for the priest; Piscina – A stone basin for the priest to wash his hands and cleanse the chalice.

The triptych at the east end of the chancel was installed in 1904 as a memorial to Sir Henry Wilmot V.C. and bears the figures of Our Lord, St. George, St. Chad and other saints.



**The triptych at the east end of the chancel**

The ancient oak rood-screen that separates the chancel from the nave seems to be approximately of the same date as the tower (c.1450) and is covered with carvings of grotesque faces, dragons and mythical beasts, whilst on the east side of the screen are two 12" figures both carrying books. The rood or cross (not the original one) from which the screen takes its name can now be seen in the sedile in the wall of the south aisle.

Below the east window of the north aisle is a reredos frame with a bracket for the statue of a saint on either side. A similar frame exists in the south aisle and now contains a memorial painting; a small blocked up doorway in the north-east angle of this aisle formerly gave access to the rood-loft stairs. Archdeacon Butler's visitation to the church in 1824 recorded the existence of a gallery at the west end of the church but this was removed even before the restoration took place.

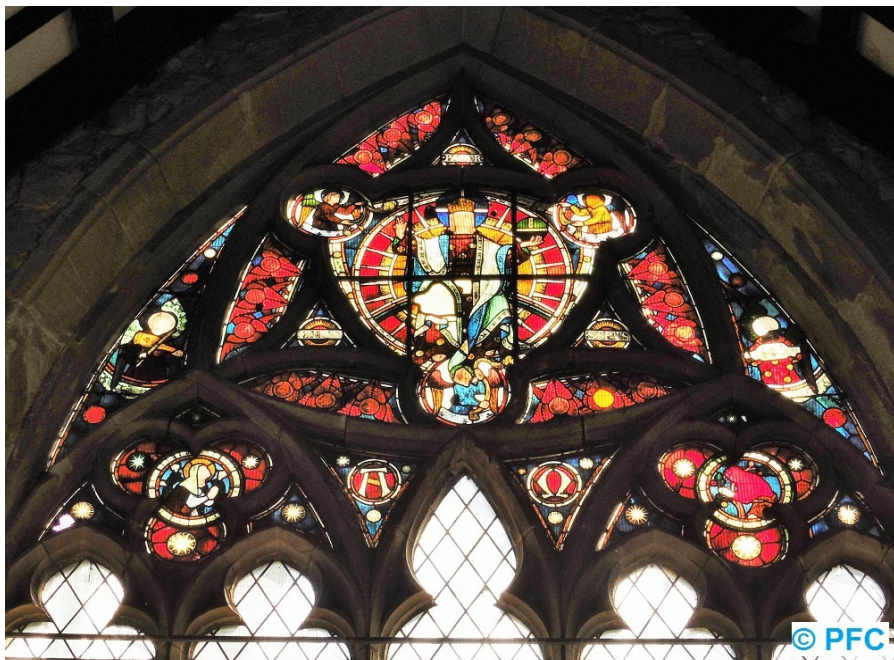
Some years ago the church possessed three fonts; a Victorian alabaster font given in 1859 in memory of Miss Maria Wilmot, a small stone font which was given to St. Philip's Church in 1955 and lastly the massive old stone font (3' 4" in diameter), possibly the original fourteenth-century one.

Substantial alterations to the fabric of the church were brought about in the 1857–1859 restoration. The main items were the lowering of the floor to its original level; the roofs were raised back to their original pitch (a previous roof level can still be seen inside the church on the tower wall) and renewed; the south wall of the nave with its doorway was totally rebuilt, three new windows added and the piscina and the sedile reinserted in their former positions and finally the church was furnished throughout with massive oak benches. From a contemporary report it appears that the stone used in the restoration was brought by the local farmers from the quarries on Morley Moor some five miles away.

Much of the stained glass now remaining in the church is Victorian in origin. Prior to the 1940 bomb damage mentioned above, the most outstanding example (as can be judged from old photographs) was the main east window in the chancel – this was designed in 1862 by Clayton & Bell of London as a memorial to Robert Edward Eardley Wilmot, the eldest son of Sir Henry Sacheverell Wilmot of Chaddesden Hall, and cost £329, the money being raised by private subscription.

The lower part of the window consisted of five compartments, the centre three showing details of the crucifixion, that to the north carrying a representation of the soldiers casting lots for the garments of Christ and the south illustrating the miracle recorded in Matthew 27, v.52 – *'and the graves were*

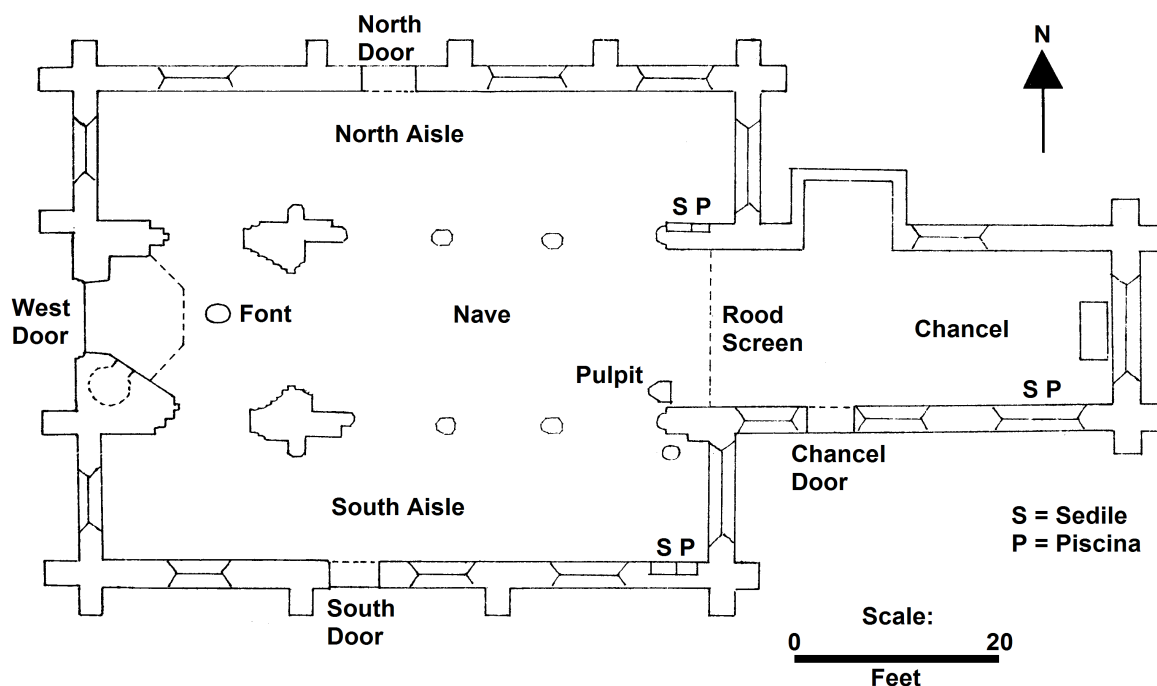
opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose.' All that now survives of this glass is the upper section, with its representation of the Lord in Glory framed by winged angels, below which are medallions of the Virgin Mary and Eve. The window at the east end of the north aisle was also greatly damaged by the bomb blast, this was another memorial to Robert E. E. Wilmot, this time from his family, and again designed by Clayton & Bell. It took as its theme the life of Joseph, but the surviving glass is now confined to the upper part, which contains the Wilmot coat of arms and a few other designs.



**Stained glass in the main east window**

The pulpit in the nave was presented to St. Mary's Church by the parishioners in 1897 to commemorate 60 years of Queen Victoria's reign.

### SKETCH PLAN OF THE CHURCH



### LOCAL CHARITIES

At various stages in their history, most if not all of the various Chaddesden charities have had some connection with St. Mary's Church and its officials. Here are brief details:

1. The six almshouses which stood just to the west of the church were founded prior to 1638 by Robert Wilmot for six poor people (four men and two women) and were demolished in 1961. When this same Robert Wilmot wrote his will in 1638, he directed that his eldest son Robert and his heirs should pay to the inhabitants of the almshouses the sum of 1s each per week as well as providing them all with cloth 'to make them shirts and smocks' and black gowns. The founder's grandson, yet another Robert Wilmot, left a bequest in his will of 1671 directing that £400 should be invested in land in order to give another shilling a week forever to each of the six people in the almshouses.

2. In 1680 Henry Gilbert of Locko, acting in accordance with the will of his late uncle, Thomas Gilbert, granted in trust '*all that house, Barnes, Buildings, Edifices, Garden, Orchard & Two Acres and a half of Pasture Ground enclosed by the same more or less commonly called or known by the Name of Nine Oakes standing situate and being in the Liberty & Lordship of Chaddesden aforesaid,*' to provide the annual sum of £1 in order to give a shilling to each of Chaddesden's twenty poorest inhabitants in the church each Christmas Day.<sup>4</sup> Shrewdly, Henry Gilbert inserted a clause to the effect that any profit over and above £1 p.a. that the Nine Oakes estate made was to be handed back to himself or his heirs.

3. Robert Walker of Chaddesden in his will dated April 21st, 1709 made provision for the education of three poor boys born or bred in Chaddesden by bequeathing his close called Stone Flatt Pingle (off Wood Road) in order to provide for each child '*the yearly pension of Eight Shillings per Annum to be continued to every Boy for the space of Five years only,*' the boys initially being chosen by Robert Walker's niece Ann Middleton.

4. In 1737 Robert Wilmot of Chaddesden gave part of Stamfords Old Yard (just a few yards to the south-west of the church's main door) as the site for a school house; the formal deed of gift goes on to mention that the schoolhouse was two bays in length and the schoolmaster lived on the premises. The schoolhouse subsequently became the Verger's Cottage and was demolished in 1956, however, the foundation stone (actually dated 1736) can still be seen in the south wall of the churchyard.

5. John Berrysford of Walworth, Surrey gave in his will dated March 22nd 1813 the interest of £600 Stock in 3% Consolidateds (subsequently reduced by Legacy Duty to £540) to be given to the poor widows and fatherless children of Chaddesden. He also gave to the parish all rents and profits from his house 29 Camden Street, Walworth, to be applied to the same cause, although a legal technicality ruled this part of his bequest void.

## CHURCH BELLS



**The smallest bell (no.1)**

The tower contains three bells (numbered from E–W) with the following details inscribed upon them:-

1. '*Celorum Xte placeat tibi rex sonus iste*' – May this sound please Thee O Christ, king of Heaven. Dating from c.1510, its founder's mark is attributed to the Mellours family of Nottingham.
2. '*God save his Church 1652*', the founder's mark in this case being that of George Oldfield.
3. '*All you that hear my doleful sound Repent before you com to the ground. 1742, R.S.C.W.*'

Just below the haunch of this bell are the words '*Thomas Hedderley, Founder*'. Also on the bell are three small stamps, two of them representing crowned heads possibly of Edward I (reigned 1272–1307) and Queen Eleanor ... perhaps Hedderley had acquired a set of ancient stamps, which he continued to apply to his new work.

## MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS, ETC

Many inscriptions exist within the church and a list of the most interesting is given below:-

1. WALL OF NORTH AISLE: A monument to the memory of Sir Edward Wilmot, Bt., M.D. (died 1786) beneath which are deposited the remains of Sir Robert Mead Wilmot, Bt. (died 1793).
2. PILLAR OF NAVE: A monument to Elizabeth, wife of Edward Maskelyne, who died in 1762.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Gilbert's will had been drawn up in 1657.

3. EAST WALL OF SOUTH AISLE: Here the old stone reredos carries a painting in memory of Arthur Alfred Wilmot, Rector of Morley with Smalley and youngest son of Sir Henry Sacheverell Wilmot.

4. NORTH WALL OF CHANCEL: A memorial to Constance Harriett Wilmot (died 1916), daughter of Sir Henry Sacheverell Wilmot – behind this can be seen the remains of a former doorway or window.

5. OUTSIDE: Out of interest this rather unusual monument is included ... a stone tablet which once could be seen leaning against a wall in the churchyard. It read as follows:

*DEAR OLD GREYMAN  
A FAVOURITE HORSE  
(THE GIFT OF SIR EDWARD BOYLE, BART. M.P.)  
BURIED HERE NOVEMBER 18, 1919 AGED 28 YEARS  
HE DID WHAT HE COULD  
T. H. TOMLINSON*

Apparently the tablet was originally fixed to the wall surrounding the park, but when the wall was demolished the stone found its way into the churchyard. It seems to have vanished in the 1950s.

### **CHURCH REGISTERS**

In 1538, Thomas Cromwell ordered that details of all weddings, christenings and burials should be kept in each parish; these early records were in most parishes written on paper and often upon loose sheets. In 1598, it was directed that parishes should purchase parchment registers and that records from the older registers should be entered into the new ones, unfortunately this copying was not always carried out. Chaddesden's earliest register may therefore have dated from 1538 but in 1824 when Archdeacon Butler visited the parish he noted that there were six volumes of registers, the earliest of which began in 1598 being in a tolerable state of preservation.

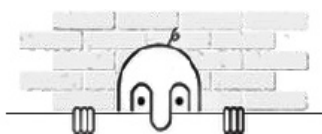
Unfortunately the earliest register now extant dates from only 1718, the whereabouts of the older register being unknown, if indeed it still exists! The loss of the old volume is lessened somewhat by the fact that the Bishops' Transcripts of the Chaddesden Registers preserved at Staffordshire Record Office date from 1663, enabling us to fill some of the gaps between 1598 and 1718.

### **VICARAGES**

In the 16th century, the minister serving Chaddesden would have lived in the parsonage, which is first referred to in a document of 1528 (the site of which, like the tithe barns mentioned earlier, is unknown). A glebe terrier of 1719 described it as: *'one house consisting of three little Bays of Building, a little Garden or Orchard lying on the South side of it containing about a Rood of ground.'*<sup>5</sup>

The Victorian vicarage on Chaddesden Lane with its landmark tall chimney-stacks dated back to 1851. When it was sold in May 1964 for £9,750, the house was demolished and the Vicarage Drive estate built. The latest vicarage is still on Chaddesden Lane, but is a much newer property, dating from 2006.

© Peter Cholerton 1976 and 2022



Click me to go Home  
(Chaddesden Historical Group)

---

5 Glebe terrier – An inventory of the sources of a benefice's income, details of any properties held, local customs providing revenue, etc.