

BRAYBROOKE CHURCH

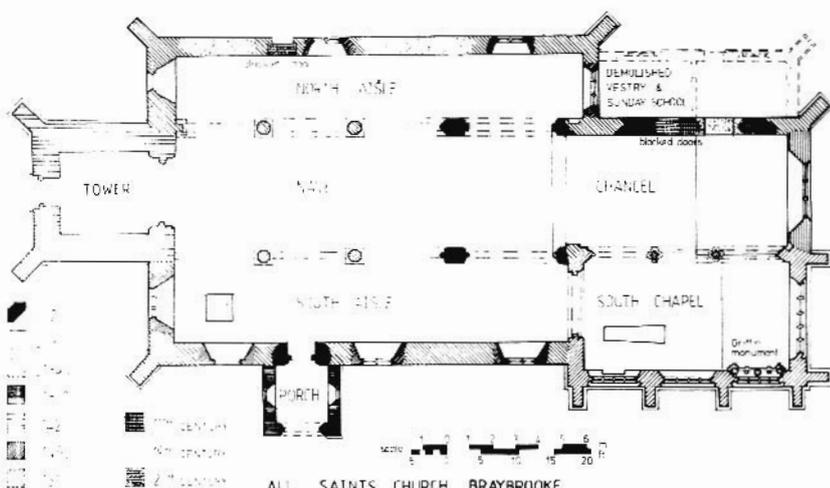


BRAYBROOKE CHURCH c 1840
(from a wash drawing by George Clark)

Braybrooke Church

BRAYBROOKE is a small, predominantly brick village situated on the north west border of Northamptonshire, in the valley of a tributary stream which runs into the River Welland. Until the 17th century it was famed for its Castle, the extensive earthworks of which survive east of the church, to give some hint of its former grandeur.

The Church of All Saints comprises Nave, North and South Aisle, Chancel, South Chapel and a slender perpendicular Tower with a tall broached Spire. The building contains 13th century work, but the surviving structure is predominantly 14th and 15th century. The late 19th century restoration, necessitated by over two centuries of neglect, was sympathetically executed so many interesting medieval features have survived. The work was spread over a long period, extending well into this century, and never properly completed, due to lack of funds, hence the normally heavy maintenance problem any small community like Braybrooke faces with a building of this age and size has been exentuated.



PART 1: *The Middle Ages*

Early Days

The Domesday book makes no mention of a church or priest at Braybrooke, but both were almost certainly well established in the parish by the late 11th century, when Cethelbert granted the advowson (the right of presentation to the living) to Daventry Priory. In Domesday Cethelbert is stated as holding one hide and one Virgate in "Bradebroc" of William the Conqueror's neice, the Countess Judeth. The priory held the advowson until 1236 when they granted it to Peter de Ragelin, but they still retained a pension of 44s. out of the rectory until the reformation.

The Fabric

The oldest feature in the church today is the finely carved Norman font, so presumably a contemporary building once encompassed it, but the earliest surviving fabric dates from the 13th century. This is represented by the heavily moulded south doorway and the eastern bay of the nave. Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, in his book on the buildings of Northamptonshire, suggests that these two arches with their foliated abacos may once have opened into transepts, as both arches appear to have originally pierced a wall rather than formed part of a colonnade, so that the 13th century church was probably cruciform in plan, being without its present aisles., but with transepts either side of the chancel arch. Such an interpretation suggests that the south door was moved when the aisles were constructed, being relocated in the new south aisle wall.

The chancel was probably the same size in the 13th century as it is today, although only the east wall and window appear to survive from this period. At the time of the restoration it was proposed to remove this window and replace it with one of "suitable design", but luckily funds did not run to this so the window survives today, slightly forshortened, but otherwise a good example of intersecting tracery of circa 1300.

During the 14th century the church was considerably extended, no doubt to accommodate the growing population. The transepts and a substantial part of the nave were demolished to make way for three bays of collonading, formed with octagonal piers and arches of two chamfered orders, which opened into new north and south aisles. The majority of the aisle windows were replaced in the 15th century, so now only one such restored 14th century light survives in the west wall of the north aisle. Late in the 14th or early in the 15th century the magnificent tower was added to the west end, with its broach spire and diagonal buttresses.

Sanctuary

An interesting event which occurred in the church at the beginning of the 14th century is recorded in an assize roll for 1326. Walter, son of John of Gumley, fearing arrest took sanctuary in the Church of All Saints Braybrooke, where he confessed to having stolen sheep at Lubenham. The ecclesiastical authorities permitted criminals to take sanctuary in churches as a protection against the wroth of their victims and neighbours until such time as a circuit judge came round to deal with the case. Walter opted to abjure the realm, so his goods, worth 14*d* were confiscated by the crown.

The Latimers

It is probable that a considerable part of the 14th century work executed in the church was financed by the Latimer family, who had acquired the manor known as the East Hall Fee in the mid 13th century, when John le Latymer married Christina, daughter and co-heir of Walter de Ledet, more commonly known as Walter de Braybrooke. In 1303 their son Thomas le Latymer obtained a licence to crenelate his manor which was thereafter known as Braybrooke Castle. He also obtained the other estate in Braybrooke known as the West Hall Fee, which carried with it the advowson of the church. This acquisition brought the major part of the parish into Latymer ownership. Thomas died in 1334 leaving his son, Sir Waryn, in his late twenties to inherit Braybrooke. The wooden effigy in the church was probably erected to his memory. (see separate notes on page 00). It may once have stood in its own chantry chapel within the church because an inquisition taken at Rothwell in June 1364 states that the predecessor of Waryn Latymer granted a message and a carucate of land in Braybrooke, not worth more than 20 shillings in ordinary years because it lies untilled, to a chaplain to celebrate mass forever in a chapel of the chantry here, but the chantry was withdrawn because of the default of the chaplain and his successors. Afterwards the parson Ralph de Daventry appropriated the premises for himself and his successors without licence. The archdeacons visitation of 1637 states that Lord Latymer was buried in the upper end of the south aisle, so it is possible the chantry stood in this position.

Between May and September 1349 the Black Death ravaged England. Both Sir Waryn Latymer and John Bover de Brampton, the Priest whom Waryn had presented to the living in 1345 appear to have fell victim. Waryn died in August, being succeeded by his eldest son, John, aged 15, while the new parson, William de Northwode, was presented to the living in September. He did not remain at Braybrooke long. The Kings Escheator, under the impression that John Latymer was the kings ward, took possession of his land until he came of age, and while in possession, the king, on December 8th 1349, presented as Rector John de Gurmundcestre, parson of Fordington on an exchange between him and William de Northwode. In January 1349/50 it was found that Waryn's wife Katherine had held Braybrooke Manor jointly with her husband so the Escheator was ordered not to 'intermeddle' further with the estate, and to restore to Katherine the income he had received during his occupation. However, the king still held on to the Advowson until John Latymer came of age presenting Robert of Woburn to the living on October 15th 1351 and Master Ralph de Daventry in May 1354. In October 1352 Katherine had presented William de Launcy to the living, so in the years immediately following the black death the church must have been in a continuous state of disruption having had six rectors in less than five years.

The Braybrooke estate passed successively to Waryns four sons and finally to his daughters grandchildren. His eldest son John died in Gascony in 1356, probably from wounds received at the battle of Poitiers. The second son, Waryn soon followed his elder brother to the grave, so it was the third son Thomas who on the death of their mother, Katherine in 1362, inherited the whole manor at the age of 20. Thomas's claim to fame was his attachment and zeal for the Lollard cause. This sect of religious reformers, who's doctriens were spread by John Wyclif, Vicar of nearby Lutterworth Church, and his "poor priests", attacked the constitution of the Catholic Church and more particularly the priests power of absolution and forced confession. Sir Thomas does not appear to have engaged in any political activity on their behalf, but his will, dated 13th

September 1401 indicates his disapproval of the practise of burying within the church, and the wake which normally followed the funeral.

"I pray to him (God) mekely of his grace, that he will take so pore a present, as my wrecchid soule ys, into his mercie, through the beseching of his blessyd Modyr, and hys holy seynts: and my wrecchyd body to be buried, where that ever I dye, in the next churcheyerde God vouchsafe, and not in the churche, but in the utterest corner, as he that ys unworthie to lyn therein, save the merci of God. And that there be non manner of cost, don about my beryng, neyther in mete, neyther in dryngge, nor in no other thing, but it be to any such one that needyth it, after the laie of God; save twey tapers of wax; and anon as I be dede, put me in the earth."

Sir Thomas's widow, Ann survived him by only one year. In her will she desired to be bured beside her husband at Braybrooke and left 40 shillings to repair the chancel of Braybrooke Church and the parsonage there and 40 shillings to make the Bridge which Sir Thomas had begun between the Church and the Castle. Thomas's younger brother Edward inherited the estate, and upon his death in 1411 it passed to John Griffin, grandson of Edwards sister, Elizabeth, who had married Sir Thomas Griffin.

The Griffins

This family built the chantry chapel at the east end of the south aisle. It represents the last important addition to the church and dates from either the late 15th century or more probably the early 16th century. In Pevsners Northamptonshire, Mr. Bruce Bailey suggests a date of 1520—30 or later for this chapel, due to its similarity with Whiston Church. It was probably either constructed by Sir Nicholas Griffin, who died in 1509 or his son Sir Thomas. The splendid Elizabethan monument in the chapel was raised to both their memories.

The Griffin family vault must be close to the priests door in the chapel since Rice Griffin, Sir Thomas's eldest son desired in his will to be buried in Braybrooke Church *"against the chappell dore"*. His wishes were probably never performed as he died fighting the Ket rebels in East Anglia in 1549 and is recorded as having been buried in St Peter Mancroft, Norwich. His mother Jane, who died in 1558 also desired to be buried in the church and gave 40 shillings to its repair.

Survivals of the Medieval Interior

Internally medieval churches were highly decorative and contained wall paintings, colouring and stained glass in profusion. At Braybrooke only a few fragments of glass survive, notably the 14th century Trinity Shield in the south aisle and fragments of late 15th or early 16th century glass in the Griffin chapel, but evidence for wall painting is more prolific. At the time of the restoration, following the removal of three or four coats of whitewash, several layers of paintings were discovered. The first layer consisted of frames with notices of bequests and texts, which probably dated from the 17th century. Beneath these were scroll work decorations in scarlet, black and white and beneath this in portions of the church were geometrical patterns in black and orange, with the earliest colouration consisting of a yellow wash on the bare walls with a black dado border, waved to a point at intervals with rough scroll ends. In the north aisle the outstanding design was a straight scroll frame of twisted bands of black and red bordered with orange. The ground was formed in chocolate red hexagons with a central design resembling a large candlestick with rushes at the feet. This was probably the seven candles of the church with the three central

candles passing through a circle (eternity) and a triangle representing the trinity in the centre. This painting was destroyed when part of the north aisle wall was rebuilt. In the south aisle was discovered a figure standing upon a swine with a knight on the left hand and another figure on the right. Pevsner suggests this may be St. Antony and his pig, but locally it is believed to represent Maud Swinnerton who died in 1361. She married first John Latymer (died 1356), and second Thomas de Swinnerton.

The chancel was the most important part of a medieval church, being the sole repository of the priest, from which all services were conducted, observed by the congregation gathered in the nave and aisles. The rood screen spanning the chancel arch formed the physical division between laity and clergy. Above it was the rood loft access to which was gained by way of the small door high up in the nave wall and its staircase, part of which still survives. Above the loft was the rood beam, upon which rested the rood, Christ on the Cross flanked by the Virgin Mary and Saint John. These objects were greatly venerated in the middle ages and often became the recipients of bequests in local wills. In 1500 Robert Whyfeld left 10s to the "crucifixi" in 1512, Agness Clark left 3s 4d to "*cruci Volgariter nunc le rood loft*" and in 1525 Agness Skeyvnton desired to be buried in the middle of the nave before the high cross.

Apart from the high altar several other altars and lights would have existed in the church prior to the reformation. The picinas which survive at the top of the north aisle and in the south chapel testify to their presence, but the Saints to whom they were dedicated remain anonymous. The only one we know of was the light to our lady, to which Agnes Oliver left 4d in 1514.

The Chapels

In addition to the Parish Church there existed in Braybrooke two separate Chapels. One of these was known as "the Chapel of the West Hall" or "of the Blessed Virgin on the Green". It was founded in 1237 when Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln granted Peter de Raley, Lord of the West Hall Fee, and Maud his wife, the right of a chapel in their own ground at "Braybroc" and a chantry within at their own cost for themselves, and their household, without bell or font, provided they attended the mother church at Christmas, the purification of the Blessed Virgin, Easter and all Saints, and on Sundays and feasts, when a sermon was usually made to the people. The Chaplain was never to celebrate marriage there or any other sacraments of that kind, and was not to admit any person to confession there, or to be girt with the knightly belt as the custom is, and on the day of the mother church festival every year Peter and Maud "shall carry to the church two wax candles weighing 2lbs and shall leave them there on the altar as an offering, so long as they last, to be expanded in divine service. The chantry was endowed with one message, one cottage and two and a half virgates of land in Braybrooke, which produced annual profits valued at 40s when the Latymers acquired the West Hall Fee early in the 14th century, they also obtained the advowson of this chapel. The Lincoln register records the institution of the following Priests to this chapel:

Robert de Dalby	
Nicholas de Ryhale	1310
Simon de Ryhale	1311
Richard de Lodington	1317
Andrew de Ayleston	1340
Richard de Passenham	1347
John King	1378

The references to the other chapel are more vague although it had a longer life. It stood within the Castle, but as no episcopal licence survives for it we do not know when it was founded. Considerable work was done to the castle by Sir Thomas le Latymer after he obtained licence to crenellate the building, so it may possibly have been established then, but the first reference to it is not until 1355 when following a dispute between Sir Waryn Latymer's widow, Katherine and her eldest son John, concerning her occupation of the castle, arbitrators awarded that Katherine should occupy those rooms beginning at the chapel and reaching as far as the great chamber. The award mentions two chaplains, John de Wodeford and John de Mydleton, one of whom was probably the domestic chaplain attached to the chapel. It survived well into the 16th century, as the last reference to it standing is in the will of Sir Thomas Griffin dated 1566, where the executors were directed to forsee the chapel in Braybrooke Castle was well repaired. Presumably it perished along with the rest of the castle early in the 17th century, since Sir John Lambe, writing in 1635 records "*the chappell in ye castle pulled down yt was consecrated to divine service.*"



SIR THOMAS LE
LATYMER, KNT

(from Hartshorne's book)
(an recumbent effigies)
(in Northamptonshire)

PART 2: *Reformation to Restoration*

Destruction and Reform

Excepting the loss of their monastic patrons, the early years of the reformation brought little change to the parish churches. Braybrooke was not even effected by this, as the patron was Sir Thomas Griffin. In 1544 T. Dobbs was still able to leave 5s "to the high altar of Braybrooke Church to bye a cloth to the more bewtie thereof and to the honor of God being there," but times were to change dramatically in the following decades. After Henry VIII's death in 1547 positive steps were made to convert the country to Protestant doctrines. Symbols of popery were eradicated, hence altars, images and tabernacles and stained glass were ruthlessly destroyed, while wall paintings were defaced and whitewashed over, and the holy rood removed, often along with the screen beneath it. By 1561 destruction of these screens had reached such proportions that a Royal order was issued prohibiting their further removal. The Braybrooke screen may have survived, as there is a story that it was found in the latter part of the last century and reassembled to form the screens between the Griffin Chapel and the South Aisle, but there is little documentary evidence to back the story up.

During the early 16th century Leonard Cotton was rector of Braybrooke. He had been presented to the living on July 19th 1510, by Alice, widow of Nicholas Griffin, during the minority of her son Thomas. She had taken as her second husband Leonard's Kinsman, Sir Robert Cotton. Whether Leonard was still rector during the protestant years of Edward VI or the short return to Catholicism under Mary I is uncertain, since it is not known when he ceased to hold the incumbency, and the next rector, William Driver, is not mentioned until 1561. The upheavals of the Civil War in the following century appears to have had a more dramatic effect upon the living, and similar to the period of the Black Death, produced quite a quick turnover of incumbents. In 1644, Nicholas Bent, who had been rector for 24 years was put out by parliamentarian sequesters and Jonas Uty, a scholar from the strongly puritan Emmanuel College, Cambridge was ordered to be settled in his place. Uty remained less than three years and in January 1646/7 Thomas Hill was admitted to the living. He remained at Braybrooke during most of the period of the interregnum, dying here in March 1656/7. He was followed for a short time by Robert Askew, but in April 1659 John Templar, the last intruding minister, was admitted to the living. After the restoration he conformed, and was ordained in 1662. He remained at Braybrooke a further 16 years. The last dramatic change of rectorship occurred in 1690 when Samuel Hawes was deprived of the living for refusing to take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary. He retained the rectory and rented it out to his successor, Samuel Stiles at £10 per annum. Hawes wife, Lydia, who died in 1691 is commemorated by a plaque on the north wall of the chancel.

The Archdeacons Visitations

Generally the reformation marked the end of church building and embellishment on any large scale and heralded in a period of steady neglect and decay, which was often only halted in the nineteenth century by major restoration.

From the early 17th century records of Archdeacons visitations or surveys survive at fairly regular intervals. The first survey for Braybrooke occurs during the incumbency of Thomas Gifford in 1611. Seven defects were noted

three of which concerned the poor condition of the seats and lack of accommodation.

1. A chest, but no locke.
2. The north side window broken.
3. Dyvers seats seered and broken at the latter end.
4. Additions at the end of the seats make the alleys (of) the church to little for the people.
5. A corner at the north east would make 2 or 3 newe seats.
6. The mounds in the churchyard even nought the ground on the south.
7. a crack at the south window in Sir Tho's Griffins Ile, and it raines in there over it and the church.

The poor state of the seats appears to have been a problem throughout the 17th century. In 1637 "*dyvers seats in the church especially towards the neither end (were) much broken and defective. Also many seats want boarding on the north side.*" The seating problem was so bad at this time that the survey records that the wooden knight had been set on two feet in the Griffin Chapel and used as a form for boys to sit on (see page 17). In 1684 the bottoms of the seats still needed mending and by 1718 most of the seats in both the chancel and the nave required attention.

By 1637 the Griffin Chapel had also deteriorated. "*The seats and roof of the chapel out of repair and very defective. The windows of the same chapel broken, also wants whitening and beautifing, being in the default of Sir Edward Griffin or his tenents.*" No further mention of the chapel is made until 1718, when the windows still needed repairing and the walls required new plaster and whitewash, but by then the responsibility for its maintenance, along with the manor, had passed from the Griffins to John Rudge and John Hopkins.

The fabric of the rest of the building appears to have been in reasonably good repair in the early part of the 17th century, but to have deteriorated towards the end. The only structural fault recorded in 1631 was the pointing at the east end of the north aisle, and in 1637 no structural defects are recorded at all, but in 1718 the following defects were noted: "*Repaire the pavement in the north isle and other part of the church also to repaire the window and doore into the belfry, also to plaster and whitewash the belfry, also to plaster and whitewash the whole body of the church and to new write all that is therein already written which is now very much defaced and to new plaster and whitewash the church porch and to pave it*".

The writing very much defaced was probably the Lords Prayer, Ten Commandments and Creed. These were established as standard fittings in churches during the Elizabethan period, to decorate the bare whitewashed walls, being often placed above the chancel arch. They are first mentioned at Braybrooke, along with the Kings Arms in the 1684 visitation. Books, vessels, vestments and the communion table, which had replaced the medieval high altar also concerned the visitors. In 1631 a book of Homiles, Erasmus Paraphrase and a table of the degrees of marriage were wanted along with a poormans box. By 1683 new copies of both the Erasmus Paraphrase and a table of marriages were still required along with a new Common Prayer book and Bishop Jewells works. Both the Erasmus Paraphrase and Bishop Jewells sermons survive for Braybrooke and are kept at the county records office. Concerning the vessels, and communion table, in 1637 it was found that "*the carpet for the communion table is old, full of holes and not fitting (and) there is a dish for the holy bread which is thought fitting to be changed, being not formally for that purpose.*" But by 1684 the parishoners were not only still required to buy a new carpet and large silver pattern for the communion bread, but also a new

communion table and a napkin to go with it, and to set up new communion rails in the chancel. The only mention of vestments is in the 1684 visitation when Dr. Mapletoft was ordered to pave, whitewash and plaster his chancel and to buy himself a scarlet hood. Bridges states that Robert Chapmans father bought the patronage of the church from Edward Griffin, so Mapletoft probably rented it from him, and was thus required to maintain the chancel.

A Benevolent Rector

John Mapletoft was a rector of considerable academic ability as well as a local benefactor, although he was rector of Braybrooke for less than three years. Born at Margaretting in Essex, he was educated at Westminster and Trinity College Cambridge, gaining a BA in 1651/2, MA in 1655, MD in 1667 and finally DD in 1690. He had been physic Professor at Gresham College from 1675—79 and had practised medicine in London with Sydenham, a friend of John Locke. On 5th March 1682/3, at the age of 50 Mapletoft was appointed Rector of Braybrooke, two days after being ordained a priest. During his incumbency he was lecturer at Ipswich and also St. Catherines London, so it is probable most of his duties in the village were performed by a clerk. On 28th January 1685/6 he was appointed vicar of St. Lawrence Jewry London, in which capacity he remained until his death in 1721. Mapletoft left £50 to the parish in 1684 for teaching poor children to read and write. This donation together with £10 left by Christopher Conyers of Braybrooke in 1630 for the benefit of the poor was combined in 1687 to buy a field, later known as school close, the annual rent from which was used to relieve the poor and teach their children. When the county historian John Bridges visited the church around 1720 he noted that the names of these two benefactors were inscribed on the church walls, Mapletoft on the north and Conyers on the south.

Bridges described the church much as it is today save only that the roof of the chancel was then tiled. The length of nave and chancel he found to be 88ft and the breadth, including the aisles 39ft 9ins. The tower was 12ft 10ins x 11ft 5ins. He also noted that the church was strewed with straw for three weeks at St. Thomas's day and that it was customary for the rector to give ninety and the clerk thirty eggs on Good Friday, to the parishioners. The wake was kept on the Sunday after All Saints day.

In the middle of the north wall of the chancel are two doors blocked from the outside, which prior to the restoration opened into a small vestry and Sunday School (see plan on page 71). This was constructed in 1812 and represents the last addition to be made to the church, but the chancel wall it leaned against was probably substantially rebuilt in the 17th century, when the two mullioned windows were inserted. The building was demolished shortly before the second world war, leaving only the blocked doors as a reminder of its presence.

Churchwardens accounts survive from both the 18th and 19th century and record minor expenditure on repair work to the church during this period. Specific items mentioned include £7 7s 0d for work to the new seats and £5 2s 5d paid to Josuah Ringrose for work and board for the new seats in 1754. Further expenditure on wood and work to seats on the north side in 1756 and in 1807 a weathercock, painted and gilded, is mentioned. In 1761 £13 was spent on the steeple and a further £16 in 1845. This last payment may have formed part of the repair work recorded in Whellans County Directory as recently done in 1849, but it appears to have done little to prevent the church reaching an almost ruinous state by the time James Ridgeway Hakewill became rector on 8th May 1887.

PART 3: *The Restoration*

An Enthusiastic Rector

The Rev. Hakewill was rector of Braybrooke for 42 years, his enthusiasm and love for this church and its heritage helped to inspire a programme of restoration, without which the building may not have survived to the present day. Originating from Paignton in Devon, he studied at Exeter College, Oxford, gaining a BA in 1873 and MA in 1876, during which year he was also ordained a priest. Before coming to Braybrooke he held a variety of posts mainly associated with teaching, including being curate of Nuneaton and assistant master of Nuneaton School from 1874—5, curate of St. Peters Maidstone, chaplain of Kent County Hospital and assistant master of Maidstone Grammar School from 1875—1880 and finally Headmaster of Market Harborough Grammar School from 1880—87.

The Survey

In October 1887 a firm of London Architects Messrs. Giles, Gough and Trollop were employed to make a structural survey of the church. In the preamble of their subsequent report they described the building as being *“now in almost a ruinous condition, owing mostly to neglect, partly to lapse of time and also to damage done by lightning.”* The report went on to state that the structural defects were great, and in want of immediate attention, some being decidedly dangerous, the chief cause being the failure and settlement of the foundations to such an extent as to endanger the superstructure. The most serious dilapidations were in the roof, north aisle and tower. In the roof the ends of the rafters were rotten and the ends of some of the principle rafters had completely rotted away and were only held in place with metal straps, while the leads bulged through holes in the rotten boards. The north aisle wall had settlement cracks in it which had destroyed the stone in some places around the windows and made it bulge in others. On the tower the north east buttress was only held in place by metal stays since lightning had struck the spire on the eastward side and in travelling to earth had cracked the stonework and virtually severed the buttress from the tower, leaving it in too dangerous a state to peel the bells. More generally the Architect found the rubble stonework outside decayed, the chancel in a deplorable condition and the vestry and Sunday school damp, dilapidated and faulty in construction. Internally all walls, windows, columns and arches were *“deluged”* in whitewash, and the chancel arch had at sometime been rebuilt, being then constructed in brick faced with cement to form the mouldings. The oak pews though high and convenient were out of repair and much patched, partially with fragments of medieval screen, which had also been worked into the Elizabethan pulpit. The report concluded with the following *“It will thus be seen that for a sum probably not exceeding £1800 a thorough and complete restoration of this interesting church can be made, but it is absolutely necessary under present circumstances that the structural defects should be taken in hand at once, and completed with as little delay as possible.”*

The 1892 Restoration

Something had to be done, so a restoration committee was formed to raise funds and get the project off the ground. At its first meeting, held on 26th January 1888 the Rev. Hakewill was appointed Honorary Secretary, W. P. Cowley Chairman, and W. Newton Honorary Treasurer. There was little hope

of raising £1800 from a parish with only 257 inhabitant so the committee issued a printed appeal to sympathetic residents in the surrounding area, which named a number of influential persons connected with the parish including the Viscount and the Viscountess Downe and Lord and Lady Wantage, as Patrons.

The restoration scheme set out in the appeal broke the work down into four sections:—

- External:* Estimated at £830, involving erecting scaffolding to the tower and steeple, reconstructing all unstable masonry and inserting a lightning conductor. Underpinning and shoring up walls damaged by settlement, rebuilding where necessary and repairing door and window arches. Dismantling the roof and reconstructing with the old timbers as far as possible and rebuilding the parapets.
- Internal:* Estimated at £480, involving removal of plaster and limewash and redressing and repointing the stone. Removing the old pews and reframing them as panelling round the walls, replacing wood boarded floors with wood blocks on concrete and reseating the nave with low benches and the chancel with two rows of choir stalls.
- Archaeological:* Estimated at £255, involving replacement of the east window and chancel arch. New parclose screens between the Griffin chapel and the chancel, restoration of existing screen and a new cover for the font.
- General Improvements:* Estimated at £215, involving new altar, pulpit and lectern and the installation of Grundys patent hot air heating system.

By 1890 only £400 had been raised, but the committee were still optimistic and in August proceeded to apply to the Consistory Court of the Bishop of Peterborough for a faculty for the complete works. However in January 1891 the Architect was only asked to draw up a specification for the "external" part of the scheme, excepting the tower and the chancel, which the rector had agreed to leave until more funds became available, and in March it was agreed to accept the tender from Claridge and Bloxham, builders and stonemasons of Banbury, provided it did not exceed £500. Work commenced in the late spring and appears to have been completed by March 1892, when the contractors bill for £507 11s 5d was settled, the extra being for a steel girder for the foundations.

The 1898 Restoration

Funds were replenished slowly and it was not until 1896 when the committee had £273 in hand, that part of the internal work and the heating was contemplated. Bloxham estimated the work in the nave, involving the restoration of the north and south arcade, internal repairs to the walls, laying a wood block and stone floor on concrete, and building heating flues would cost £271. Together with the architects fees this exceeded the money in hand, but in November Bloxham started preliminary work in the nave on an initial contract for £181. Of this the contractor had already received £55 by 18th and 19th November when a Bazaar was held at the Corn Exchange in Market Harborough, where among other things needlework, game, poultry and eggs were sold in aid of the fund.

At a committee meeting held in January 1897 final arrangements were made to proceed with the complete restoration of the nave, but the contract with Bloxham amounting to £209 2s 6d was not signed until 13th July, by which time the preliminary work had ceased. This delay upset the Archdeacon of Northampton, who had to explain to the Bishop why the church was not yet ready for re-opening, and on 30th July he sent a letter "strictly enjoining and ordering" the rector and churchwardens to proceed with the restoration "the estimate of which work the money has been subscribed and is now in the bank". Work started soon after, and by October, with a balance in the bank of £297 the committee felt confident enough to order the installation of the Grundy patent hot air heating system. The majority of the work was completed by the early summer of the following year, by which time the nave had been closed for worship for eight years, the services being held in the chancel, so on Thursday 2nd June 1898 the Rev. F. H. Thickness, Bishop of Leicester, re-opened the restored building. Thickness was also Rector of nearby Great Oxendon, so he had always taken a keen interest in the project.

The Northampton Recorder noted the event and also the gifts of local churchmen including 250 chairs and hassocks presented by Mr. Pickering Phipps J.P. (the pews were never installed), and the carved oak lectern presented in memory of the Rev. John Field, rector of Braybrooke from 1819—1867 and the Rev. James William Field who followed him as rector from 1867—1884. The recorder concluded by stating that much still remained to be done before the church was thoroughly restored, as the tower, spire and roof of the chancel still needed attention, and new bells were also required, but that efforts would be made to complete the restoration when the debt of about £100 on the work already done had been paid off.

Bloxhams final account for £364 18s 11d was some £155 over the original contract. The heating which cost around £121 accounted for most of the extra, the remainder being represented by some £30 spent on taking down two pillars in the south arcade which had been rebuilt in old stone, and reconstructing with new box ground stone, and £4 for minor works including repairs to the moulded corbels at the west end of both arcades and cutting out and chasing in a new stone cap at the east end of the north arcade. At the last recorded meeting of the restoration committee held on 31st August 1899, it was resolved to pay off the architects fees and to pay the contractor £53 18s 11d, leaving a debt to Bloxham of £61. This sum, with accumulated interest was not finally cleared until 1917.

The 1933 Restoration

The tower was finally repaired just before the first World War but the problems of unstable foundations did not cease with the restoration. The dry summer of 1921 dried out the clay subsoil and caused cracking in the west walls of the north and south aisle and also in the rebuilt north wall. The defects were inspected by J. Alfred Gotch, a Kettering Architect and famous architectural historian, in November 1923 and the findings, communicated to Mr. Heneage Griffin, a descendant of Sir Edward Griffin. He had repurchased his ancestors Braybrooke estate in the early 1920's and, although residing in France, took a keen interest in his forebears resting place, so it is probable he helped finance the repair of these defects.

In 1923 the Griffin Chapel roof had been in reasonable repair although the roof of the chancel was in a poor state, but by 1933 both roofs and the porch were in desperate need of attention. Consequentially £537 was spent in re-

roofing both chancel and chapel, limewashing the chancel walls, repairing the altar rails, lowering the altar floor, and repairing and re-roofing the porch. As both chancel and chapel were the responsibility of the Rector and the estate owner, the Rev. C. M. B. Skene, who had taken over the parish on the death of Rev. Hakewill in 1929, contributed £200 and Mr. Heneage Griffin £226. The tower was never completely restored, and has continued to give trouble throughout the century. It remained unsafe to ring all four bells and hence three were recently sold to raise funds. In 1962 the top of the spire was taken down and rebuilt, but this year (1979) following an architects inspection, it has been estimated that £15,000 needs to be spent on the tower to make it structurally sound. The chancel and griffin chapel are no longer used, and are normally sealed off to economise on heating costs.

Main Items of Interest

INTERNALLY

South Aisle

Mainly 14th century with 13th century west door and 15th century windows. This is the only part of the church where the moulded 15th century roof beams survive.

Stained Glass:

A few fragments of 14th century stained glass survive notably the trinity shield in the top of the middle window.

Wall Painting:

14th century painting of a figure in cloak and hood standing on a swine with the figure of a knight on the right hand and another figure (now almost obliterated) on the left. This was once thought to represent Maud Swinnerton (died 1361) flanked by her two husbands, John Latymer and Thomas de Swinnerton, but Pevsner suggests this may be St. Antony and his pig.

Font:

This is Norman and represents the earliest feature in the Church. Originally square it has had its corners chamfered at a later date. The decoration follows an aquatic theme with beaded intertwined monsters and shell shaped devices worked into a geometric pattern on three sides, and on the fourth, what appears to be a diving mermaid, holding a fish in her hand and nibbling the tail. Beside the figure is a carved cross.

Monuments:

Floor slab to John Cooper, died 1714.

North Aisle

14th century with 15th century windows and one remaining 14th century window much restored on the west side. The north wall was largely rebuilt in the late 19th century.

Kings Arms:

Royal arms of George III recently repainted. This replaces the Royal arms first recorded in 1684, which may have been originally painted directly on the plaster.

Panelling:

Remodelled from 18th century box pews, which were dismantled and reassembled as panelling in 1898. The wood block floors mark the site of these pews.

Chest:

Bound in iron and probably dating from the middle ages. The first documentary reference to it occurs in 1611 when a complaint was made that it had no lock. Until recently it contained the parish registers which date from 1653, and many interesting books and paper relating to the village. It has no lock to this day.

Rood Stair:

Survives at the upper end of the aisle with the 14th century door which gave access to the rood loft.

Picina:

Which once served an altar at this end of the aisle, and on the opposite wall a blocked qumbry. This would have been used for storing the vessels for containing the holy oils used at baptism and for anointing the sick.

East Window:

Renovated and reglazed with modern stained glass by Margaret Winifred Cowley, who died in 1967, to the memory of William Payne, Elizabeth Walters Cowley and their son Major Edwin Charles Cowley.

Framed Brass:

Giving instructions on the administration of £50 given by the Rev. John Mapletoft for teaching poor children. If the money was misused the gift became void, and the sum put to the same use in Broughton Parish.

North Procesional Door:

Still in position outside, but blocked from within.

Monuments:

Floor slabs to Thomas Jones 1684 and his daughter Barbara 1716 and John Stonn 1709.

Cupboard Door:

Small door with a pointed head and a painting of a pelican upon it, now resting above the Panelling. This may once have filled the qumbry in the Griffin Chapel.

Nave

Three bayed arcades of 14th century octagonal piers much restored in 1898 and two Early English arches at the east end which may once have opened into transepts. The chancel arch was refashioned in timber in 1898.

The Pulpit:

This was originally Elizabethan, but at the time of the restoration it was restored in memory of Thomas Hakewill, who died in 1894. It is very doubtful if the present pulpit contains any Elizabethan work and was probably constructed as a replica.

The Eagle Lectern:

Oak lectern given by the Field family in memory of the Rev. John Field rector of Braybrooke from 1819—1867 and the Rev. James W. Field, rector from 1867—1884.

The Reading Desk:

This old desk is Elizabethan, with the front panel dated 1602, and a simple body much restored. A more sophisticated modern desk has taken its place.

The Bracket:

Projecting from the eastern respond of the north arcade, this probably helped provide support for the Rood Loft.

Chancel

Late 13th century east wall with contemporary window containing intersecting tracery. The north wall appears to have been substantially reconstructed in the 17th or early 18th century when the two mullioned clearstory windows were inserted. The door, blocked from without, once led to the demolished Sunday school and vestry.

Altar Rails:

In 1684 the Archdeacons' visitation stated that new communion rails were required, but the present rails appear to date from the mid 18th century. Various repairs are recorded to these, the earliest being in the churchwardens' accounts for 1754 when the ballusters were repaired and a bolt fitted to the altar gate. They were recently removed when the chancel fell into disuse.

Stone Reredos:

This has blocked the bottom part of the east window and probably dates from the 17th century. It was designed in one panel with a moulded frame and crenellated cornice. When the architects Giles, Gough and Trollope surveyed the building in October 1887 there were still fragments of paint on the panel which they thought may have represented the Last Supper, but this has since vanished.

Priscina:

With broken bowel, situated in the south east corner, this would have served the high altar and was probably refashioned when the chapel was constructed.

Monuments:

Wall Plaques — Mary Valens 1571 with coat of arms. Quite early for a simple marble plaque of this nature. Rev. Robert Chapman (1759) and Francis his wife (1738), Lydia, wife of Rev. Samuel Howes (1691), Rev. Robert Young (1828) and Mary his wife (1803).

Floor ledgers to Samuel Coles senior of Braybrooke (1684), Elizabeth, daughter of Brice Shuter (1710) and Robert Brice Shuter (1734), son of R. B. Shuter and Judith his wife, daughter of John Allcock of Loddington.

**The South
or
Griffin
Chapel**

Probably erected as a chantry chapel by a member of the Griffin family early in the 16th century. It was repaired and re-roofed in 1933.

Two Niches:

Either side of the east window. These are well preserved, with miniature vaulting and projecting bases and fragments of paint still surviving. They probably lost their statues during the reformation.

Piscine:

To served the altar beneath the east window.

The Helmet:

Believed to date from around 1580 it was originally fixed to the eastern wall of the south chapel on an iron bracket almost immediately over the Griffin monument. The helmet is a fine specimen of the armourers craft, being a good example of the type of close helmet worn in the 16th and 17th centuries. It consists of the headpiece proper or skull, which is hammered out of a single piece of iron, with a high cable-ridge comb over the back and a long spike to support the crest. The visor, which was originally ornamented with silver scroll work, is in two parts, being secured either side of the head piece with pivots, each ornamented with a cross. The upper visor has the "ocularia" or long narrow slits for vision, and can be lifted and turned back over the helmet. Then by lifting the lower visor or Mezail, and slightly lifting the chin piece, the helmet may be placed over a persons head. Two curved flat plates or lames are riveted to the front of the headpiece for the protection of the neck. Probably similar plates were also attached to the back. No trace of the lining inside now remains. The Rev. J. R. Hakewill stated that when he came to Braybrooke in 1887, a steel corslet or breast plate and a pair of gauntlets hung by the helmet, but these have since vanished.

Parclose Screen:

There is a story that this once formed part of the pre-reformation Rood Screen, the pieces of which were found and reassembled during the last century. It was in its present position in 1887, when Trollope made his survey, as he noted that although the screen was very mutilated, sufficient remained for a complete restoration. The remains appear to be 15th century and have at sometime been reassembled, but whether the pieces formed part of the Rood Screen is less certain since the chapel probably had parclose screens when first constructed. It still retains some interesting carvings, notably the two wrestlers and the small pierced lantern tracery which once must have covered the whole of the top.

The Medallion:

Originally built into a wall at Brampton Ash Rectory, from at least the early 19th century, until it was placed in the church in 1933. Pevsner describes it thus: "*a big somewhat rabelaisian medallion containing the head of a military man. He has a walrus moustache and a goatee and wears a wreath. Probably c 1575.*" this is typical of the medallion used to decorate the outside walls of mansion houses and gatehouses throughout the 16th century, and is locally believed to have come from Braybrooke Castle.

The Aumbry:

A small medieval cupboard for storing vessels which contained holy oil for baptismal services and anointing the sick. Hooks for the hinges and the bolt stay still remain.

Monuments:

Wooden Effigy of Sir Thomas Le Latymer:

Died 1334 (normally kept on permanent display in Northampton museum). Thomas was a minor when he inherited the Braybrooke estate on the death of his father, John Le Latymer in 1283. He was twice married and summoned to both the Parliaments of Edward I (1289) and Edward II (1310), and it was he who obtained a Royal Licence in 1303 to crenellate his manor house at Braybrooke and to fortify it with a stone wall, from which time it was styled a Castle. The effigy is larger than life, being 7ft 4ins long, and is carved out of a single log of knotty oak, but has suffered badly from beetle attack and decay. It was probably once painted and set upon a wooden chest tomb in its own chantry chapel (see page 5). It represents Sir Thomas wearing a rigid cervelière (helmet) over a mail hood with haubeck (shirt) and chausses (stockings) of mail, genouillères (knee caps) of plate, a surcote and plain gauntlets. The spurs have wheel rowels, and the shield, probably once blazoned with arms is suspended by a narrow gigue. Two features of the monument date it fairly accurately to the 1330's thereby making it undoubtedly the effigy of Sir Thomas. These are the short surcote which indicates the transition from the Cyclas to the Jupon which succeeded it as a military garment, and the helmet, which is the precursor of the pointed bascinet, but is seldom met with. The effigy was originally intended to rest in the upper end of the south aisle, but in 1637 the archdeacons visitation recorded "*The monument of the Lord Latymer, deceased, being of carved wood, is removed out of the up end of the south aisle where he was buried, and placed in the chapel upon two feet in the manor of a form for boys to sit on, very unseemly and the seat of Mrs. Hill, which is about four foot in length, placed where the monument did stand, which monument the visitors think to be returned into its first upper place and in a seemly manor to be repaired and made up as formally it hath been.*" When Bridges visited the church in the early 18th century it had been returned to the south aisle and lay under the upper window there, but by 1860, when Heneage Griffin, as a boy of 12, first visited the church, it was back in the Griffin chapel beneath the east window. Earlier this century the Rev. Hakewill, believing the effigy to represent Sir John Latymer and the painting on the south aisle wall, that of his wife Maud, who later married Thomas de Swinnerton, moved it back into the south aisle beneath the painting, but when the Griffin chapel was re-roofed and repaired in 1933, a new stone base was constructed for it in the chapel, and the effigy brought back to rest upon it.

Griffin Monument:

Erected to the memory of Sir Thomas Griffin (died 1566) and his father Sir Nicholas (died 1509). This is one of the finest examples of this type of Elizabethan monument in the county. From the base project short pilasters, which at either end are grouped together to support a cluster of short fluted ionic balusters,

General Items

above which a heavily moulded cornice supports two urns surmounted by heraldic Griffins. A central panel boldly displays the Griffin coat of arms with the motto "Gardes La Fine", above which a semicircular centrepiece contains a shell surmounted with another Griffin capped urn. Pevsner quotes references suggesting the Thorpe family of masons were responsible for the monument.

Wall Plaques:

Guilded plaque on a timber frame with coat of arms to Alfred Griffin of Brand Hall Salop (1867), his wife Elizabeth Sarah (1858), their eldest son Alfred William (1861), and eldest daughter Elizabeth Fanny (1916).

Floor Ledger:

To Jonathan Nethercoat (1795).

The Vamping Horn:

Believed to have been brought to Braybrooke in the 17th century, this 5ft long horn is one of only seven to survive in England. Ironically the neighbouring parish of Harrington can also boast ownership of another of the seven. They were probably used as a form of loud speaker, but their exact function is unknown. Suggestions range from calling in labourers from the fields to reading parish notices, but the most plausible idea is that a bass singer would 'vamp' down the horn during hymn singing to keep choir and congregation together.

The Chair:

Locally known as the Bishop's Chair. Nothing is known of its history, the Rev. Hakewill being the first to record its presence in the church late in the last century. The details on the three half length figures which have been planted onto the back suggest the chair has been made up with carved fragments from a 16th or 17th century piece of furniture, or perhaps a family pew, possibly in the 18th century. The cross at the top, crudely fashioned from beading suggests it was created with a church location in mind.



The Vamping Horn

EXTERNALLY

Porch 14th century. Repaired and re-roofed in 1933 with a sundial above the entrance, and a scratch dial on a window reveal inside.

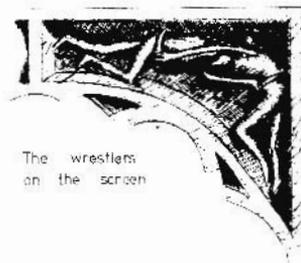
Tower Late 14th or early 15th century with diagonal buttress and a tall broached spire rising direct from a frieze of cosped lozengers. The clock with its skeleton iron dial, was presented by Samuel Blythe as a thanks offering, and was dedicated on 21st November 1926.

Crude Carved Mask:

Above the eastern buttress of the north aisle.

The Church-yard

Gods acre (to be exact 1.079 acres), probably predates the present church building, which lies nearly central within it being aligned roughly on an east-west axis. Over the years the yard has been cleared on an adhoc basis so that now only about 100 headstones remain standing, together with several victorian chest tombs and sundry modern cross's, kerbs and memorial vases. The oldest headstones are in limestone and roughly cover the period 1680—1720, the earliest noted being that of Thomas Coleman who died 26th February 1684. The average thickness of these stones is 3—4ins, but Coleman's stone measures over 5½ins on the edge. In the early 18th century limestone gave way to slate, George Clipshams stone dated December 1700 being one of the earliest examples, but the 19th century saw its reintroduction along with cast stone and marble. The four chest tombs, which were once surrounded by railings, date from the mid 19th century and commemorate members of the Attenborough family, who donated a cup to the church. A little to the east, a raised ledger, still surrounded by railings commemorates the Rev. John Field, MA, who died on March 24 1867 aged 77, also Louisa, his wife, who died in 1832 aged 35, and three younger members of their family, Charles Bray brooke, died 1835 aged 5, Ann Letition, died 1835 aged 7 and Henry Arthur, died 1840 aged 8. Slightly to the west, a plain marble tomb commemorates the Fowler family, with dates spanning 119 years, probably the longest period recorded on one stone in the yard.



The wrestlers
on the screen

The Church Plate

1. Silver cover paten and cup both dated 1570.
2. Tall silver flagon with inscription on front, made by Thomas Corbet o St. Martins Lane, London in 1703 and said to have been presented by the Rev. Dr. John Mapletoft, Rector of Braybrooke from 1682—85.
3. Silver cup made in 1764 with an inscribed memorial to Mr. Robert Attenborough who died on 20th November 1852. He was a church-warden at Braybrooke for many years and the cup was presented by the Attenborough family to his memory.
4. Two silver bread holders, both made in London in 1829 and presented to Braybrooke by Mrs. Mary Bousquet, mother-in-law of Rev. John Field, Rector of Braybrooke from 1819—1867.
5. Pewter arms plate undated but old and battered, with a heraldic achievement on it.

The Bells

1. Inscribed 'Sit Nomen Dominic Benedictum' (*Blessed be the name of the Lord* — no date. (Diameter 33ins).
2. Inscribed ABCD KLMNO EFGHI — dated 1610. (Diameter 35½ins).
3. Inscribed Geo HEDDERLY OF NOTTINGHAM FECIT 1785. (Diameter 28½ins).
4. Inscribed G. HATTENBEREY C. WARDEN W. TAYLOR ST NEOIS FECIT 1806. (Diameter 31ins).

By tradition they were rung in the following fashion: — At the death-knell, three tolls were given for a male and two for a female.

On Sunday the 1st bell was rung at 7am; the 1st and 2nd bells at 9am. For Divine Service the bells were chimed and the Sermon-bell (tenor) rung. At the close of Morning Service two bells were chimed.

The Churchwarden's accounts give some information concerning the costing of the two more modern bells:

		£	s.	d.
1784	Spent at a vestery concerning the bell		3	0
	Spent taking the bell down and loading it		10	0
	Spent when taking the tone of the bell			9
	Paid the bellfounders bill	10	10	0
	I gave him towards his charges		5	0
1806	Paid Mr. Edey for casting and hanging the bell	16	0	0
	James Burley bill for work and wood	5	2	6
	Jon Pain bill for iron and work	3	2	4
	Sam Moore's bill: Ale when doing the bells	1	8	0

The danerous state of the tower during most of this century prevented the bells being rung, so in 1962, when the spire was repaired, three of the four bells were taken down and sold to provide funds for maintenance.

The Rectory

The patronage of this Church was granted to the Priory of Daventry by Cethelbert in the late 11th century and conveyed by them in 1236 to Peter and Maud de Ragelin. From them it passed first to the Latymers and finally to the Griffins, from whom Bridges tells us it was purchased by the father of Robert Chapman, Rector of Braybrooke from 1718—1759, who transmitted it to succeeding rectors.

In 1253 the rectory was valued at fifteen marks, less an annual pension of 44 shillings to the prior of Daventry. By 1535 the value had risen to £23 17s 4d, but the living does not appear to have been rich, since Sir John Lambe in his notes on "inconformable" clergy in Peterborough Diocese, in 1635 states that Mr. Bent, rector hath but 30 or 40 pounds per annum, although the rectory was worth 200 marks and above. The Parliamentary survey of 1650 found the rectory to be worth £100, and Thomas Hill, clerk "*receiveth the profits and dischargeeth the cure*". The land amounting to nearly 307 acres was distributed throughout the old open fields named Loatland, Heydicks, Arnsborron and black field, until the 18th century when it was consolidated into one estate after a series of enclosures, culminating with the Parliamentary enclosure of 1778.

The Rectors have fought for their right of tithes from an estate in the parish, which prior to the reformation belonged to Pipewell Abbey, since the time of Edward III until 1820.

The Rectory House is now a private house in the ownership of the Rev. R. J. Hakewill's grandson. It has probably stood on its present site in the west corner of the village since the middle ages, and is first mentioned as the Parsonage in the will of Ann Latymer in 1402 when, along with the church, it benefited from a bequest of 40 shillings. The earliest surviving church tesser (survey) describes it as a four bayed dwelling, with a kitchen, stable, barn and dove house, approached by a street called Parsons Street. This road was closed in the late 18th century, but it still survives today. One stormy night in October 1670 we are told that at about 11 o'clock a gale attacked a pease-rick and uncovered its thatch, and afterwards uncovered the parsonage house from which it passed over the town without doing any further damage. By 1752 the house had increased in size to nine bays with a brew-house adjoining on the west side, together with a larger barn, two stables, a granery and dove house. The main part of the house as it survives today probably dates from the second quarter of the 18th century, being built in a mixture of brick and stone with a central stairwell containing a fine contemporary staircase with fluted newels. The service wing, which runs at right angles to this block appears to have been extensively reconstructed in the 19th century, but the survival of the large kitchen fireplace, which probably preserves the remains of ovens in the thickness of its side walls, and which is spanned by a chamfered clavel beam with lozenge shaped stops suggests this wing may be the shell of the building recorded in 1631. The Field family extended the property against this wing in the 19th century and introduced a gothic porch on the main facade, but the present owner has removed some of these obstructions to reveal some of the original 18th century ferrestation.

Brief Notes on the Castle

This was originally the manor known as the East Hall Fee and was held soon after the Norman Conquest by Ivo Newmarch. His grandson, Robert le May, more commonly called Robert de Braybrooke, was high in favour with King John, being master of his wardrobe and one of his Council, and it was during his time that the first reference is made to the fishpond, when Robert's son, Henry released to Pipewell Abbey all his right to the dam which Robert had made at Braybrooke, within the Abbey's close, provided the dam water continued to flow into Henry's fishpond. The monks were not to dig in the watercourse, or prevent it from running into the fishpond, but they could freely use the dam for fishing. Henry also extended the manor house and in 1213 was given timber from the forest of Leicester to build a fair chamber at Braybrooke.

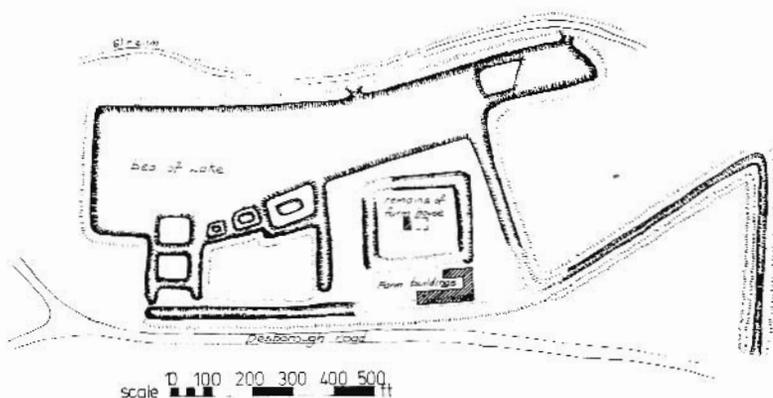
In the late 13th century the estate passed into the hands of the Latymer family when Henry's great granddaughter, Christina, married John Latymer. The Inquisition taken after Christina's death in 1292, only records a capital messuage (chief house) with a garden worth 6s 8d yearly and makes no mention of the fishpond, which was probably small and worth little. On January 30th 1303 Thomas le Latymer, Christina's son obtained a licence to strengthen his manor house at Braybrooke with a stone wall and to embattle it. It is clear Thomas undertook major alterations to the building as the Pipewell Abbey register records that he had the roof of his great chamber at Braybrooke of the timber of the Abbey and Convent, and the inquisition taken after Thomas's death in 1334 describes the castle as a capital messuage enclosed by water, worth with a close outside the gates, in herbage from St. Mary to Michelmas 10 shillings. The fishery around the enclosure is worth nothing (probably because all the fish were consumed upon the estate).

It seems likely that the earthworks which survive today comprising the double ditched platform upon which the castle stood, and the many small breeding tanks or fish stews, set around the edge of the large fishpond or lake were probably all created by Sir Thomas early in the 14th century. The nature of the buildings which stood upon the platform are less certain. Clearly the great chamber roofed with the Abbots timber was the great hall, and in 1355 we have details of further buildings when Sir Thomas's widowed daughter-in-law, Katherine, following a dispute with her son, John Latymer concerning her occupation of the castle, was awarded in arbitration "the rooms beginning at the chapel as far as the great chamber," with right of entry and re-entry "if there cannot be made a convenient door across the ditch. The picture appears to be of a large and sophisticated manor house, probably constructed in stone, with great hall and chapel, built on a square double ditched platform, surrounded by a stone wall, with probably several bridges and gatehouses spanning the ditches.

The castle passed out of Latymer ownership in the mid 15th century, when it was inherited by the heirs of Sir Thomas's granddaughter, Elizabeth, who had married Sir Thomas Griffin. During the Griffins occupation, Bridges tells us, part of the castle was casually blown up by gunpowder, but no date is given. The famous 16th century typographer, John Leland made the following note about the castle around 1540, although he does not appear to have visited it. "*Braybroke Castelle upon Wiland water was made and embatellid by licens that one Braybroke, a noble man in those (days) did obtaine*". "*Mr. Griphine is now owner of it, he is a man of faire landes.*" Mr. Griphine was Sir Thomas Griffin, eldest son of

Nicholas Griffin. More famous was his younger brother, Edward, who rose high at Court, becoming attorney general to both Edward VI and Mary I. In 1558 Edward commenced work on a mansion house of his own at nearby Dingley, and thus split the family estates. Sir Thomas outlived his two eldest sons, and on his death in 1566, the castle passed to his third son, Thomas who had been a lunatic since the age of 12. In his will dated April 1566 Sir Thomas made provision for his son and directed his executors to "see my house of Brayboke — well and honestly repayred and kept up — and shall foresee also the chappell therof well repayred and the hauld therof well paved and scelyd." Thomas the lunatic died childless, and the castle passed first to his niece, Mary Markham, and then to the heirs of his uncle, Sir Edward Griffin of Dingley. Elizabeth, wife of Edward's grandson, Sir Thomas Griffin was probably the last member of the family to reside in the castle, since she is recorded as living at Braybrooke in 1620, after the death of her husband.

Two pieces of evidence survive to suggest the castle was demolished around 1632–33. The first is a record of the repair of Walgrave Church in 1633, when the chancel was embattled and the buttress's raised with stone from Braybrooke Castle. The second is a note in a document relating to 1752 tyth case, which states that the castle had been demolished some 120 years previous. It had almost certainly gone by 1635 when Sir John Lambe noted the chapel in the castle as "pulled down". Some remains of the stone mullioned windowed farmhouse which succeeded the castle on the site still survive. It was demolished in 1959, having stood empty for most of this century. It is first mentioned in 1649 as the capitol messuage or mansion house, on the site of the castle and was probably constructed soon after the castle was demolished. When Bridges visited Braybrooke around 1720, he noted that eastward of the town were the ruins of an ancient castle, standing in a low situation and encompassed with a double ditch. He does not make it clear whether any upstanding masonry survived, but it seems unlikely since only the farmhouse and the range of farm buildings which face the Desborough Road are shown on the earliest surviving map of the village dated 1767.



SKETCH PLAN OF THE EARTHWORK REMAINS ON THE
SITE OF BRAYBROOKE CASTLE

(The castle buildings stood on the double ditched platform)

The Rectors of Braybrooke

Alexander		Jonus Uty	1644
Marescal	1233	(intruding minister)	
John de Rowell		Thomas Hill	1646/7
Robert de Riston	1291	(intruding minister)	
Roger de Wakerle	1292	Robert Askew	1656/7
		(intruding minister)	
John Bover de Brampton	1345	John Templar	1659
William de Northwode	1349	(conformed 1662)	
John de Gurmundcestre	1349	Jacob Crawford	1678
Robert de Woburn	1351	John Mapletoft, MA	1682/3
William de Launcy	1352	Samuel Hawes	1685
Ralph de Daventry	1354	(deprived 1690)	
John de Braughinge	1365	Samuel Stiles	1690
William Braibroc	1379	Robert Chapman, BA	1718
Thomas Hasilwode		Robert Chapman, BA	1759
Robert Holdernesne	1482	Robert Young, LLD	1800
Edward Lane	1504	John Field, MA	1829
Richard Griffin	1508	James William Field, MA	1867
Leonard Cotton	1510	Edward Hood Higgs	1885
William Driver (occurs)	1561	James Ridgeway Hakewill,	
Peter Bingley	1582	MA	1887
William Dimpleby, MA	1593	Claude M. B. Skene, BA	1932
Thomas Gifford	1607	Brian W. Earle, MA	1938
Nicholas Bent, BA		G. Ronald Loxton	1947
(put out by sequesters)	1620		

The following works were consulted when compiling this guide:—

Braybrooke — its Castle, Manor and Lords, *W. Paley Baildon, F.S.A.*

History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire, *J. Bridges.*

The Buildings of England in Northamptonshire, *N. Pevsner.*

Northamptonshire and Rutland Clergy 1500—1900, *Rev. H. Isham Langden.*

The Parish Churches and Religious Houses of Northamptonshire: their Dedications, Altars, Images and Lights, *Rev. R. M. Serjeantson, M.A., F.S.A. and Rev. H. Isham Langden, M.A.*

H. Isham Langden, M.A.

The Church Plate of the County of Northampton, *C. A. Markham, F.S.A.*

The Church Bells of Northamptonshire, *T. North, F.S.A.*

Kellys Directory of Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire, 1914.

Recumbent Effigies in Northamptonshire, *A. Hartshorne.*

Associated Architectural Societies: reports and papers, 1922.

Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous. Volume III.

Northamptonshire Notes and Queries. Volume V.

Broadsheets and newspaper cuttings from Northampton County Library.

Unpublished documents from Braybrooke Parish Records and Archdeacons

Visitations at Northampton Records Office.

I am also indebted to the Librarians at Northampton Public Library and the archivists at Northampton Records Office who have assisted me with material, to members of the parish church council who have encouraged me with the project and to Miss L. Fairey who had kindly read through and corrected this manuscript.

Geoff Pitcher