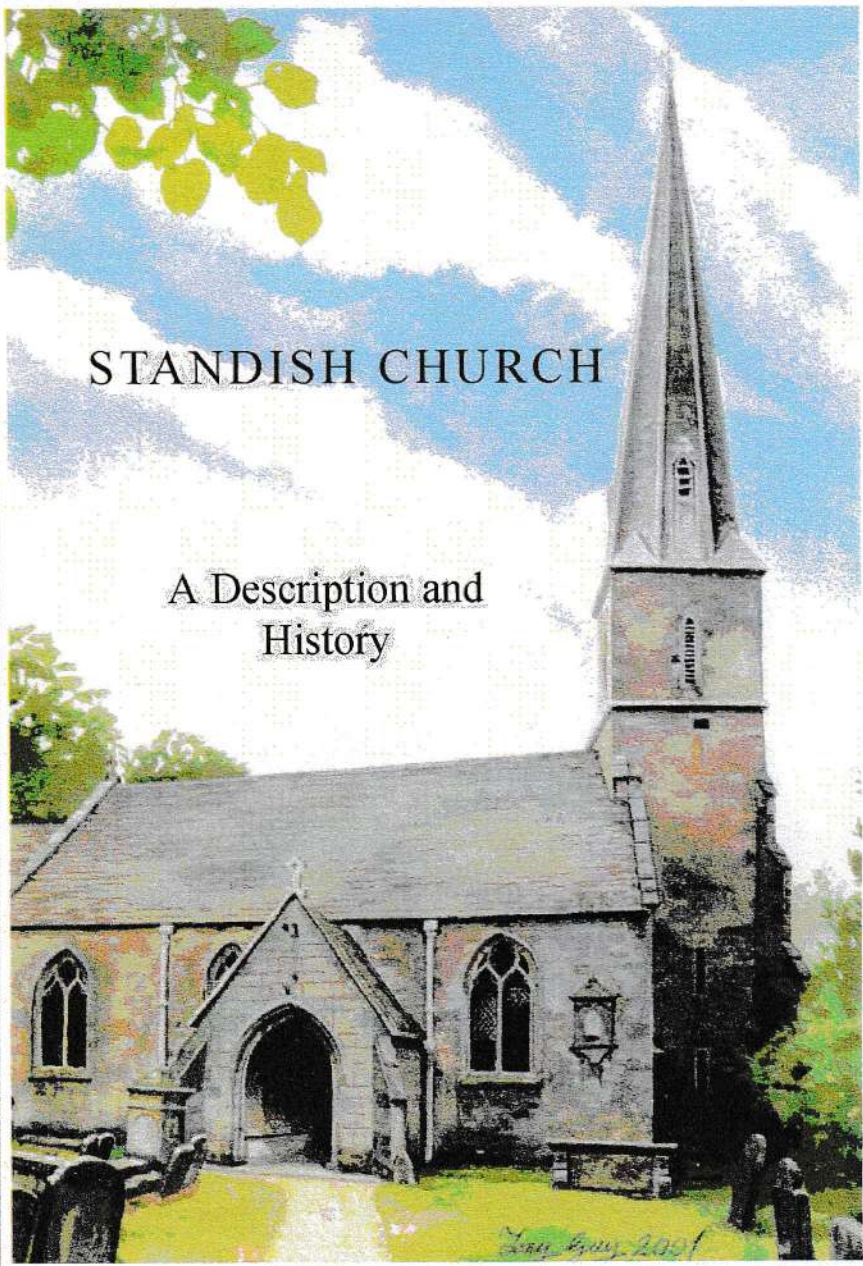


# STANDISH CHURCH

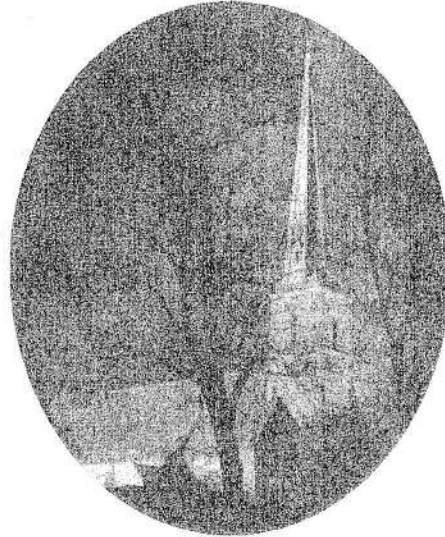
A Description and  
History



# STANDISH CHURCH

A Description and History

by Bonham Bazeley



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STANDISH PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

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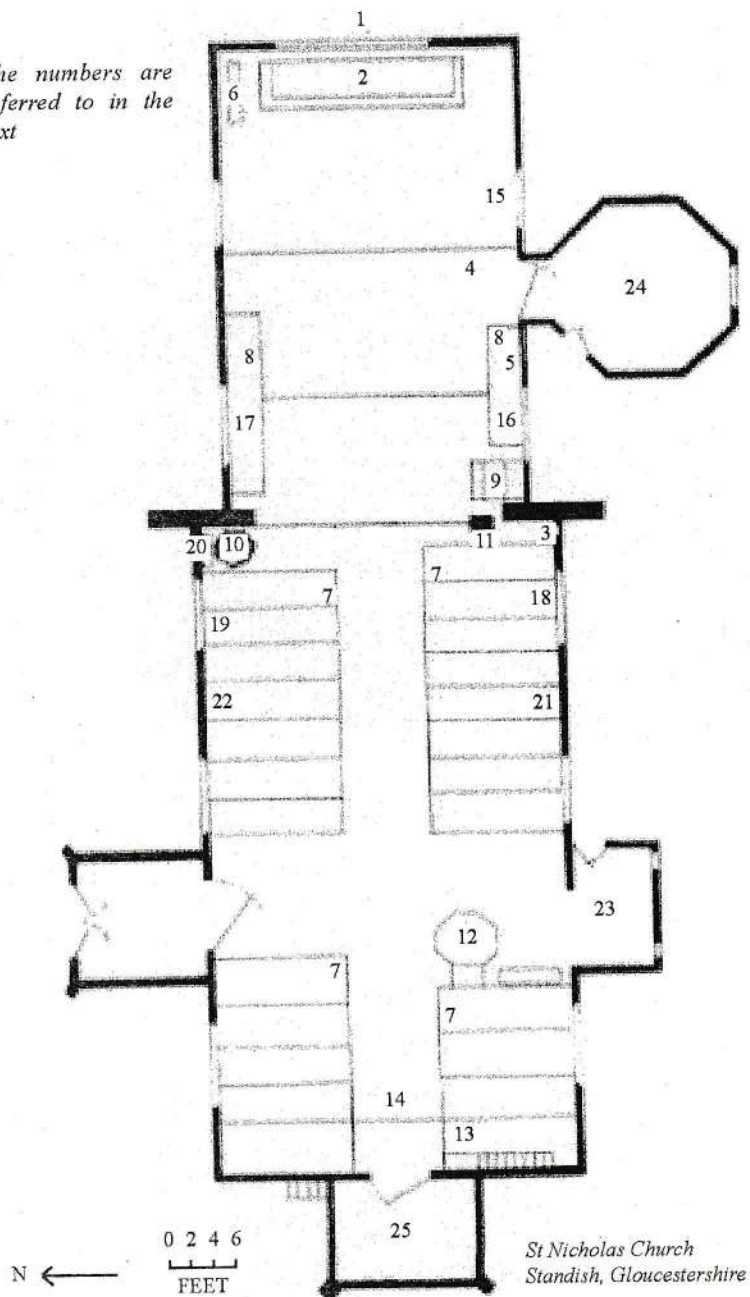
Reprinted 1984

Reprinted and revised 2001

*Proceeds towards the upkeep of the church*

Cover: *Painting of Standish Church by Tony Guy*  
Above: *Standish spire floodlit on a winter's evening*

The numbers are referred to in the text





## *St Nicholas Church*

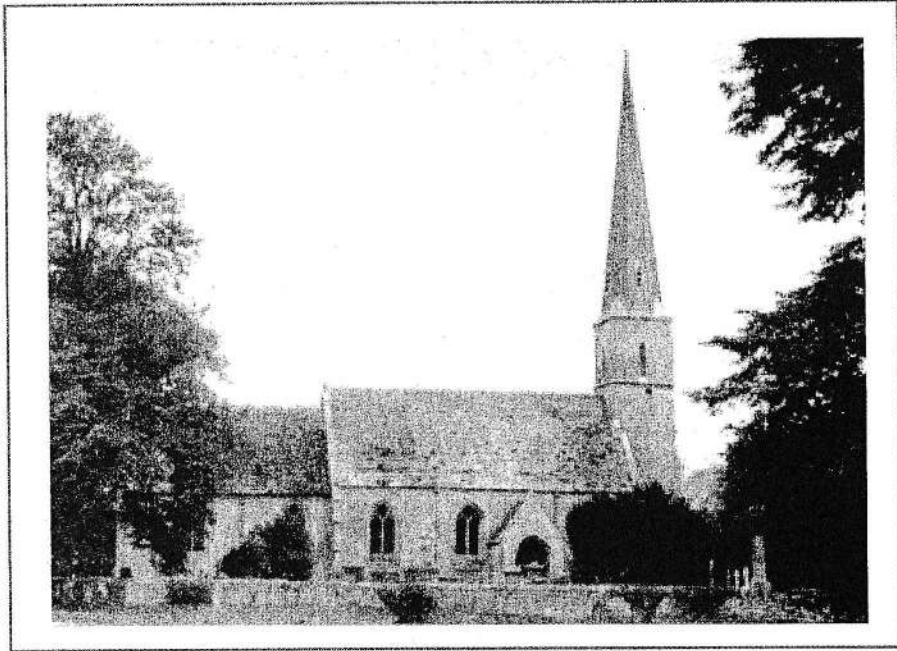
### *Standish*

STANDISH is a scattered village, composed mainly of smallholdings and lacking shop, school, post office, or inn. But in the heart of the village is the Church - and what a church it is! - with high nave and choir, beautiful windows and a pencil-thin spire which soars above the old lime trees shading the churchyard.

For miles around this spire breaks in upon the view across the green fields, as it has done for more than six hundred years. The people of Standish have particular affection for this spire, proudly surmounted by the golden cock, and in the winter months it is beautifully flood-lit.

Six hundred years is a long life for a building, but the church is as sound as a bell; as sound as it was on the day it was finished and good for another six hundred years into the future - into an unknown, unpredictable exciting future, as different from today as today is from the time of Edward II, whose body, after the foul murder in Berkeley Castle, rested a night in this little church on its way to be buried in Gloucester Cathedral.

This was in December, 1327, when Abbot Toky's church at Standish was still new; but in all probability it was built on the site of



*Standish Church from the north*

an earlier church, of which part of the east end is all that remains. Certainly it has hardly been altered since, the population never having increased. The Christian settlement on this site was founded by Osric, King of Mercia, in the ninth century. The Church House was possibly the original building, later enlarged and used as an almonry after the construction of the present church.

It was built in the Early English style of architecture by the monks of the Benedictine Order, living in what is now Standish Court. The rather large chancel, lower than the nave, and the finely proportioned tower and spire are notable for a country church. The visitor cannot help but be impressed by the majestic stone walls, Cotswold roof (containing 12,000 tiles, it is said) and inviting porch.

## THE EAST WINDOW

Inside, the eyes are quickly drawn to the exceptionally beautiful east window (1) (not quite in the middle of the wall); the tracery is particularly fine, and is an object of study by students of architecture from far and wide. It is in the Decorated style, and tends towards the "Flamboyant", so common on the continent yet rare in this country. The absence of drip mouldings, seldom omitted in the Decorated style, indicates a date fairly clearly - around 1310.

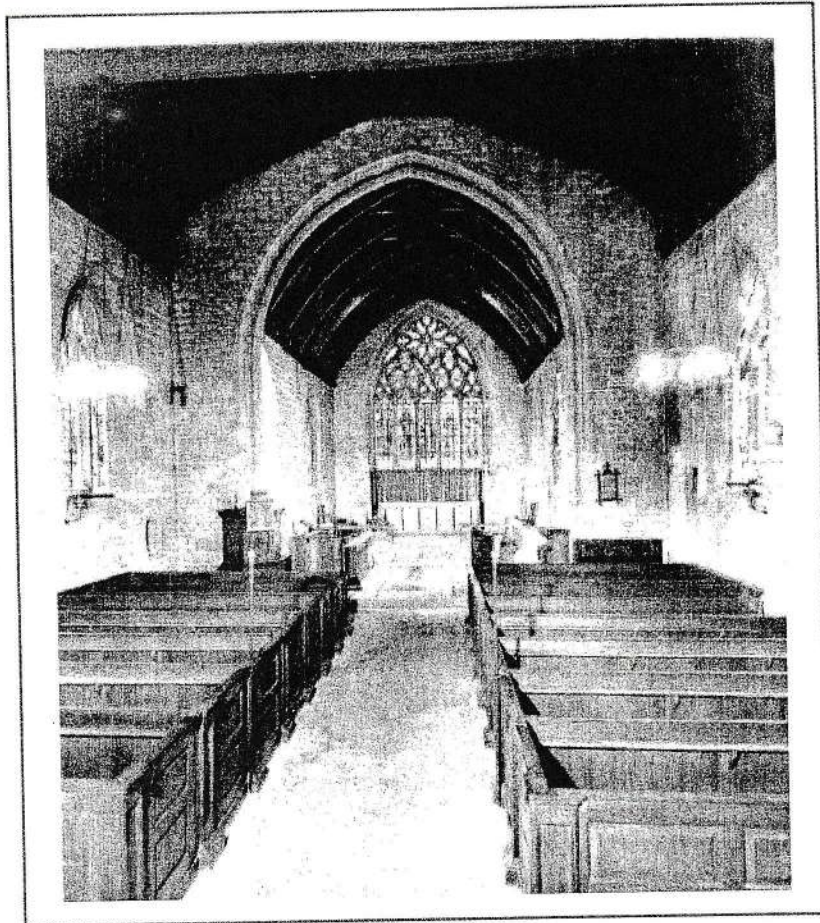
The glazing, by Messrs Clayton and Bell, was placed in 1874, illustrating the creed, and is a combined memorial to Sophia Merriman, Gertrude Sheringham, Richard Potter, Lawrence Heyworth, Samuel Butcher and John Baverstock.

## THE CHANCEL

Beneath the east window is the fine English altar (2), given in memory of Mrs Nathaniel Hawkins of Oakey Farm by her daughter Mrs Goodman, and designed by Mr Stephen Dykes Bower in 1927. The altar cross and candlesticks are a memorial to Archdeacon Sheringham (his grandfather).

The chancel arch forms a magnificent frame for this view to the east end and emphasizes the simplicity of this church. The staircase to the south of the arch (3) led at one time to the loft above the rood-screen, erected in the 15th century but removed about 1550. In order to keep the inner line of the church clear, a false buttress is built on to the south wall of the nave to accommodate this staircase.





*View towards the east window  
(before installation of new choir stalls)*

On the north wall of the chancel can be seen marks left by the original organ, placed there in 1867. To make room for it the memorial to Sir Henry Winston (21) was then banished to its present position on the south wall of the nave, but in 1947 the organ was enlarged, re-voiced and removed to the west end of the church.

On the south side of the chancel are three grave slabs (4). One of 1582, is that of Thomas Winston, son of Henry Winston, mentioned above. Another, is of a member of the Yate family of Colethrop, and the third the son of Dr Benson, a Vicar of Standish in the 18th century. The south wall of the chancel has on it an elaborate marble monument (5) to the memory of other members of the Yate family.

### **BISHOP FRAMPTON**

On the north side of the altar (6) there is the tomb of Bishop Frampton, probably the most notable resident of Standish in all its long history. Born at Pimperne, Dorset in 1622, he graduated BA at Oxford in 1641, but was precluded from proceeding to MA because he would not sign the Solemn League and Covenant. He was ordained by Bishop Skinner of Oxford, privately, since Parliament was already seeking to suppress bishops. After some years of work on behalf of the "plundered" ministers (those discharged from their livings by the Puritans), he went in 1655 to the Levant, being one of the earliest English missionaries. He came home to marry and with his wife returned to the east until 1671. In 1673 he became Dean of Gloucester and in 1680, Bishop. He formed a great love for Standish where he lived from 1685 onwards.

After the revolution of 1688 Frampton found himself in an intolerable position. Although he had protested against the romanising practices of King James, he yet could not take an oath of allegiance to William and Mary until James should release him from his previous oath. So he became the leader of the "Non-Jurors" in the country, clergy who for conscience sake suffered ejection from their livings. Frampton was dispossessed of his Bishopric of Gloucester but was allowed to live at Standish until his death in 1708.



Being the only man in orders present, he continued to conduct services and in all respects act as Vicar. Being barred from the pulpit he overcame this difficulty by catechising the children from the chancel step thereby edifying his congregation considerably! During these years he was held in such good respect that it was quite usual for a clergyman, on appointment to a benefice in Gloucester, to visit Bishop Frampton at Standish and obtain his consent, before accepting the preferment.

### THE PEWS

Where the Winston memorial now stands was formerly the site of the pulpit; the pews (7) were so arranged as to give a good view of it to the greatest possible number of the congregation, some of them being built square. They were probably higher than they are now, the topmost panels having been removed in 1866.

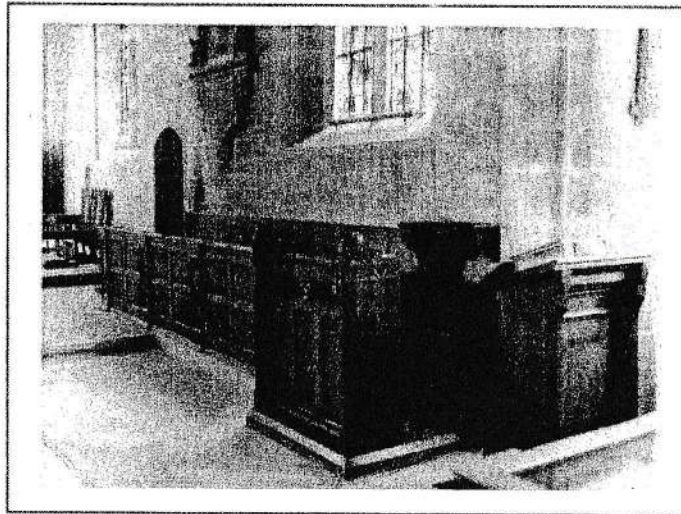
These comfortable old box pews were built in 1764 by Mr Anthony Keck and he received £176 2s 11d for the job, making them "of oak bourde and quarter". He certainly made them most beautifully, with delicate mouldings and rich panelling, and they have now graced Standish Church for over 200 years.

In 1962 these pews and the Victorian pitch-pine choir-stalls were found to be in danger of collapse, due to rot in the supporting platforms, and the people of Standish, realising their obligations to posterity, had to raise £1,500 to save them by re-flooring both nave and choir. When this great need was published, financial help came in from far and wide, so well known and loved is standish Church and its Georgian furniture.

This large sum, seemingly impossible at the outset of the appeal to a village of a hundred-odd households, was raised within a year. The pews were carefully lifted, the platform removed, the void beneath filled and a new floor laid, onto which the pews were replaced, none the worse.

Whilst removing the choir-stalls for this work it was suggested that they were unworthy of the church and should be replaced, if this was possible financially. So further fund-raising was tackled and the new stalls (8) provided; they were designed by Mr Ronald Demuth, in keeping with the Georgian box pews, and built by Messrs Smith and Choyce of Gloucester. The work was carried out by Messrs H E Beard of Stonehouse, who have been responsible for much of the maintenance of the fabric.

The Vicar's stall (9) was erected in 1926 in memory of Canon Nash who was incumbent here for 33 years and is a modern piece by "Mousey" Thompson of Kilburn. The maker's trade mark, a small mouse, can be seen climbing the right arm.



*The new choir stalls, south side, Vicar's stall and lectern*

## PULPIT AND FONT

At about the same time that Mr Keck made the box pews, he also provided the pulpit (10) for £28 and this stood first, as has been said, on the south side of the nave. When being transferred to its present position in 1869, the door was removed and used to make the lectern (11), the sounding board overhead being made into the Vicarage hall table. In 1963, when fitting the new choir-stalls, the pulpit was moved 2½ feet to the north and the lectern transferred to the south side in order to improve the view to the east end through the arch. The present font (12) and cover, introduced in 1860, were designed by Francis Niblett. It replaced one by John Bryan of Gloucester, which itself replaced the former lead font in 1764.

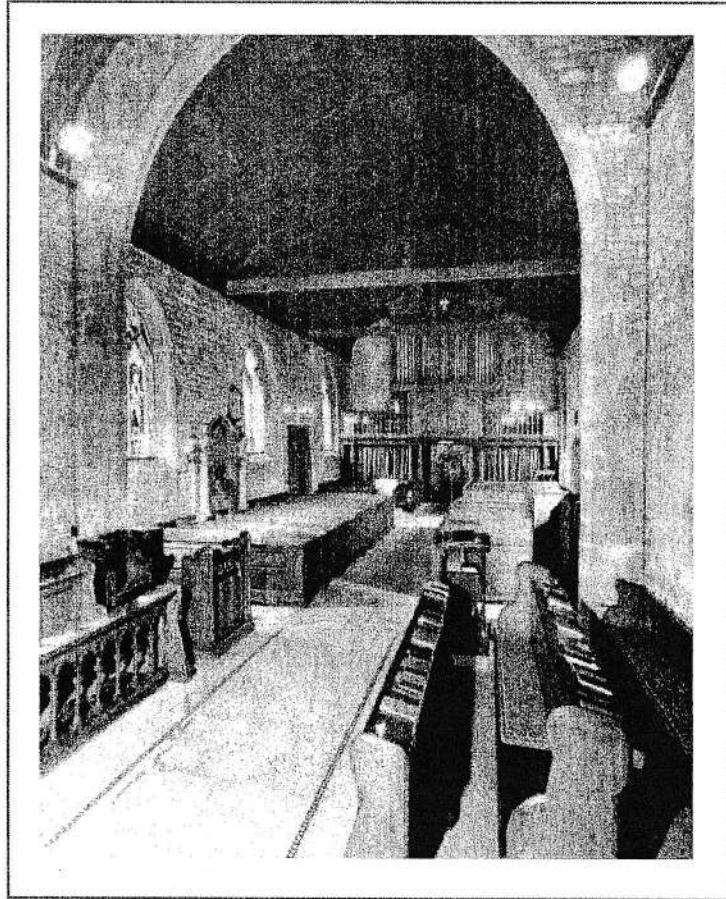
## ORGAN

The organ (13), now placed at the west end of the church, was built originally by W G Vowles in 1867. In 1950 it was re-built and enlarged by P Daniel of Clevedon and a new case fitted by Boulton of Cheltenham, the latter in memory of the Reverend Andrew Freeman, Vicar 1923-1947, an organ expert of international renown. Mr S E Dykes Bower was again the architect, and the whole cost was £3,300, a substantial part of which was donated by Mr Archie Knight. *A further major overhaul of the organ and casework was undertaken by Trevor Tipple of Worcester in 1993.* The fundraising to meet the cost of £11,000 was led by Mr S Dicker and Colonel A Neale.

## SAINT NICHOLAS

Over the organ case (14) can be seen the three gold balls, the sign of St Nicholas, to whom Standish Church is dedicated. He is perhaps best known as Santa Claus, taking particular charge of children but also of thieves, seafarers and pawnbrokers. The latter fraternity use the three gold balls as their sign to commemorate the three bags of gold which the Saint dropped under cover of darkness into the house of an impoverished nobleman as dowries for his three daughters.





*View from the chancel, showing old choir stalls, panel roof,  
box pews, Winston Memorial and organ*

### **NAVE ROOF**

The roof of the nave is of hammer-beam construction with panelling. The 180 carved bosses boast of being all different but nearly all of them are either masks or rosettes with leaves falling back into the corners of the panels. Distinct from all the rest is the boss that has been cut back, painted blue and inscribed "Samuel Stratford, 1703".

## MEMORIALS

The walls of nave and chancel have for many years been bare of plaster or decoration, but have not always been so; they were probably stripped about 1869. The walls have been kept fairly free of monuments, the most outstanding being that to Sir Henry Winston, on the south wall of the nave (21).

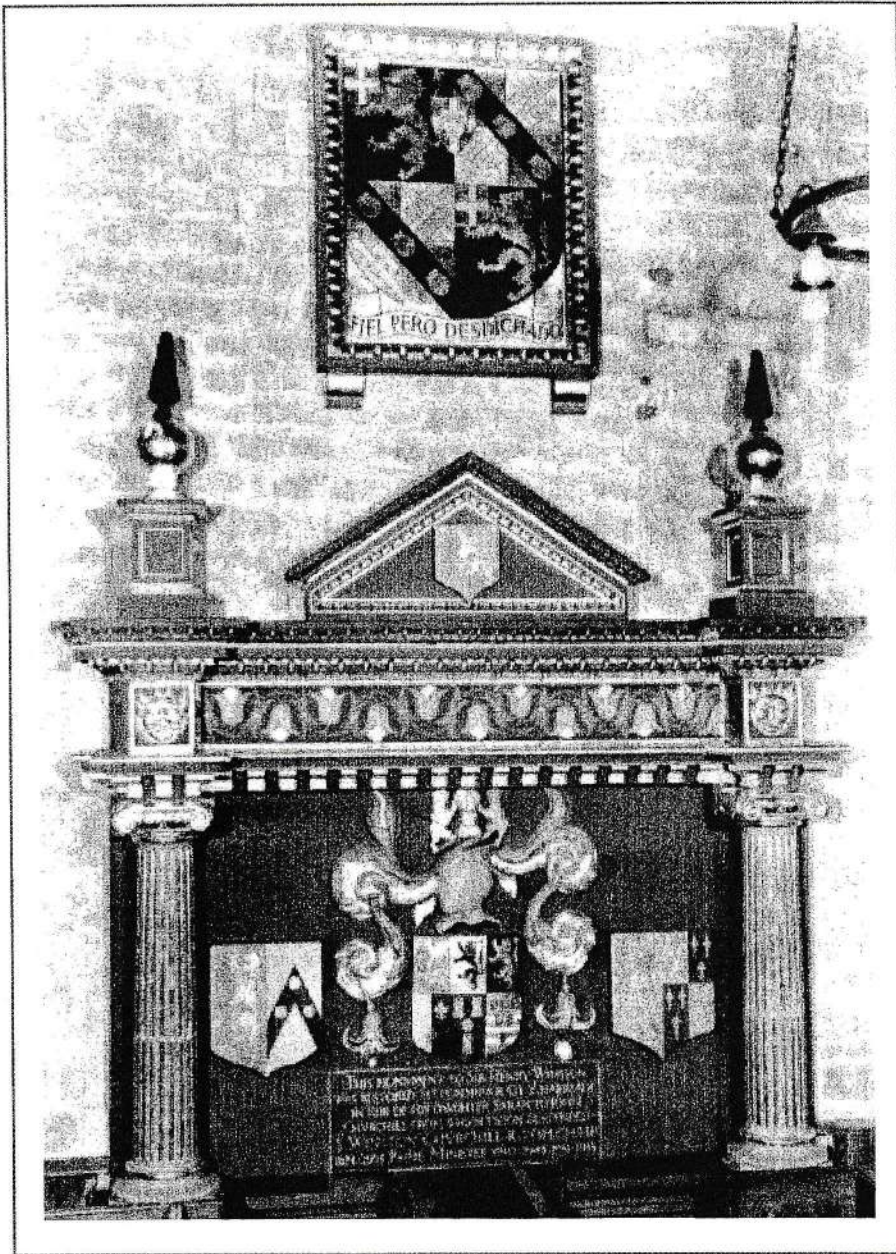
Sir Henry Winston died in 1609, and was Lord of the Manor of Standish. The family traced their pedigree from Drago de Balladon, whose son Hamlet came over with the Conqueror. Sir Henry's daughter Sara married John Churchill, of the Middle Temple, at St Stephen's, Walbroke, in 1618. Their son, Sir Winston Churchill, was an ardent Royalist, honoured by Charles II in 1661, and was the father of the great Duke of Marlborough and ancestor of the later, more famous, Sir Winston Churchill.

In 1965 the Winston Memorial was restored, the work being carried out under the direction of Mr Stephen Dykes Bower (Surveyor of the fabric of Westminster Abbey) and paid for by public subscription.

The centre coat of arms, in six quarterings, is that of Sir Henry Winston, his paternal family arms being the first quarter ("per pale gules and azure, a lion rampant argent supporting a tree eradicated vert"). This re-appears impaled with the arms of his first wife, Elizabeth Vaughan of Bredwardine, on the west side and again on the east side impaled with the arms of his second wife, Dionise Bond.

The College of Heralds provided the authentic details for the coat of arms of Sir Winston Spencer-Churchill, KG and the following is a brief description. The 1st and 4th quarters show the Arms of Churchill, a lion rampant with a cross on a canton; the latter augmentation was granted in 1661 to the first Sir Winston (father of the 1st Duke of Marlborough) in recognition of his service to King Charles 1st.





*The Winston Memorial*



The 2nd and 3rd quarters show the Arms of Spencer. The 5th Duke of Marlborough was granted the shield which is displayed overall in the centre chief point. A translation of the motto reads "faithful though unfortunate".

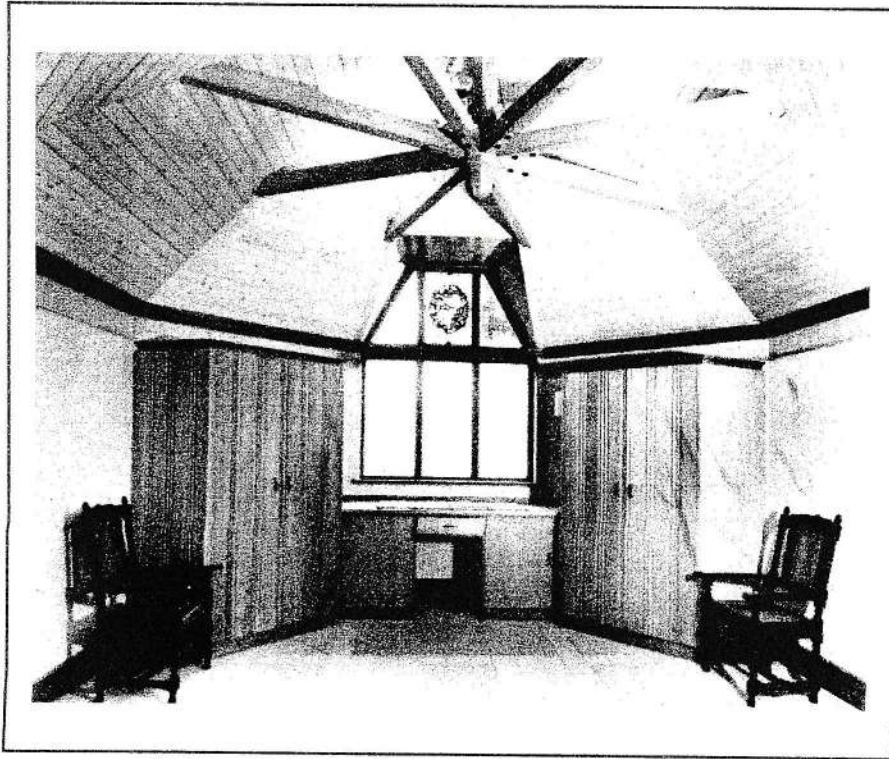
The restored memorial and the arms of Sir Winston were unveiled almost a year after his death by Mr Winston Churchill, his grandson, at a service on January 11th 1966. This task of renovation was completed through the tireless efforts of Mr Norman Odling, OBE, Church Warden from 1957 to 1970.

Opposite, on the north wall of the nave, is a tablet erected to the memory of Robert Hallifax (22), for fifty-three years Vicar of the parish, and of his wife. Her favourite attire of grey dressing-gown and red night-cap identifies her as one of the "Vicarage ghosts", claimed to have been seen at times. Bishop Frampton is also said to haunt the Vicarage, as is a third, unidentified but mediaeval character.

### **CLERGY VESTRY**

Since Commonwealth times the clergy vestry has been in the former south porch (23), but in 1969 a new vestry was built adjoining the existing doorway in the south wall of the chancel. This door led into the churchyard and was obviously constructed when men were of smaller stature!

This new vestry (24), designed by Mr Ronald Demuth and built by Messrs Lionel Hook and Sons of Chalford was given in memory of Helen Gemmell of Standish Park by her husband and sons. This long awaited improvement, which Mrs Gemmell had hoped to see in her lifetime, is octagonal in shape and roofed in slate. At the dedication service on October 4th 1969, the Bishop of Gloucester stressed the importance of such good facilities, so often lacking in other churches, for the clergy in their preparation for services.



*The new vestry*

An interesting feature of the interior is a stained glass panel of a cherub blowing a horn to heaven and representing a lost child. Its origin cannot be traced, but it is certainly of considerable age. The two Indian chairs were exhibited at the Delhi Durbar in 1857. The cupboards on each side of the window, made of African hardwood, are of a pleasing modern design. The one on the west contains a basin with hot and cold water - the other is reserved for the vestments of the clergy. The carpeting conforms with that leading up to the altar.

## WINDOWS

A window to the memory of Archdeacon Sheringham and his wife is on the south wall of the chancel (15), near the altar; it was the work of C E Kempe, one of the most accomplished artists of his day, and represents St Michael and St Gabriel.

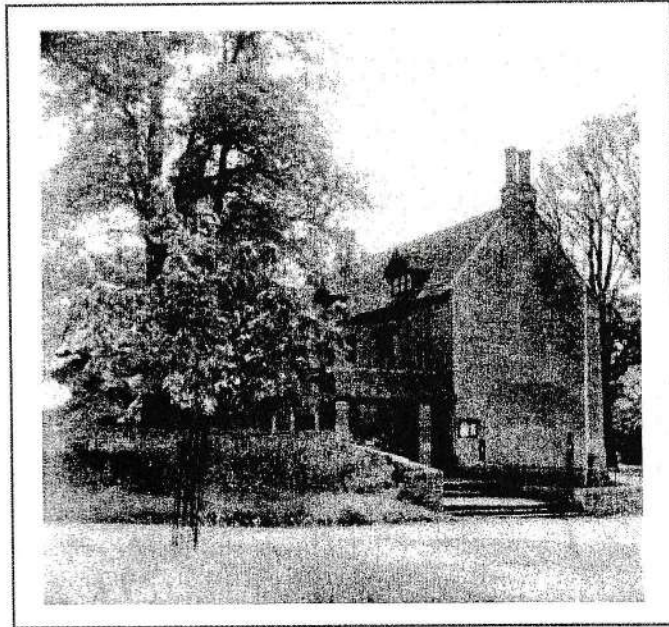
To the west of the Sheringham window is another (16) erected in memory of Mr and Mrs Potter - parents of Lady Passfield (Beatrice Webb), and in this "Nunc Dimittis" window, the face of Simeon is said to be that of her father. Opposite is a "Resurrection" window (17) in memory of Mr and Mrs Knight of Colethrop, the parents of Mr Archie Knight, a great benefactor of the church.

Of the windows in the nave, that on the south side (18) (erected by Mr L S Lush, Churchwarden), has two pleasant illustrations, "The Good Shepherd" and "The Light of the World", whilst opposite to it (19) is the Victoria Diamond Jubilee window of 1897. This depicts the Queen of Sheba visiting King Solomon, the faces being those of Queen Victoria as a young woman and of Our Lord. The other windows have purposely been left with plain glass in order to lighten the building as much as possible.

## NAVE PISCINA

Much of the beauty of Standish Church is due to its uncluttered simplicity and rather large chancel - more than half the size of the nave. So wide is the chancel that hardly any room was left for a second altar in the nave, north of the arch, but its piscina (20) remains in the north wall. Beneath there is a grave-slab, formerly in the chancel, originally marking the resting-place of Margery at Mulle from whom fifteen acres of land in "Hoxlinge" (Oxlynch) was obtained for the priory in 1294.





*The Coronation Maple planted near the lych-gate*

### **LATER ADDITIONS**

Electric tubular heating was installed in the pews and windows in 1958 and renewed again in 1996 when the 1958 version proved to be inefficient and very expensive to run.

In 1983 funds were raised to restore the fine organ.

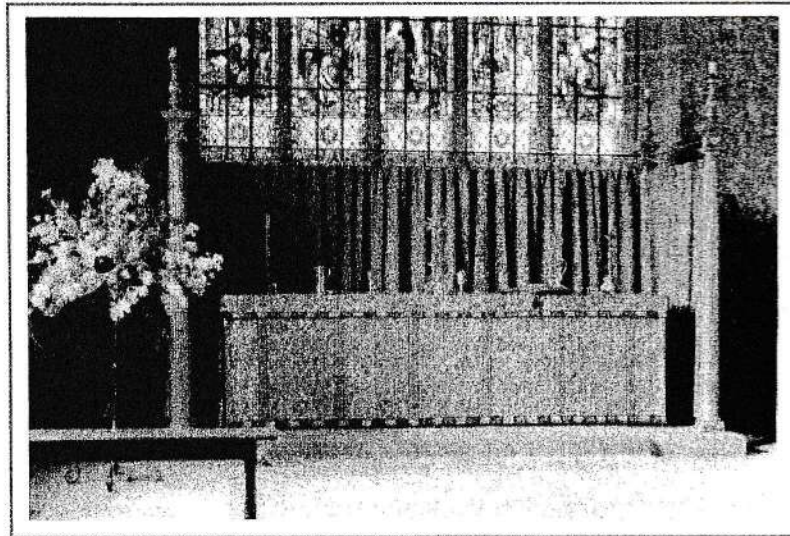
In 1984 fund-raising began to finance the re-roofing of the Church and by 1986 nearly £13,000 had been raised and the Church had its new roof.

Between 1998 and 1999 ten table-top tombs were restored at a cost of £10,000. Mr Bonham Bazeley was instrumental in organising this, obtaining much of the cost from a number of organisations.

In addition there have been many gifts to the church, such as the processional cross and wardens' staves in memory of Mr Ernest Vick. In the churchyard, the lych-gate at the head of the steps to the road

was erected in memory of Henry Neems, Churchwarden, and designed by Mr Stephen Dykes Bower. Mention has been made of the generous donations from Mr Archie Knight; he also installed electric light in the church (in memory of his mother) in 1937 and in 1941 the nave roof was stripped and re-tiled at his expense. As a memorial to Jean Dicker, her husband Stan paid for the weathercock to be re-gilded in 1994 and in 2000 he purchased new floodlights so that during the winter months the spire with the glorious golden cockerel illuminates the sky and is visible for many miles.

Other gifts treasured by the church make up a notable collection of silver plate ranging in age from Elizabeth I to Elizabeth II, with specimens of Commonwealth, Georgian and Victorian work. The 19th and 20th century pieces have been the gifts of incumbents and their families. A modern silver wafer-box was given by the Parochial Church Council in appreciation of the services of Major A J Gibbs, DSO MC as Secretary and Warden 1925-1967. The chancel carpet laid in 1965 was the gift of Mrs G W Gemmell and others and the carpeting in the aisle and cross-aisle (now removed due to damp) was the gift of Mr and Mrs L W Stevens.



*The English altar and church plate*





*Standish bells ready for re-hanging, 1930*

## BELLS

After being rung at Harvest Festival, 1914, the Standish bells went out of use for sixteen years. They were taken down in 1930 and sand-blasted, number 3 being re-cast and re-hung in a steel frame. The choir vestry under the tower (25) was furnished at the same time. Several times since then the bells have been overhauled, new ropes hung and the belfry louvres wired against jackdaws.

The bells themselves total over 45 cwts in weight, the inscriptions and dates being as follows:-

No 1 (Treble) (Re-cast 1897)

*"Charity brought me hear in the 1720th year"*

No 2 *"Gloriam dei in excelsis sono, 1656"*

No 3 (Re-cast 1930)

*"W. Chew, G. Stratford gardi, 1656"*

No 4 *"Giles Weyman, John Pridey, church-wardens. Feare God. Anno 1651"*

No 5 *"Peace and good neighbourhood, A.R. 1748"*

No 6 (Tenor) (c.1490. From Holy Trinity, Gloucester, 1648)

*"Sancta Maria tuo succurre piissima servo. Wilhelmo Lawley Vicaire gave me"*



## CHURCHYARD

At first glance many of the tomb-stones in the churchyard appear in need of re-erecting and aligning in straight rows. In some instances these large slabs were placed over new graves to thwart the unholy efforts of the "resurrectionists" or grave robbers. An Act of Parliament in 1832 enabled the medical profession to obtain their corpses in less objectionable ways and these troubles ceased.

About the oldest stone is the rectangular table-type tomb six yards north-east of the porch. The wording is as follows:-

*HEAR RESTETH THE BODY  
OF SAMUEL BEARD YEA  
MAN WHO DECESED THE  
8 DAY OF JUNE WAIGHT  
ING FOR A JOYFULL RE  
ZURRECTION UNTO GLO  
RY ANNO DOMINI 1653*

300 years after Yeoman Beard's burial it had become necessary to increase the size of the churchyard and Mr Martin Prout defrayed the cost of walling the the extension, a quarter acre of land being given by Messrs Williams and James, then owners of the neighbouring Court Farm.

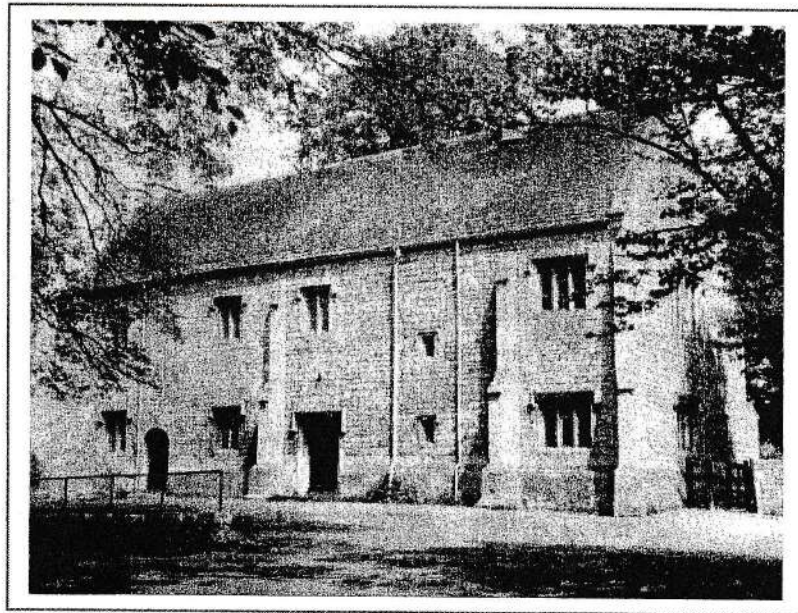
Mention has been made of the fine old lime trees in the churchyard; elms in the vicinity, too, lend majesty to the surroundings. A younger addition is the purple-leaved maple planted by Mrs E Vick in the triangular piece of grass at the road junction, to commemorate the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 (illustrated on page 17).

Two Blenheim Oaks were planted in the churchyard in 1966, given by The Men of the Trees in memory of Sir Winston Churchill.

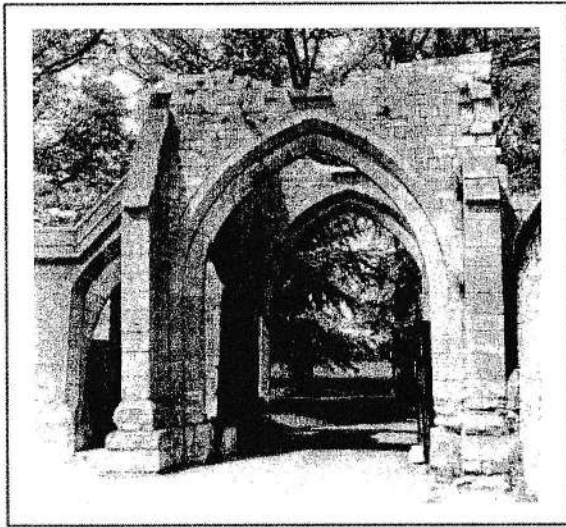
## CHURCH HOUSE

The building next to the churchyard, for many years the village school and centre of the social life of the parish, is the Church House. Originally the Almonry of the Priory, at the Suppression it passed into the possession of the new Lord of the Manor, the last being Baron Sherborne.

It formed part of the Sherborne estate which was one of the first to be accepted by the government in lieu of death duties, to be administered by the Gloucestershire County Council Small-holdings Department. They finally sold it in 1950 to the Parochial Church Council for £5.5.0 ! Since the closure of the school in 1964 the building has been used by the village for meetings and harvest-suppers. Since 1972 Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust have rented the ground floor and the upper floor remains in use as the 'Village Hall'.



*The Church House*



*The ancient archway, from the Court*

Next to the Church House an ancient archway gives entrance to Standish Court, now the home of eight separate families. Information about this building is scarce but the site of St Peter's Almonry is the earliest recorded. The gateway would seem to be of 14th century architecture, backed by older work, and one can imagine, perhaps, the old monk door-keeper appearing from his room above the arch to admit the visitor. The Village Pound was the square piece of ground between the gate and churchyard, wherein were impounded any stray cattle until redeemed by the payment of a fine.

The Arlebrook flows through Standish on its way from the Cotswold escarpment to the great waters of the Severn; formerly it passed around the church and down Standish Lane. The brook was diverted through the Court to pass through the Upper Mill, for the exclusive use of the monks, and later to the Lower Mill in Standish Lane, for village use. The latter was worked until 1925, but was burnt accidentally during the Second World War, and has since been rebuilt as a private house.



## THE VICARAGE

The Vicarage system of parish administration dates from 1205 when the Bishop of Worcester, tiring of the neglect of the people by the Religious of the monastery, put in a "secular" (ie non-conventual) clergyman at Standish as his vicar (or representative) to care for the people. To provide for this man and his stipulated five assistants, certain revenue was alienated from the monastery. The system was successful and spread rapidly in the succeeding century, Standish thus being the first ecclesiastical parish in the land.

Later, in 1866, Standish was also the first parish in England to which a Lay-reader was licensed (Mr J T Niblett of Colethrop).

After more than a century of wrangling between the Vicar and the monks the Vicarage house was built for his use and the sources of revenue were settled by an Act of 1348. It is situated at Little Haresfield, half a mile to the north of the church and was in use as the Vicarage until 1975 when it was sold.

The Monastery was forced to provide the house and land for the Vicar's use and also to release some tithes, including those of the two mills. After such a beginning, it is amusing to note that by the end of the century the Vicar, Thomas de Stoke, was English Ambassador in 1286 to the Scottish Court and in 1291-2 to France. Presumably he made due provision for the care of the people of Standish!

A list of Vicars is appended and it will be noticed that in nearly 300 years Standish has had but seventeen incumbents. It is certainly true for the laity of Standish, as it is evidently true for its clergy, that the historic associations and surroundings inspire in them a real love for the church. Perhaps this little book will help others to share this affection.

## THE VICARS OF STANDISH

1225	Ernisius	1659	Walter Powell (reinstated)
1236	R de Lewes	1664	Anthony Andrews MA
	Elias de Bromfield	1667	Richard Horston
1270	Thomas de Stoke	1676	George Venn
1302	Nicholas de Bathneston	1678	Edwin Pitt MA
1336	Sir Thomas de Thormaston	1685	Robert Frampton MA DD <i>(Bishop)</i>
1348	Walter de Evesham		
1378	Thomas	1708	Samuel Fowler BA
1409	William Stoke BL	1724	Edmund Lewin MA
1498	Master William Blomer	1727	Robert Breton MA
1532	Master Thomas Greenwood	1731	Thomas Savage MA
	Sir Thomas Ferentur	1769	James Benson LLD
	Sir Richard Flemyng	1785	Robert Hallifax MA
	Sir Henry Tomson	1839	Thomas Murray Browne MA
	<i>(Chaplains)</i>	1865	John William Sheringham MA
1543	John More	1889	Alexander Nash MA
	Sir William Parker	1922	Andrew James Freeman BA MusB
	Thomas May	1947	Philip Stacey Lewis PhD BSc FRIC
	<i>(Curates)</i>		
1554	John Yannes	1964	Charles H J Wood
	Sir William Whittings	1972	Donald Charles Field BSc
	<i>(Curate)</i>		
1559	John More (reinstated)	1980	Geoffrey C Baynton MA
	Sir Christopher Hearne	1985	James Albert Blower Caterer MA
	<i>(Curate)</i>		
1580	Francis Yate	1997	Noel Edward Lloyd Baker <i>(Priest in Charge)</i>
1618	Walter Powell BA		
1654	William Hill	1999	Richard James Rutherford Amys BA
1656	Thomas Pritchard		<i>(Priest in Charge)</i> <i>(Rector from 2000)</i>

## STANDISH CHURCH

GOD gave to man this spreading vale  
In which to take his pride,  
Fair heritage of hill and dale  
From Stroud to Severn tide;  
And man his love and labour lent -  
His craftsmanship - to build  
This slender spire, a monument  
To grace the fields he till'd.

Across the spring-clad quickening wold  
And summer's landscape bright,  
Down autumn's patchwork, green and gold,  
And winter's robe of white,  
The bells that our forefathers pealed  
In those forgotten days  
Still summon us from farm and field  
To precept and to praise.

Six hundred long-drawn years have died  
And still their memories live  
Who built with such ungrudging pride  
And all they had to give;  
Let all the world be out of joint  
And faith, like Homer, nod,  
That lonely, lovely pencil-point  
Still shows the way to God.

E R P BERRYMAN