

History of St Clement's, Cambridge

From its Founding to 1989

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The Founding

There is general agreement that the present stone St Clement's church building was preceded by a wooden one, going back to Viking or Anglo-Saxon times. It is helpful to place the founding of our church, with its Viking connections, in the context of the conversion of the Vikings to Christianity and the development of the cult of St Clement.

The initial impact of the Vikings on the Anglo-Saxon church was destructive, beginning with the attack on the monastery at Lindisfarne in 793. In that early period, the Vikings simply made raids, with no attempt to settle in Britain. However, from the 860s they began to settle. In 866 a Viking army landed in East Anglia. In 870 they captured Edmund, King of East Anglia who was tortured and executed. By 875 only Wessex remained unconquered, and in that year the Viking army led by Guthrum made their winter camp in Cambridge on the SE bank of the Cam, in what is now the parish of St Clement. Guthrum, was probably the first Viking leader to be converted to Christianity, in the winter of 877-8. He came close to defeating Alfred the Great in battle, but Alfred fought back successfully, defeating the Vikings and making a treaty that led them to withdraw from Wessex.

Guthrum was converted and baptised as part of the peace treaty, with Alfred as his Godfather.

However, this 'conversion' was rather forced on Guthrum after defeat in battle, and it is hard to know whether it had far-reaching effects. Presumably Guthrum's conversion would have influenced the Vikings in Cambridge. However, having been defeated in battle, he may have had no alternative but to agree to be baptised; it may not have been at all heartfelt. Following his defeat by Alfred he retreated and became King of East Anglia within the Danelaw. However, he died a year later, in 880. The Viking conversion to Christianity thus began very early in the Danelaw period, but it is hard to gauge how deep it went.

The conversion of the Vikings seldom involved a straightforward replacement of Danish gods by the Christian god. One example is a Viking coin that had symbols of both St Peter and Wotan on it. Religious allegiance was as much a matter of protection as of belief. People were inclined to invoke the protection of whatever god or gods were perceived to have power. If the Christian god was thought to be a powerful source of protection, he would have been invoked; though that would not necessarily have involved a renunciation of Pagan gods. The Vikings probably also saw Christian Anglo-Saxon Kings as a model of how Kings ought to conduct themselves. Conversion to Christianity seems to have been associated with a desire to achieve status and respectability in what was still predominantly an Anglo-Saxon country (See *The Vikings: From Odin to Christ*, by Martyn and Hannah Whitlock, 2018).

Cambridge came under Viking control c. 875, and remained under it until c. 917, when it was brought back under Anglo-Saxon control by Edward the Elder, with a combined army from Wessex and Mercia. Cambridge swore allegiance to him in 921. It is possible that the St Clement's was founded in this period of Viking rule, as some have suggested, though various factors make it unlikely. The Vikings had begun to be converted to Christianity in this period Viking 'conversion' may initially have been largely a matter of political expediency.

Another factor is that ecclesiastical structure and authority were considerably disrupted by the Viking occupation. The Cambridge area would have been within the Diocese of Leicester, the Anglo-Saxon Diocese of the Middle Angles. However, the Diocesan seat was moved to the safety of Dorchester in 874, because of Viking disruption. There was a break in the line of Bishops in some Dioceses in the Danelaw area, such as Lindsey, in Lincolnshire. It seems unlikely that the Bishop of Dorchester would have gone much to the parts of his Diocese that were within the Danelaw, or that a new church would have been founded at that time. It is more likely that St Clement's was founded at a later date when things were more settled.

Almost the only firm fact about the founding of our church is that it was dedicated to Saint Clement. Fortunately, that contains clues to the circumstances of our founding, and when that might have occurred. We are helped in this by the meticulous research of Barbara Crawford in her recent book on *Churches Dedicated to Saint Clement*. St Clement's Church can be found all over England, but the majority are in the territory of the 'Danelaw'. That reflects the fact that St Clement, with his sea-faring connections, was a favourite saint of the Vikings. Most towns in the former Danelaw have a church dedicated to St Clement, as there are in Norwich and Huntingdon though, surprisingly, not in Thetford. However, we have already noted two reasons why our church was unlikely to have been founded in the Danelaw period. One is that the conversion of the Vikings had not gone very far. Also, the structure and authority of the Anglo-Saxon church was very disrupted by the Viking occupation.

Yet another reason is that the cult of St Clement was not very developed in the Danelaw period. A key event was the discovery of remains of St Clement, which were taken to Rome in 867-8. After that date the Feast of St Clement gradually came to be included in liturgical calendars, but there is no clear evidence of the observance of Feast of St Clement in Britain until the end of the 10th century. Cambridge was liberated from Viking control in 907 and the cult of St Clement was probably not well established in Britain so early. Even after Viking control was ended in Cambridge, many Vikings would have remained and become integrated with the Anglo-Saxon population. It is possible that the Anglo-Saxons might have dedicated a church to St. Clement with a view to furthering the conversion of Vikings to Christianity.

The location of the church is one factor that supports a Viking association. In Cambridge the main Anglo-Saxon settlement was north of the river, centred on Castle Hill, where there was probably a large church. The area south of the river was probably not much occupied before the arrival of the Danes, but that is where they settled, in Quayside, or what is now the parish of St Clement. The Vikings arrived in 875, as recorded in the Anglo-Saxon chronicle, led by King Guthrum and others. The bridge over the Cam in what is now Bridge Street was the only good crossing point for miles around, and the river provided a natural fortification between the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, who 'glowered' at each other across the bridge. The course of the river was a little further North at that time. The extension to other parts of what is now Cambridge, beyond Quayside, was quite rapid as a result of the thriving dockside area resulting from the Viking settlement.

St Clement's is the nearest church to the great bridge over the Cam, which was there at least by 875. The south bank area was enclosed by two ditches, St. John's ditch and King's ditch. The original parish of St. Clement was coterminous with the area within the two ditches. St. Sepulchre's parish, which was created c. 1130, was carved out from the original St. Clement's parish. The focus on the bridge suggests that the area was a fortified trading centre, controlling the river and functioning as an inland port. It probably had a Danish origin, as the King's ditch encloses a 'D' shaped area, as is often found in Viking

fortifications, though another possibility is that it was a new *burh* founded by Edward when he reconquered Cambridge in 917.

The parish of St Clement straddles the main Roman road from the north-west where it enters the city centre at the river crossing that gives the city its name. Ancient sites (standing stones, stone circles) or holy places (burial mounds, churches) are often aligned in straight lines, known as 'ley lines', that are connected by ancient pathways or tracks. There is said to be such a line in Cambridge, and St Clement's is one of the churches built along it. The first marker is the great round barrow on Wormwood Hill near Wandlebury Fort. The ley passes through the Gogmagog Hills and Wort's Causeway, and into Cambridge. There it passes through Christ's College and Sidney Sussex College (which occupies the site of a 13th century Franciscan church). The ley then goes through Holy Sepulchre (the Round Church) and on to St. Clement's. After crossing the river and Magdalene College (originally a Benedictine hostel), it goes through St Giles and Castle Hill. The line ends in Swavesey, in the church of St. Andrew and the remains of an 11th century Benedictine priory, visible only as ridges and ditches in the ground.

There are clues to when St Clement's might have been founded in the changing fortunes of the Abbey at Ely (not yet a Cathedral). The *Liber Eliensis* records the slaughter of the inhabitants by the Vikings in 870, including the massacre of the monks and nuns, and general destruction of the church and all its contents. The Abbey was re-founded in 970 by St Dunstan, not only Archbishop of Canterbury, but also the person to whom the King delegated responsibility for almost everything except defence and law-and-order. As Dunstan worked to rebuild the Anglo-Saxon church in areas that had been under Viking control, it seems that re-establishing the Abbey at Ely would have been a higher priority in this area than founding a parish church in Cambridge.

With the re-founding of the Abbey at Ely by Dunstan in 970 the three main conditions were met for the founding of St Clement's Church in Cambridge to be likely: (i) there was political stability, (ii) ecclesiastical authority and structure had largely been restored, and (iii) the cult of St Clement was well established, even in places that were a long way from Rome such as England. It marks the beginning of the most likely period when St Clement's in Cambridge is most likely to have been founded. There was some brief disruption when in 997 when Aethelred's mother had the young King Edward murdered and replaced him as King by her own teenage son, with herself as Regent. Dunstan presided at the coronation, but he had been too closely associated with the previous regime and was soon replaced as Archbishop. However, in general, the first 20 years of Aethelred's reign were a period of political and ecclesiastical stability, and 970-997 is the period is most likely to have been founded. There were good relations between Aethelred and the powerful Abbey at Ely.

This period of stability came to an end in 997 when Viking raids began again. Cambridge was burned by the Vikings in 1010, though the Viking quarter south of the river might have been spared. Political stability was restored in 1016 when Cnut the Great took the English throne. Cnut was generous to the Church and supportive of it. A number of churches dedicated to St Clement are thought to have been founded in his reign, including the one in Oxford, and it is possible that St Clement's in Cambridge was also founded in his reign. What argues against that is that Cnut was very selective in his favours and was harsh towards areas that had been opposed to him. Ely had been strongly aligned with Aethelred and opposed to Cnut, and Cnut was on bad terms with Ely, which probably extended to the surrounding area. The ballad that starts, "Merrily sang the monks of Ely, As King Canute came rowing by. Row, boatmen, near the land, And hear we these monks sing" misrepresents the political reality, and may have been designed to present Cnut as more of a Saint than he actually was.

St Clement's was founded with the Mercian Diocese which had originally been based in Leicester, but was removed to Dorchester when Viking raids first began. Our first Diocesan Bishop would have been the Bishop of Dorchester. However, the Dorchester Diocese was amalgamated with the Anglo-Saxon Diocese of Lindsey, in Lincolnshire, which had struggled badly since the original Viking raids. In 1072 the Diocese was removed again to Lincoln by Remigius, Bishop of Dorchester, who became the first Bishop of Lincoln. However, St Clement's was under the Bishop of Lincoln only briefly, until the Diocese of Ely was founded in 1109, largely carved out of the Diocese of Lincoln. Ely was always a relatively small Diocese, compared to the vast Diocese of Lincoln, and seems to have been created to please a powerful Abbot of Ely, who wanted to be a Bishop as well.

The Mediaeval Period

The first St Clement's church, a wooden structure, would have been the first Christian church south of the river. Saint Benet's, further from the river and built in 1025, was the first stone church, but came later than the wooden church in Quayside. We don't know anything about the circumstances that led to the wooden church of St Clement in Cambridge being replaced by a stone church. However, we can make a good guess at the date in the 1210s. We don't have an exact date for the present stone building, though it is generally thought to be very early thirteenth century, possibly very late twelfth century. It was probably around 1215 (the date from which we have a continuous line of clergy at St Clement's), or 1218 (the date on which the Living was given to St Radagund's Nunnery). Hugh fitz Absalom granted the living of St Clement to the nuns of St Radagund. The history of the parish of St Clement is intertwined with that of St Radagund. The new Priory accumulated a healthy property portfolio that included farms in the local villages and houses in Cambridge. The nuns were in a position to build a suitable convent between 1159 and 1161, though the convent was never wealthy. Revenues from St Clement's were used to provide clothing for the nuns. It is possible that the nuns worshipped at St Clement's for 40 years, until they built their own church.

The main feature that remains from that early 13th century building is the elegant arcading on each side of the nave, though the arches nearest the altar were rebuilt in the fourteenth century, and the arcading was probably raised when the clearstory was put in in the 16th century. The aisles and chancel have been demolished and rebuilt; there were probably also side-chapels, demolished with the aisles. The West front was altered when the present tower was built. However, the South Door remains from the thirteenth century church, albeit repositioned and heavily restored in 1847. In the East wall of the North aisle there is a mediaeval plastered recess, and to the east of the South door there is a mediaeval Stoop for holy water. Both were presumably reset when the aisles were rebuilt. The hexagonal font dates from the 15th century. St Clement's is one of ten surviving mediaeval parish churches in Cambridge city centre. The area around St Clement's became a prosperous commercial hub for Cambridge in the 13th century

There was probably some significant redesign of the building in the fourteenth century, though we don't have much exact information. The most easterly bays of the arcading in the nave were rebuilt, probably giving way to transepts on each side, making the church cruciform in shape. The transepts may have been about the same width as the present aisles, though the mediaeval aisles would have been narrower, and the other arches probably lower than they are now. A chapel to the east of the north transept (where the present sacristy stands) may well have been built at this time, or a little later. A window on the east wall of the south transept can be seen from the outside, though it is now bricked up. There were guilds here of St. Clement and of Jesus, as well as St. Mary's chantry, founded by Robert

Aungier in 1278, and St. Nicholas's Chantry, founded by William de Lolleworth in 1325 and augmented by William Horwood in 1352. In 1402 the nuns agreed to allow the vicar a dwelling house, probably 8 Portugal Place, and the payment of the pension was exacted until the dissolution of the convent, and even beyond.

St Clement's has the oldest memorial to a Cambridge Mayor; the French inscription on the tombstone of Eudo of Helpringham who died in 1329 during his sixth mayoralty gives an early version of the modern form of the name of the town—'Caunbrege'. St Clement's is not rich in monuments but we have a remarkable stone coffin lid with a carving of a recumbent figure ('gisant') or corpse. Carvings of decaying corpses or skeletons on coffins became common in the late middle ages, and ours is thought to date from the 14th century. Such figures were intended to show how transient earthly glory is, since they depict what all people finally become.

From its founding St Clement's was closely linked with the Nunnery of St Radagund, but the Nunnery closed in 1496, and the advowson passed to Jesus College who took over the buildings of the former Nunnery. The closure was approved by both King and Pope and seems to have been uncontroversial. There are different versions of why it closed. One says that there were very few nuns left. The Nunnery was also burdened with debts, and several buildings, including the *frater*, had no roof on them. A more colourful version says that Nunnery had gained a reputation for licentiousness. John Bale, a contemporary churchman, dubbed it 'Spiritualium meretricum cœnobium' (a community of spiritual harlots). It was also a time when a number of new Colleges were being founded, so there was an obvious alternative use for the Nunnery buildings, which became Jesus College. In fact, the closure of St Radagund's seems to have had surprisingly little impact on St Clements for 40 years.

We know little about clergy at St Clement's before the Tudor period but, from 1474, a new pattern emerged in which clergy were usually members of one of the Colleges. Other small Cambridge churches followed the same pattern. The first College Fellow at St Clement's was John Barefoot, Fellow of King's Hall, presented by the Nuns of St Radegund, and at St Clement's from 1474-1521. From then on the clergy at St Clements were usually Fellow of Jesus, but sometimes of other Colleges. They lived in College, which solved the housing problem. Martin Bassett, Master of Jesus and Vicar from 1531-1546, sharing a pint of wine in the Pump tavern with a friend, alleged 'his benefice to be very small in value and not able to fund him by reason of the great payments that he should make yearly to the King out of the profits of the said benefice'. The 5 marks deducted each year to pay for clothing for the nuns were still being deducted in his day, though the Nunnery had closed in 1496. The church and vicarage together were valued at £4 5s. 8d. in 1535. Two Vicars of St Clement's resigned to become chantry priests, presumably because it was better paid. In 1535 the chantries were valued at £7 11s. 8d.

Passing responsibility to provide clergy at St Clement's to Jesus College did not work very satisfactorily. A note relating to a Synod of 1557 says that John Thorne, who was supposed to be Vicar has 'withdrawn from the same and has not resided for several years'. Another note of 1561 records that 'There is no Vicar there and no one else has resided there for 7 years past and this is the fault of the Master and Fellows of the College vulgarly called Jesus College. And the Chancel there is ruinous and internally it lacks a *coopertura* and a lectern'. In that year the authorities at Jesus took glass from the chancel and installed it in the chapel, hall and buttery of the College. They also took away 93 loads of stone and used it for offices (or privies, in another version of the story). It is understandable that soon after the chancel was demolished entirely as it seems it was left almost unusable. Fortunately the nave and aisles had been (or were being) rebuilt. Jesus College would have had special responsibility for the chancel, but

they clearly saw it as something to raid for their own use, rather than as something they had a duty to maintain. The post of Vicar of St Clement's also seems to have been used by Jesus College as a convenient way to support young Fellows, many of whom probably did little for St Clement's.

The Reformation

The 16th century saw a remarkable transformation of St Clement's. In 1538 the mediaeval aisles and transepts were demolished and replaced with new wider aisles, possibly the same width as the 14th transepts had been when the church was cruciform in shape. The nave roof was raised and clearstory windows put in. It is likely that the 13th century arcading were also raised. The date of 1538 is to be found in the ceiling of the north aisle (assuming both aisles were rebuilt at the same time, though the ceiling of north aisle is higher, suggesting that the south aisle may have been rebuilt slightly earlier). The transformation of the church was completed around 1568 when the mediaeval chancel was knocked down, leaving the church with no chancel for over 150 years. The church that you see from the outside today is very largely as it was rebuilt in 1538. It is a light and spacious building, and must have looked remarkably modern in its day, very different from other mediaeval churches in Cambridge.

The demolition of most of mediaeval St Clement's seems to have occurred soon after the dissolution of the Monasteries, and may reflect our being linked with St Radagund's nunnery. Radical rebuilding of a church was rare in the 16th century, and must be connected with the developing Reformation. A town lectureship at St Clement's was established by 1568 (or 70), if not earlier, and was held by a series of Puritan divines, including Lawrence Chaderton, the first Master of Emmanuel College. St Clement's thus became a centre of the Puritanism that then held sway in Cambridge. The fact that the chancel was demolished and not rebuilt for 150 years is consistent with that; the light, airy interior of the rebuilt church would have been good for lectures. However, St Clement's continued as a parish church, and records began in 1560. With no chancel, they presumably used an Elizabethan Communion Table, which came into common use c. 1570, the time when the chancel was demolished. It is recorded in 1637 that there was 'a seate at ye east end' for the Bishop (Hicks p. 134), suggesting that the Communion Table was in the body of the church. The changes in both architecture and usage of St Clement's between 1535 and 1570 were massive.

Someone obviously put a lot of money into St Clement's in the 16th century, both to rebuild the church and to establish a Lectureship. As the church was rebuilt in a way that made it eminently suitable for the Puritan Divines who lectured here, the same person probably did both. It was probably the Brakyn family, Thomas Brakyn (1494-1545) and/or his son, Richard Brakyn (1522-86). Thomas was a very prosperous fishmonger who had a pondyard in the churchyard in St Clement's (and other pondyards elsewhere); he supplied fish for most of Cambridge and became very wealthy. He acquired the Manor at Chesterton, and also a riverside house in Cambridge, now part of St John's College. He was Mayor three times, represented Cambridge in Parliament and was also a JP. Richard was not a hands-on fishmonger as his father had been, but he inherited his father's wealth and position, and also represented Cambridge in Parliament. On the roof of the North Aisle there are the words, "Orate pro bono statu Thomas Brakin Armigere et Luce 1538". It is not easy to translate, as the Latin is not quite correct, but it could be rendered, "Pray for the good condition/state/wellbeing of Thomas Brakin, armourer/squire and light of day/in the light. In English, luce is a pike, and Thomas made his living partly out of pikes, so there seems to be some word play involved.

Church-based lectureships became common in the Reformation period. They were intended mainly for town's people, but often attracted more interest among undergraduates than the University authorities wanted. Laurence Chaderton was the main Lecturer at St Clement's. There are different versions of the

dates between which he lectured, but the normally reliable Patrick Collinson endorses the view that he was Lecturer here for 50 years, starting when he became a Deacon in 1568, and ending in 1618. He was immensely influential in Cambridge, first as Tutor of Christ's College, then as Master of Emmanuel, and his Sunday afternoon sermons were immensely popular. Thomas Hodilowe left an annuity of 40s per annum to Chaderton, for as long as he remained a preacher at St Clement's. There is a story of one occasion when he began to draw a sermon to a close after two hours, but his listeners cried out 'For God's sake, sir, go on, we beg you, go on', and he went on for another hour. The aim of his sermons at St Clement's was 'not to tickle his hearer's ears with an empty jingle of words, but to insinuate the most salutary truths into their hearts in a pleasant manner'. Collinson describes Chaderton as 'the pope of Cambridge Puritanism'. His association with St Clement's would have made it an important church.

Chaderton was not the only Puritan divine to lecture at St Clement's. For example Michael Bentley was a licensed preacher here from 1612 to at least 1618. However, after Chaderton resigned in 1618, at the age of 82, St Clement's seems to have gone into decline. One factor was the influential Lectureship that had been established at Holy Trinity in 1610. Most Vicars did not stay long at St Clement's. George Sterne, a Fellow of Jesus, died just two days after becoming Vicar in 1638, though we don't know the cause of his death. His successor, Thomas Lentall, Fellow of Pembroke, also did not last long and by the following year there was 'no vicker, no curate. No hood.' In 1650 it was reported that 'the Parish of St Clement's hath neither Minister nor anything for the maintenance of a Minister'. St Sepulchre (the Round Church) also had no Minister, and it was proposed that the two parishes be amalgamated, though that never happened. The next Minister to be appointed to St Clement's was after the Restoration of the Monarchy, when William Gibbs, Fellow of Pembroke, was appointed Curate in 1665.

The Enlightenment

The 17th century was mostly a low period for St Clement's, but fortunes began to revive in 1691 with the appointment of the scholarly and energetic Simon Patrick as Bishop of Ely. He was unusual in those days in deciding to actually live in his Diocese, and in trying to improve religious life there. He was also a prolific polemical theologian, with quite advanced views; for example he was ahead of his time in calmly accepting that Moses could not possibly have written the account of his own death that occurs in the so-called 'Books of Moses'. It is said that 'where he found scanty provision to maintain a Minister, out of his own revenue he would order such a settlement, which might be sufficient encouragement for one. This he did, both at St Clement's and St Botolphs, in Cambridge; giving 30l. to each for an afternoon sermon'. So, after a gap of about 70 years, there were once again Sunday afternoon sermons at St Clement's.

The new Lectureship was very different from the Puritan one held by Chaderton. William Whiston lectured here from 1691 to 1709, and was only 24 when he took up the Lectureship. He was an effective populariser of the work of Isaac Newton, and succeeded him as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics in the University. However, his religious views were too radical for many. That led him to resign his Lectureship at St Clement's in 1709, and in 1710 was expelled from the University. He advocated a return to the truths of the Bible and repudiated the Trinity as being post-Biblical, and the doctrine of hell as being an insult to God. After losing his Cambridge Professorship he moved to London and lectured in coffee houses. Later, he founded the Society for Promoting Primitive Christianity, which met in his London home.

The mediaeval chancel had been demolished by the Puritans in 1568 and, for over 150 years, it had no chancel. However, a new chancel was built c. 1726, with an altar, which was 'handsomely railed in...ye

wainscote reaches up very near the ceiling and is adorned by fine fluted Corinthian Pillars (Hicks, p. 134).. William Cole, Rector of Milton and antiquarian, has given us a fine, detailed description of the chancel of 1726, which originally looked very different from how it does now. You have to go outside to see how the windows were built in 1726, "The chancel which is built of brick and paved with freestone throughout, with a neat cross at the end of it, is quite modern; you ascend four steps out of the Nave into it. The altar is on an eminence of 2 steps more and is handsomely railed in, and from the rails the wainscote reaches up very near the ceiling and is adorned by fine fluted Corinthian Pillars, and above the place in the middle where the altar stands it is further adorned with gilding and carved work. The chancel is wainscoted quite round, but not so high as within the rails, and painted and neatly pewed regularly, towards the bottom with benches quite round up to the rails. Above the wainscote against the East wall on each side of the altar are the 10 Commandments in handsome gilt frames, as are the Creed and Lord's Prayer in the same sort of frames between the 2 windows on either wall.' Cole commented that St Clement's church was "in the best repair that I ever saw for an old one".

From the late 17th there began a practice of laying marble slabs in the floor to commemorate prominent parishioners. In date they range from 1683 to 1808. Sadly, we have background information about only a few of those who are commemorated in this way. The very first slab commemorates William Pedder, who owned two houses, one in St Sepulchre and the other in St Clement's, both large houses 'with seven hearths'. The one in St Clement's was the mansion by the river previously occupied by the Brakyn family, who probably paid for the rebuilding of the nave in the 16th century. Another of the floor slabs commemorates Daniel Love, who died in 1709 at the age of 52, an Alderman, JP, Mayor and Captain of the 'Train Bands' (a company of trained civilian militia); his wife, Martha, buried in 1715, is also commemorated. The slab says that Daniel was a 'true subject of the Queen and lover of his country' though, after his death, he was accused of corrupt practices in the election of 1707. They had three children, but only their oldest, Mary, christened here in 1688, survived beyond infancy. Daniel was a partner in a local Brewhouse. Another slab commemorates William Anderson, who died in 1774. In 1724 he had been a founder member of the Society of Cambridge Youths, one of the oldest bell-ringing Societies for which continuous records are available, and his name is on the peel board in GSM. Our Churchwarden, Barry Johnson, is a current member of the Society, providing a nice link between past and present. These slabs provide glimpses of life in St Clement's in the eighteenth century.

As well as the black marble slabs in the floor, St Clement's also has a series of wall monuments. They tend to be later in date. The earliest floor slab is 1683, but the first wall monument was not put in place until 1769; the last slab is dated 1808, but the wall monuments went on until 1832. Both are a feature of the long 18th century. There are two monuments in the chancel and four more in the north aisle, but we have no background on any of them. However, the most significant monument is to William Cole (1714-1782), sometimes known as 'Old Cole', clergyman, University don for 17 years, and then Vicar of various parishes, including Milton. Noted as an antiquary and print collector, his extensive papers are in the British Library. His father, lord-lieutenant of the county, appointed him one of his deputy-lieutenants. He was also a friend and correspondent of Horace Walpole, who said that he was 'as true a Roman Catholic as it is possible for a Protestant to be'. He suffered badly from gout. A nineteenth-century biographer described Cole as 'one of the most learned men of the eighteenth century in his particular line, and the most industrious antiquary that Cambridgeshire has ever had, or is likely to have'. The verdict of another contemporary, Michael Lort, was that '...with all his oddities, he was a worthy and valuable man'. He liked St Clement's and commented that it was the 'neatest and most uniform of any in this town' and 'in the best repair that I ever saw for an old one'. He lies buried under

the tower, built with money left by Cole for the purpose, and which bears on its front his motto, *Deum Cole*. The Spectator published an entertaining piece about 'Old Cole' in 1932, which can be found online.

The Victorian Period

The practice of appointing College Fellows as Vicars started in 1474 and ran on until 1852. The first two non-Fellows to be Vicar were William Girdlestone and Richard Thorpe, who was of the 'old evangelical school'.... The young, outgoing Vicar, Richard Thorpe was a caring and hard-working person who, in a long subsequent ministry in Camberwell became a notable campaigner for protection of children from cruelty and exploitation.

In 1860 Fr. Arthur Ward was appointed Vicar, and that led to a significant change in direction for St Clement's. There is no reason to think that St Clement's was in bad way in 1860. His churchmanship was very different from that of Thorpe, and led to significant changes. Ward came from a Tractarian family. His older brother, William George Ward, had been a significant influence in the emerging Oxford movement, and a friend of Newman's. His story is told by the historian of the movement, Wilfred Philip Ward, another family member. The Wards were a well-connected and well-to-do family, and The Duke of Wellington had been one of Arthur Ward's godparents. He had been an undergraduate at St John's in Cambridge. Then, after ordination served his curacy at All Saint's Cambridge, shortly before it was rebuilt in Jesus Lane in 1864. He was 31 when he became Vicar of St Clement's, and he remained Vicar until he died 24 years later, being buried in the Mill Road cemetery in 1884. Under his leadership St Clement's became one of the most notable Anglo-Catholic churches outside London and Oxford.

One of the most significant things Ward did at St Clement's was to appoint Edmund Wood as his curate in 1865. Wood served as Ward's curate for 20 years, and then succeeded him as Vicar, serving for a further 46 years in that capacity. They were of the same churchmanship, but were otherwise very contrasting characters. Ward enjoyed food and wine and came to have a large girth; there are also indications that he came to be away quite often away, and left things to his curate. Wood was ascetic and conscientious, and could be quite severe in his manner. Ward was known locally as the 'Real Presence', whereas his thin and zealous curate was known as the 'Wafer'. Ward's absences probably meant that Wood had much autonomy from the start, but it was Ward who initiated the Anglo-Catholic turn at St Clement's, and who had already carried out a restoration of the building in 1863, before Wood was appointed.

Edmund Wood was born in 1841. Though his parents were from Kent, he was born while they were in Australia. His parents returned to England when he was four. His education included a spell at the King's School in Rochester, and he came up to Cambridge in 1860 as an undergraduate at Emmanuel College, studying Mathematics and Moral Sciences. He got his BA degree in 1864, was ordained Deacon in 1865, aged 24, and priest in 1866. He began his ministry at St Clement's and remained there until he retired in 1931.

Fr. Wood continued his academic studies, being awarded the prestigious Hulsean prize in 1886 for an essay on 'The Province of Faith: Remarks on the Method of Donation of Objective Reality to Subjective Truth'. Academically, Wood became best known for his work on Canon Law, and his book on that subject, 'The Regal Power of the Church, or The Fundamentals of the Canon Law' was published in 1888. He continued to be a notable authority on Canon Law throughout his life and towards the end of his life gave the Hulsean lectures on that subject. He also published various pamphlets on Anglo-Catholic topics, such as one on 'Altar Lights and Eucharistic Vestments'.

Ward and Wood left their mark on the church building at St Clement's. They commissioned a splendid mural of Christ in Glory by Frederick Leach, on the East Wall of the Chancel.

There is also a painted ceiling in the chancel by Leach, which may have been part of a larger and more ambitious scheme of decoration in Cambridge. Leach was a local master decorator, mural and stained glass painter, with workshops in City Road. He worked closely with George Bodley, George Gilbert Scott and William Morris, and there is also notable work by him in All Saint's and St Botolph's Churches, and at Queens' College. He was 35 when he did the mural at St. Clement's in 1872.

Various other re-orderings of the church probably date from around this time. The chancel windows are large and rectangular from the outside dating from 1726 when a new Chancel was built in brick. However, from the inside, they have been made to look like Gothic windows with pointed arches. Other features such as the dorsal behind the altar, and the choir stalls, also probably date from these years. The present Sacristy was built in 1866, replacing a chapel off the north aisle.

In 1878, with help from his younger brother James (to whom Edmund was evidently close), Fr Wood bought 1 & 2 Thompson's Lane, which adjoin the churchyard, and converted them into 'Church House'. Sisters from All Hallows at Ditchingham came to live there, caring for orphans and conducting a school for poor children. 6 & 7 Portugal Place also became part of St Clement's Church School. Wood himself originally lived in Malcolm Street, but by 1891 he had replaced the Sisters in Church House, where he remained for the rest of his life. The house became known as 'The Old Vicarage', though it was never owned by the church and never occupied by any other Vicar except Wood.

Fr. Wood became involved in various Anglo-Catholic bodies outside Cambridge. He became a member of Societas Sanctae Crucis (Society of the Holy Cross) and several times served as Master. He also took part in the work of the English Church Union, set up to defend Anglo-Catholic priests who were being prosecuted under the Public Worship Regulation Act. In 1874, with his brother, he founded the Society for the Maintenance of the Faith, which acquired the Patronage for Catholic parishes. St Clement's in Cambridge became one of the more notable Anglo-Catholic parishes outside London. Wood became a Proctor in Convocation and eventually (in 1911) was made an Honorary Canon of Ely.

Services at St Clement's gradually became more elaborate and ritualistic, though Eucharistic vestments were not introduced until 1886 when Bishop Woodford died, a year after Fr. Wood became Vicar. He had promised the Bishop not to wear them, but did so as soon as the Bishop died. E L Mascall recalls a scandalised lady parishioner protesting 'Oh Vicar! How could you do this, and his dear Lordship not yet cold?' Wood just replied, 'He knows better now'. Though a high ritualist, Fr. Wood was also an ardent upholder of the Book of Common Prayer, and is said to have regarded any departure from it as a grave sin. Morning worship at St Clement's consisted of Morning Prayer, the Litany in procession, and Holy Communion. On special occasions the round of services at St Clement's became very arduous. For example on Good Friday in 1911 there were eight different services, starting with Meditation at 7.30 am, including the three-hour Agony of our Most Holy Redeemer at noon, and ending with Tenebrae at 9.00 pm. St Clement's is thought to have been the first church outside London to offer the Three Hours Devotion on Good Friday.

Though Wood could be harsh, exacting and combative, the Church Times recalled him as being 'the wisest, kindest and most fatherly of Catholic priests...[with] a heart of gold, capable of great love and affection'. E. L Mascall recalls that when Edward Wynn and Eric Milner-White were persuaded against

their own judgement to consult Wood about the pastoral problems with which they would be confronted as army chaplains in the First World War, they were surprised to receive highly relevant instruction from him.

Fr. Wood remained as Vicar until he was 91, and probably longer than he should have. E L Mascall recalls that the Litany in procession at St Clement's consisted of Fr. Wood and a server, one of his contemporaries, 'tottering round the church together'. Mascall also recalls that when, in his late years, Wood gave the Hulsean Lectures, he 'muddled his manuscript, repeated himself and lost the thread of this argument'. He was hit hard by the death of his brother in 1928, and lapsed into senility and became 'unable to appreciate the course of events'. He remained as Vicar until 1931, aged 91, and died the following year of senility and heart failure. Fr. Wood was buried in the churchyard, by special permission, though the churchyard had long been closed to regular burials. It was Fr. Edmund Wood who, with Fr. Arthur Ward under whom he originally served, who gave St Clement's its identity as an Anglo-Catholic parish.

After Canon Wood

Edmund Wood was succeeded at St Clement's by James Tait Plowden Wardlaw, who was Vicar from 1931-41. Born in 1871, he appears to have been from quite an aristocratic background, an old pupil of Marlborough School and a graduate of King's College, Cambridge; his name appears on the membership list of the Royal Societies Club in 1914. His parents were James Campbell Wardlaw and Augusta Ellen Chichele-Plowden, but James changed his surname by deed poll on February 25th 1901 to Plowden-Wardlaw. After leaving King's he trained as a barrister at Lincoln's Inn and then moved to South Africa and served as an advocate in the Supreme Court of the Cape Colony.

Most of his ministry was spent either in Beckenham or Cambridge, and he served twice in both places. He was ordained in 1910 and spent three years as Curate in Beckenham. In 1913 he came to Cambridge to be Chaplain of St Edward's, then quite High Church, and he took leave of absence during WW1 to serve as a Chaplain with the army in France. Shortly after the war he returned to Beckenham as Rector. Then, after a brief period as Chaplain in Cannes, he returned to Cambridge in 1931, aged 58, to be Vicar of St Clement's.

He must have seemed quite youthful after the 91-year old Edmund Wood. The only change he made to the church fabric was to create, as a memorial to Canon Wood, an attractive Lady Chapel in the South Aisle, with Anglo-Baroque panelling. As there is no Vicarage at St Clement's clergy arrange their own accommodation, and Plowden-Wardlaw lived at 5 Madingley Rd, where he remained in retirement. Like most clergy at St Clement's, he would have needed independent means to supplement the modest stipend St Clement's offered, but his work as a barrister had presumably been quite remunerative.

Fr. Plowden-Wardlaw was very much an Anglo-Catholic with a strong social conscience. The last sermon he preached at St Edward's in Cambridge before going to serve as a temporary Chaplain to the Forces was published as the opening chapter of a book on 'Religious Reconstruction After the War: A Cambridge Programme'. He spoke that Sunday morning on 'A Democratic Ministry for the Church of England'. After castigating most Englishmen for treating religion as only mere 'respectability tinged with faint emotion' he criticised the Church of England's abject failure to attract more working class members of the clergy. He observed that:

'Religion must come to every man in terms of his own understanding, not in the terms of another man's understanding. And no man understands any class better than the man who has been born and bred in

it. At present, if there happens to be a working class clergyman, he is such a unique object, that he tends rapidly to assimilate himself with the surrounding clergy. He is in a short time absorbed into another social environment, and his intensely valuable experience of his own class is practically lost in his changed social condition. But further, the upper middle class, from which most of our clergy are drawn, has failed to man the ranks of the Church of England ministry in sufficient numbers..... At present a large part of the working class population has escaped from the Church of England. Anglicanism, on the whole, is not the working-man's religion, and after the war it must be the task both of the leaders and of the ordinary communicant to see that, as far as in them lies, the Church of England becomes once more the religion of the people. It is not the fault of the individual that the Church of England is mainly the Church of the comfortable and leisured classes. It is the fault of the system.'

Fr. Ivan Clutterbuck, who remembered Plowden-Wardlaw from his Bekenham days, comments that; 'He was an excellent preacher, no doubt due to his legal training. He did not cease demonstrating that the Church of England was a lawful part of the universal Catholic Church and our worship faithfully reflected this.' His commitment to Catholicism became even more pronounced in later years. It is evident, for example, in the supplement to the English Missal he published in 1933. In 1935, he published a book on Catholic Reunion arguing for re-union between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches. He hoped that a uniate patriarchate of Canterbury would be established and that an ultramontane theology of Anglicanism would be adopted.

'We must abandon wholly and utterly the High-Church denial of the continuity of the present Latin Church in England with the pre-Reformation Church of England. With the facts of history before us it is astounding impertinence to look upon the Roman Church in England as schismatic. Continuity is not a simple idea. It is an exceedingly complex idea, for there is a legal continuity which may or may not coincide with spiritual continuity. No competent lawyer could be found to deny the legal continuity of the present State Church of England with the pre-Reformation Church, ... Let us then abandon any approach to the subject which looks upon those faithful Catholics of the Latin rite as schismatic's in this country. Let us rather thank them from the bottom of our hearts for their noble stand for 400 years, and salute them as brothers of the Latin rite, and faithful sons of the Apostolic See.'

In his earlier period in Cambridge Fr. Plowden-Wardlaw had been one of a group of High Church clergy in Cambridge to form a quasi-monastic order, the Oratory of the Good Shepherd. It began in Sidney Sussex College Chapel in 1914 but a few months later moved to St. Edward's, where Plowden-Wardlaw was the priest. The members of the Oratory included John How from Trinity College, who would later become Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Eric Milner-White of King's College, later to become Dean of York Minster, and Edward Wynn of Jesus College, later to become Bishop of Ely. The OGS had a residential community in Lady Margaret Road, which continued until 1939. When Plowden-Wardlaw was at St Clements's he lived close by, and presumably remained closely associated with the OGS during that period. It may have been one of the things that drew him back to Cambridge.

Fr Plowden-Wardlaw wrote two devotional books under the pseudonym Clemens Humilis, *Vox Domini* (1929) and *Vox Dilecti* (1931). They were republished together in 1960 under the title *A Modern Imitation of Christ*. It is an impressive book, almost a spiritual classic, and had a wide circulation. It consists of about 200 short meditations giving spiritual wisdom on various subjects and to people in various conditions. Each is presented in short metered lines, like poetry, suitable for meditation, or even liturgical use.

Fr Plowden-Wardlaw was probably one of the most charismatic and effective clergy to serve at St Clement's, and the church is remembered in that period as fashionable and well-supported. In a photograph of him taken in his military uniform before he went to the front in 1916 he looks distinguished and handsome. With his patrician background, barrister skills, social conscience, the rigorous spiritual discipline of the OGS, and the pastoral wisdom evident in his *Modern Imitation of Christ*, it is not hard to see why he drew large congregations to St Clement's. There is a memorial to him in the form of a Coat of Arms in stained glass in one of the windows in the South Aisle.

The next Vicar of St Clement's, Fr Cuthbert Keet, came to St Clement's in 1941 at the age of 50, and lived in New Square. Born in London in 1891, he studied theology at King's College London, and trained for the ministry at Cuddesdon. He was ordained in 1916. Rather unusually he had done three Curacies stretching over 12 years, to 1928. Towards the end of that time, in 1927, he was awarded a PhD, which was perhaps the reason why he delayed becoming a Vicar. He published a book on the liturgical use of the Psalter in 1928, which presumably arose from his PhD.

He then spent 13 years as Vicar of St James, Hampstead Road, during which time he wrote another book on the Psalms, this time a 'Brief Introduction', published in 1940. With that completed he moved to St Clement's in 1941, where he embarked on his magnum opus, a detailed study of the Psalms of Ascent, published in 1969, when he was c. 78. That is the book for which he is best known in academic circles. There seems to have been a pattern of organising his church ministry around his study of the Psalms, and the books he wrote about them. Twice he moved shortly after publishing a book on the psalms.

At St Clement's he continued the Anglo-Catholic tradition. He wore a biretta in church, the last priest at St Clement's to do so on a regular basis. The 11.00 am High Mass was a non-communicant one, almost everyone having already made their communion at Low Mass at 8.00 am. He took a stern view on the importance of fasting before receiving Communion, and once remarked that he wasn't going to send people to hell by giving them communion after they had had a full breakfast. He sometimes started Mass early, on the assumption that there would be no congregation, and could be upset if anyone turned up just before 11.00 am.

He inherited a thriving and very well-attended church in WWII, but attendance gradually declined. By the 1950s it was down to a congregation in single figures. There were various circumstances beyond his control that no doubt contributed to that. It was a period in which many people moved from central Cambridge to the suburbs. Also, there was a general decline in church-going around 1960, and a particular decline in the Anglo-Catholic tradition that had been so strong between the wars. Nevertheless, the decline in attendance seems to have occurred more rapidly than can be explained entirely by such factors.

There were probably things about his ministry that contributed to the decline at St Clement's, including the priority he gave to academic study of the Psalms. He was available to those who sought him out, but made little attempt to see people unless they did so. His outlook was severe, and he could be tart and irritable. After Mass he would stand, rather like a religious statue, with his hands in a gesture of prayer, not speaking to anyone. Once, when at a PCC meeting, someone expressed concern at what cats were doing in the churchyard, he stamped his foot crossly, and said he had too much trouble with what cats were doing in the church to bother about the churchyard as well. He is remembered as having been 'mad and unapproachable'.

Nevertheless, there were some who became very fond of him, including Anglo-Catholic spinsters such as Madaline Stapylton. David Williams remarks in *The Five Wounds of Jesus* that 'in her later years she was a faithful member of St Clement's Cambridge and a sure support to the long-time Vicar, Dr Cuthbert Keet'. Keet was a man of fixed habits and an austere life-style. One friend commented that 'Eastbourne is the seaside town to which my dear friend – the saintly Dr Cuthbert Cubitt Keet, Vicar of St Clement's, Cambridge, for many a decade – would go each year for his fortnight's holiday. In Eastbourne, and in Eastbourne alone, the godly priest would put aside his clerical collar and dress as a layman.'

Long before Fr Keet retired, questions were being asked about the future viability of St Clement's, and some in the Diocese were suggesting that it should be closed. By then Fr Keet had been at St Clement's many years, and probably had neither the gifts nor the will to rebuild his congregation. Knowing that the threat of closure hung over the church he clung on to c 1977, by which time he was about 86, almost as old as Fr. Wood had been when he stood down. Perhaps, once his book on the Psalms of Ascent was published, Fr Keet had less sense of purpose about his work. However, hanging on at St Clement's only postponed the discussion about closure that happened on his retirement, and which was the inevitable consequence of the marked decline in the congregation that had occurred during his long incumbency. He was the last full-time Vicar of St Clement's.

The decline in attendance that had occurred while he was Vicar led to questions being asked about the future viability of St Clements, and some in the Diocese suggested that it should be closed. With no Vicar, the small congregation at St Clement's was thrown back on its own resources, and it was the start of a long period in which the laity at St Clement's had to learn to be self-sufficient. A prominent member of the congregation at this time was Miss Constance Babbington-Smith, who had a distinguished record of code-breaking at Bletchley Park in the war. She moved to Cambridge in the 1950s and attended St Clement's, though she later transferred to the Greek Orthodox church.

It fell to the Churchwardens to arrange for visiting clergy to take services, and they quickly established relationships with several priests who came regularly. One was Fr. Allen, a retired priest who was the mainstay in that period, though he was not here every Sunday. His son had become Vicar of Harston in 1965. Fr. Allen was an energetic and engaging priest in the High Church tradition, and also an accomplished organist. Other retired priests who helped in this period were Fr. James Goodchild, who had been Vicar of Isleham, and Fr John Bray, who had been Vicar of Shepreth. In many ways this first period of vacancy seems to have been quite a positive one. St Clements found itself no worse off without a Vicar. The retired clergy who celebrated Mass were friendlier than Fr Keet had been. After Fr Keet's retirement the practice of having a non-communicant Sung Mass at 11.00 am came to an end, and it became normal practice for the congregation to receive communion at the 11.00 o'clock Mass.

Various plans for the future of St Clement's were considered. One was that it should, like nearby St Giles, become part of the Team Parish of the Ascension when that was formed in 1982, under the leadership of Fr. Jonathan Young. However, the congregation at St Clement's wanted to remain independent, and resisted being part of the new Team Ministry. The Bishop of Ely, Peter Walker, then asked Fr. David Walser, who had become Archdeacon in 1981, to become Priest-in-Charge of St Clements. However, he was never able to be more than a titular Priest-in-Charge, as he was also Rector of St Botolph's as well as being Archdeacon.

Fr. Walser was initially regarded with some suspicion. Most parishes who feel insecure about their future would be wary of having the Archdeacon appointed as their Priest-in-Charge. However, the

apprehension that was felt initially proved unfounded. Fr. Walser was himself in the Catholic tradition of the Church of England, having trained at St Stephen's House at Oxford. He was also in the Third Order of St Francis, and one of the few Archdeacons to regularly wear sandals. Though an able administrator, he was not over-fussy about details, and his successor was surprised to find that he never kept records of his parish Visitations. He was, however, slightly shocked by the unauthorised form of liturgy that had been in use at St Clement's, and restored an authorised liturgy, according to the Book of Common Prayer. Above all, Fr. Walser had a warm pastoral approach, and St. Clement's quickly took him to their hearts. When speaking at the service to mark his retirement, Fr David recalled that when he had been appointed Archdeacon he had asked the Bishop what he should particularly focus on. Apparently, the Bishop said, "I want you to sort out Cambridge". Fr. David added, "Of course, I haven't done that". Some members of the congregation are still in contact with his widow, Elizabeth.

Though some feared that Fr. Walser had been put in to close St Clement's down, that was never actually the Bishop's plan. His intention was rather for it to be shared with the Greek Orthodox community, so that the building would be better used, and the Greeks would contribute to the maintenance of the building. The Sung Mass was moved from 11.00 am to 10.00 am, so that the Greek service could start at 11.30 am. Close friendships developed between the Greek parish of St Athanasios and St Clement with the Anglican parish of St Clement. Fr Walser negotiated a 20-year sharing agreement, which started in March 1987. Under the agreement the Greeks were to pay 50% of building costs, and running costs related to their usage. However, in fact, few building works were undertaken during the period of the agreement, so that provision didn't work out as intended. A joint Council was set up, though it hardly ever met after Fr Walser's time, and business between the two communities was handled informally. When the initial 20-year sharing agreement ended, although various options were considered, including most radically the disposal of the building to the Greek Orthodox community, the agreement was not formally renewed, though everyone continued to operate as though it was still in place.

In 1983 the Friends of St Clement's Church was formed. The entry about the Friends held by the Charity Commission states, 'St. Clement's Church is a building of historical and architectural importance in Cambridge. It is currently shared by Anglican and Greek Orthodox communities. The Friends of St Clement's supports the preservation of the building for use by the two church communities and to give public access to the wider community in Cambridge'. The Friends were active in raising funds for about 20 years, intending the funds they raised to be used to support repair of the roofs. It is now their intention to discharge their responsibilities by contributing to re-roofing and to wind down.

Fr Walser's period as Priest-in-Charge ended in 1989 when the Church of England decided at national level that Archdeacons should not also be Incumbents.

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