



St Peter's  
Filkins



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Broughton  
Poggs

# Broughton-cum-Filkins





St Peter's, Broughton Poggs, early history unknown.

Broughton Poggs means enclosure by the brook owned by Norman Pogeys of the Stoke Poges family.

The parish has always been autonomous with its church built in a farmyard.

Broughton cum Filkins gives us an opportunity to compare St Peter's, Broughton Poggs as a Saxon then Norman structure, solidly built, with St Peter's, Filkins, a graceful structure in a medieval style but built in 1855 - 57; the Victorian Gothic style as used by Charles Barry and August Welby Pugin for the Houses of Parliament and by George Edmund Street, who built St Peter's Filkins, for the Law Courts in the Strand, London.

Filkins was originally part of Broadwell parish and given by Ralph de Limesi of Broadwell to the Knights Templar soon after 1185. When the Templars fell from grace, 1307 -1314, Filkins remained a farming area of small freeholders and became larger than Broadwell itself.

William Hervey applied to the Oxford Diocese for an independent parish in 1851. Plans were submitted for a church but rejected by the Diocesan architect, G E Street, who submitted his own plans for a larger church as right.







St Peter's, Broughton Poggs, is situated in a farmyard although many of the former barns on the north side have been converted into modern dwellings.

The building is basically Norman but there is a suggestion that the tower might be Saxon due to the style of the bell apertures which compare with known Saxon architecture on a chapel tower in Bradford-on-Avon. Semi-circular headed arches and square pilaster (centre) with a square single stone capital are all typical of pre-Conquest work.

However, another source suggests these apertures have been rebuilt using Norman stone.

The early history of this Grade 2\* listed building is unrecorded and detective work is required to learn a little about it.

The nave is 12th century so this section was probably built at the boom time for building just after the Conquest. Possibly an earlier Saxon building was adapted and it could have been a manorial chapel for early versions of Broughton Hall.

Broughton Poggs was an independent parish but Filkins was originally part of the larger Broadwell (Bradwell) parish although the two were and are separated by the narrow Broadwell brook.

The settlements straddled the ancient and important north-south route from the Cotswolds through Burford to the river Thames at Lechlade which was an inland port to London and the sea.

*Filkins did not have an independent church until George Edmund Street's St Peter's was consecrated on Easter Tuesday 1857.*

*August Welby Pugin (1812 -1852) was appalled by the bland architecture of Georgian churches and revived the Gothic style. George Edmund Street, the Gilbert Scotts and others studied Pugin's work and adopted the style for themselves; so the Victorian Gothic revival became well established.*







The nave is 12th century and was reroofed at an altered pitch in the 19th.

The low, semi-circular chancel arch is also 12th century with large rectangular squints (hagioscopes) either side.

The chancel beyond is 13th century but was restored and altered in 1874.

The nave is mainly lit by the larger windows in the south wall. These, according to English Heritage, are 19th century restorations; the eastern one is in the three lancet Early English style (from the 1150 - 1250 period) and the western one is Decorated style (from the 1250 - 1350 period) with two traceried lights.

The nave has 12th century arched slit windows in the north wall.

John Betjeman described the church as "simple and subtle in local stone". The stone came from the Windrush quarry owned by the Jackson family who built the church.

Street's design uses a medieval Gothic arched arcaded nave leading into an apse for the chancel similar to one he designed for Lille cathedral.

The apse chancel was a Saxon and Norman feature replaced by rectangular chancels in the Gothic period.

The apsed chancel is semicircular at ground level but grades vertically towards polygonal.

The ceiling stars were added by the vicar from 1874 to 1882, Hugh Cunnyngame.

The apse chancel does not have a flat floor as in medieval churches but follows the pattern for Victorian "restorations" where the altar and chancel were raised and tiled.







The chancel arch is low, just under 9 feet, and no trace of any rood beam or screen remains. The stonework bears roughness from the masons' axe and the plain imposts and arch stones characterise a simple village church.

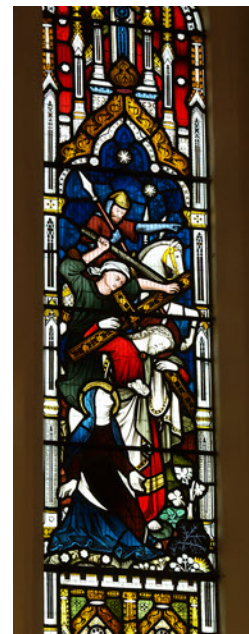
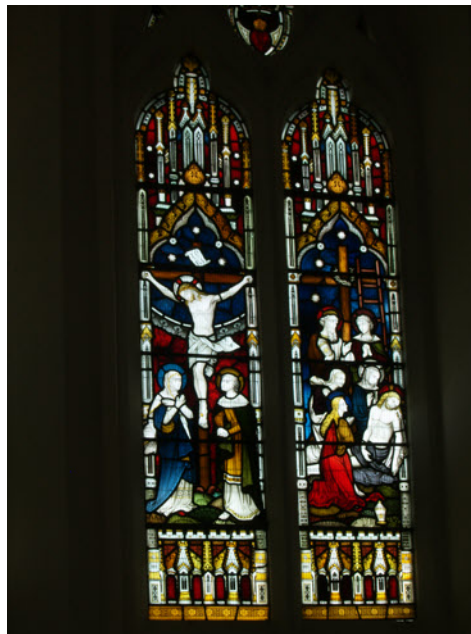
The chancel floor remains flat as in medieval times and the only Victorian "restoration" appears to be roofing at a steeper pitch and also window repairs.

The 12th century tub font on a panelled base probably indicates the date when most of the building work was completed on this church.



The large squints (hagioscopes) either side of the chancel arch were inserted at a later date probably to provide a view of the altar from the side pews in the nave.

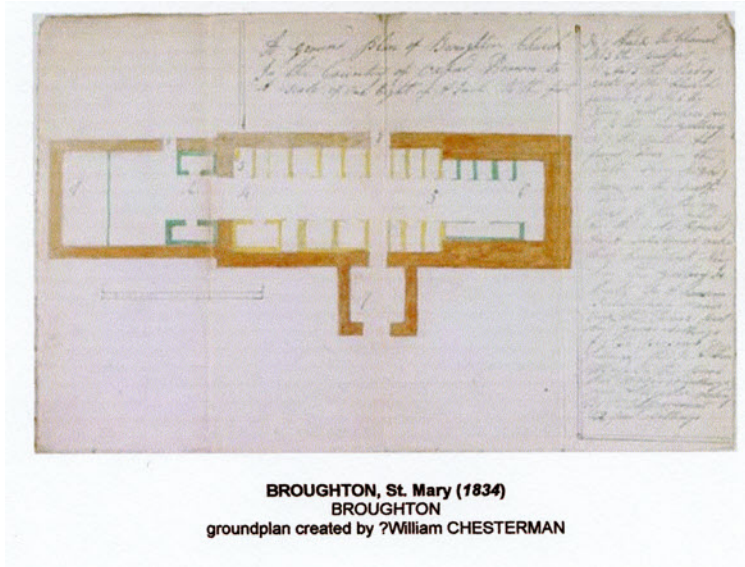
Originally no seating was provided in medieval churches.



Raised and tiled chancel and sanctuary - a typical fashion of the Victorian restorers which was repeated in almost all the medieval churches they worked on.

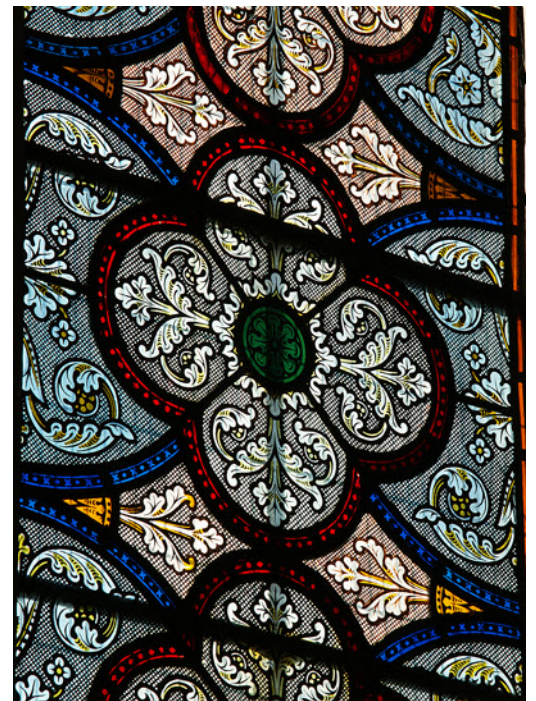
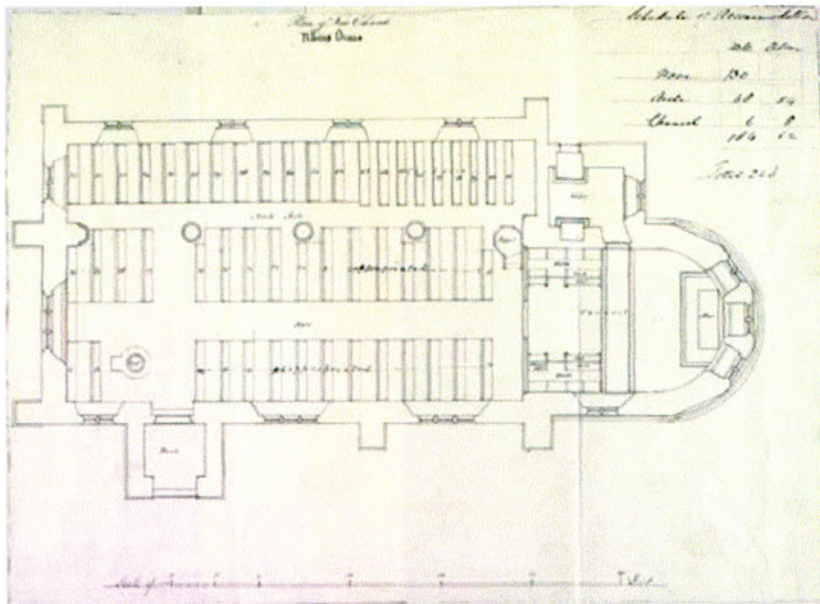
This was also the period of the Arts and Crafts movement and the East windows are by Clayton and Bell who were the most proficient and productively efficient stained glass manufacturers of the late Victorian period. Clayton and Bell reverted to ancient medieval methods of glass manufacturing in order to achieve higher levels of luminosity and colour saturation.





The main porch and entrance to the church is on the north side but two doors do exist on the south side. One is the priest's door in the chancel, top right, which has a Caernarvon arch, and the second is in the nave and has a scratch dial on the outside lintel.

Scratch dials were sundials intended to indicate the time of the next service before the days of clocks. Pegs would be moved around the holes possibly between services.



George Edmund Street had an architectural practice in Oxford from 1852. His office became the nursery of the Arts and Crafts movement, William Morris trained there and met Philip Webb.

William Morris was also engaged to produce designs for this church as seen in the glass above. Pugin's influence had started everything but his name was fading. The Arts and Crafts movement saw itself as a reaction to the Great Exhibition of 1851.



The memorials and First World War cross inside the church are well worth reading and examining. As you leave wander round to the south side to see this splendid example of a cast iron headstone, rare in these parts.



St Peter's, Broughton Poggs, was probably built, extended and modified over a period of 3 to 400 years. Consequently the architectural styles, tools used and fashions changed progressively. The window styles of medieval churches are usually the clue with regard to age and development from Norman (Romanesque), 1066 to 1150, rounded arch and lancet windows through Early English (1150 -1250), Decorated (1250 -1350) and Perpendicular Gothic, (1350 to 1450), into the flatter Tudor four centred arch for doorways and windows (1500 onwards).



George Edmund Street completed his medieval Gothic theme for St Peter's by installing an aumbry, dry cupboard, and a piscina, washing bowl, either side of the altar. The piscina is a copy of the one in St Peter's Broughton Poggs.

He also used "medieval" corbels to support the roof and a cusped rere arch porch design copied from a window in Kelmscott church.

Street is best known for designing and building the Law Courts in the Strand, London. Building work started in 1873 but Street was killed in 1881, a year before completion, when he stepped back into the Strand to admire his work and was run over by a horse and cart - he lies buried in Westminster Abbey. The law Caourts were finished by his son, A.E.Street, and Sir Arthur Bloomfield.







The Victorian Gothic revival period gave the architect licence to employ and develop his own styles. Therefore, spare a few minutes as you leave St Peter's, Filkins, to study the external stonework of the windows. George Edmund Street used the Gothic Decorated period, 1250 - 1350, as the basis for this church's windows. Most are different and use tracery in the upper section to embellish their appearance. All are the same style indicating that the church was built as a complete entity as it stands with no extension or modification.



*This guide to the two churches in the Broughton cum Filkins parish has necessarily dealt with building features more than detailed history and is intended to make any visit more enjoyable. The work of others is acknowledged in producing this guide, English Heritage, Victoria County History, Richard Martin and others.*

*For a more detailed history of the parish you are invited to see Richard Martin's book "The Parish of Broughton-cum-Filkins, Oxfordshire" which is available [here](#).  
Derek Cotterill 2010*