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FUND

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH  
CHADSHUNT  
WARWICKSHIRE

80 pence



## ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, CHADSHUNT, WARWICKSHIRE

by Geoff Brandwood

Chadshunt lies in the attractive, hilly country of south-east Warwickshire not far from the Oxfordshire border. The view south from the churchyard is over a broad vale, past the site of the Battle of Edge Hill (1642) — the first great battle of the Civil War — and up to the higher country of the neighbouring county. All Saints' church, built of brown Hornton stone, is set within a roughly circular churchyard, surrounded by many trees. It has a building history stretching back to Norman times and ending, to all intents and purposes, with a major scheme in the 18th century. It may have been then that the churchyard received its present shape as the brick wall surrounding it dates from that time. There was some restoration work during Victorian and Edwardian times but no drastic changes occurred and the church now appears, like countless other village churches, as the mellow product of the centuries.

### Parish History

The early history is obscure until the middle of the 12th century which is the date of much of the nave fabric. By this time the ecclesiastical living, with that of Bishop's Itchington, supported the Precentor of Lichfield cathedral. At the end of the 13th century, and probably between 1282 and 1291, Chadshunt became a chapelry dependent on Bishop's Itchington. Gaydon, the next village to the east, had a chapel dependent, in turn, on Chadshunt. And so it remained that Chadshunt and Gaydon were served from Bishop's Itchington until 1879. In that year the new living of Gaydon with Chadshunt was established. By then Gaydon was by far the bigger place and had received a new church in 1852, designed by the Leamington architect, D. G. Squirhill. Chadshunt church suffered from the problems associated with serving a small village and the changing social and religious patterns of the late 20th century. It was declared redundant and vested in the Redundant Churches Fund in May 1988.



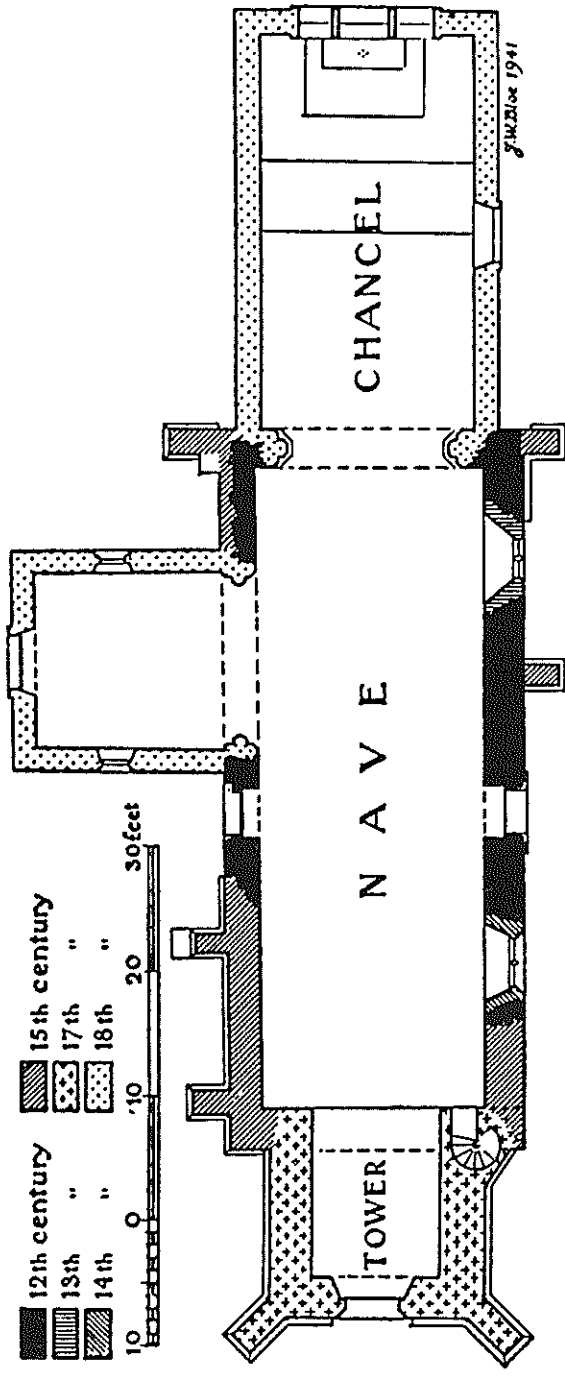
Dugdale, in *The Antiquities of Warwickshire*, records that according to local people, 'in the Chapell yard there hath been an antient Oratory . . . in which was the Image of S. Chadde, whereunto Pilgrimages had wont to be made.' The proceeds amounted to the not inconsiderable sum of about £16 a year. There was also a holy well to which pilgrims to St Chad's shrine might repair. It still exists north-east of the church in the grounds of Chadshunt Hall, but is now overgrown. There is surely some connection here with the place-name Chadshunt. Ekwall, however, identifies this as meaning 'Ceadel's spring', Ceadel being a personal name unconnected with St Chad!

#### Architecture

The church appears long and low with a chancel, aisleless nave, north transept and squat west tower. Norman work can be clearly seen in the north and south doorways which are placed somewhat unusually in the middle of the nave walls. Originally the Norman nave would have been quite short. Frequently in medieval churches, increases in accommodation or the provision of side chapels were achieved by the addition of an aisle. However, at Chadshunt the expedient of a westward lengthening seems to have been adopted in the early 14th century (the date of the south-west window with its reticulated tracery). Both the north and south doorways date from the mid-12th century. They have pairs of shafts, though the east shaft on the north side has gone.

In the early 15th century two-light clerestory windows were added, three on the south, one on the north. Then comes the two-stage, battlemented west tower, evidently built or rebuilt in the late 1660s about the time that a new ring of bells was cast. It has a west doorway with a broad chamfer and four-centred head. The belfry windows are of two lights, square-headed and with modern slate louvres.

Architecturally it is the work of the 18th century that is of most interest. John Newsham who inherited the manor in 1705 was married twice, the second time to Anne Craggs, daughter and co-heir of James Craggs, the Postmaster General. She appears to have been a lady of some means. She



PLAN OF CHADSHUNT CHURCH.

Plan by kind permission of VCH.

and her husband presented the church with new plate in 1723 and the pair of them must have been responsible about this time for the present chancel and north transept. These are built of finely jointed ashlar masonry. The chancel has a Venetian east window and a single, large round-arched window on the south. A new plain semi-circular chancel arch was provided too. The transept, which was designed as a family pew for the Newshams, has an elliptical-headed north doorway to provide them with direct access from Chadshunt Hall to the north. It breaks into the window above. The seating area is raised considerably above the nave, presumably above a burial vault. The arch to the nave is problematical as it is pointed and quite different from the chancel arch or, indeed, anything else in the early 18th-century work. However, it is hard to believe that it is medieval. There were Victorian alterations to the transept, such as the rolls round the windows, and the good, bright tiling in the northern part; so the arch might possibly be of that time (probably 1866).

The final part of the chronological story concerns modern repairs. In 1866, according to a brass plaque on the south side of the nave, these included some to the roof (architect unknown). In 1905 there was much concern about the stability of the area near the south-east corner of the tower. Repairs were undertaken by the architect C. Ford Whitcombe and the contractor George Smith of Leamington in 1906. In the same year the bells were rehung by Bond of Burford. In 1933 general repairs were carried out under the architect Philip A. Chatwin of Birmingham. Since 1988 further general repairs, particularly to the nave roof and tower, have been carried out for the Redundant Churches Fund by Rodney Melville & Partners of Leamington.

### Roofs and Ceilings

*Nave* Much of the old Perpendicular tie-beam roof remains. It has wall-posts and short, sturdy king-posts to the apex. On the tie-beams are a number of carvings; on the second from the east is the Angus Dei and above it on the west face a bearded king's head.

*Chancel* The 18th-century plaster ceiling survives. Above a narrow cornice deep coving rises to a plain square central panel.

*Transept* This seems to be Victorian (1866?) and has a barrel vault divided into panels containing saltire crosses.

### Stained Glass

In the north transept is a collection of sixteen panels which are said to have been acquired from an Italian convent by Robert Knight, Earl of Catherlough, who held the estate in the late 18th century. The glass is supposed to have been intended for his town house in Grosvenor Square but it must have found its way to Chadshunt by 1855 which is the date in the east window. In one of the panels in the same window is the original date (stated twice) — 1558. The panels are of variable quality and are set among attractive coloured glass of 1855. The scenes are:

*West window* Christ points to a plough (from which one should not turn aside); Joseph's dream; Joseph goes to meet his brethren at Dothan; Joseph in prison.

*North window* Abraham kneels before Melchisedek; the Circumcision; the destruction of the first born; children of Israel leaving Egypt.

*East window* Solomon and Sheba; an unidentified allegory; Judgement of Solomon; possibly Jephtha about to sacrifice his daughter (the two last panels are copies of originals destroyed by vandals).

### Furnishings and Fittings

*Font* This is 12th-century with rather crude interlaced arches round the circular bowl and elongated star-like motifs round the rim. The base is of much larger diameter than the bowl and has a number of mouldings.

*Pulpit* A plain piece, no doubt part of the early 18th-century scheme.

*Iron rails* Of excellent early 18th-century design, at the entrances to the chancel and the sanctuary, they are in marked contrast to the plainness of the chancel ceiling.

*Panelling* Round the chancel, original early 18th-century work.

*Seats* Some of the original ones remain in the north transept.

*Doors* On the north and south sides of the nave, both 18th-century.

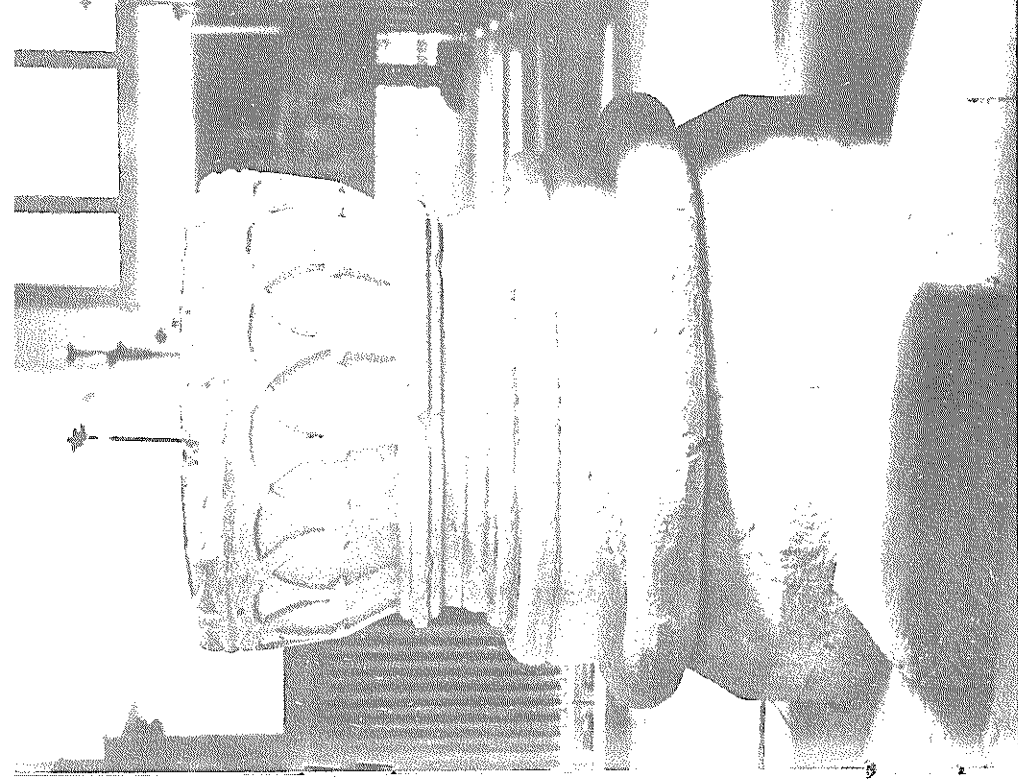
*Bells* Six cast by Richard Keene of Woodstock in 1669 and 1693; bell frame c.1669.

#### Monuments

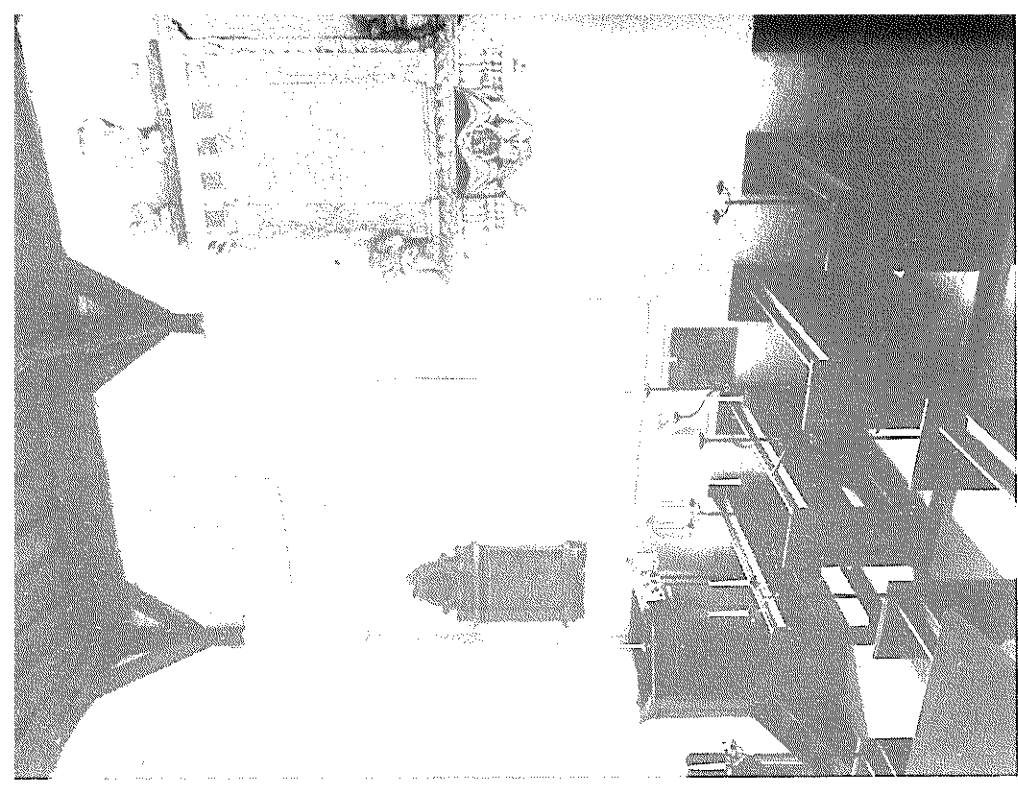
The biggest and most important is the wall monument to Michael Askel (died 1697) and others, erected by Susannah Askel in 1713. It is signed by the important sculptor Robert Taylor (c.1690-1742) and is his earliest known work. A large tablet is flanked by fluted pilasters. Below are a shield and drapery over two cherubs' heads. Above are an urn and shell-like lamps.

Further east is a smaller wall monument to the 'predecessors' of Walltar Newsam, to him and his wife Fridayswed, 1621. The tablet is flanked by pilasters bearing suitably funereal emblems like a scythe, hour-glass, hammer and coffin, etc. There is some painted marble decoration.

In the chancel is a wall monument to Sarah, wife of the Rev. Henry Clarke (died 1756). She was, as the monument records, the daughter of Jethro Tull, the agricultural improver. Unusually the monument is of timber painted to resemble mottled marble. Henry Clarke's own monument is placed below but is made of slate.



*Norman font.*



*South side of nave and Askel monument.*

### Bibliography

Parish records in the Warwickshire Record Office, Warwick. Parish magazines (DR20), miscellaneous papers (DR 324/20-22, 31).  
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*Victoria County History of Warwickshire 4* (London, 1949), 31-4.

### THE REDUNDANT CHURCHES FUND

All Saints' church is now in the care of the Fund. This body was set up in 1969 to preserve churches of the Church of England no longer needed for regular worship but which are of historic, architectural or archaeological interest. The Fund's main income is provided by Church and State but the constantly increasing number of churches entrusted to it (281 in December 1992) means that its resources are severely stretched. Contributions from members of the public are therefore gratefully received. If there is no money box in the church or the keyholder is not available please send any contributions you would like to make to the Fund at the address shown.

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