



The Church of  
St. Mary, Byfleet



Mr. Haywood  
The Church  
Byfleet

The Parish Church of  
St. Mary, Byfleet

By  
LEONARD R. STEVENS

1934

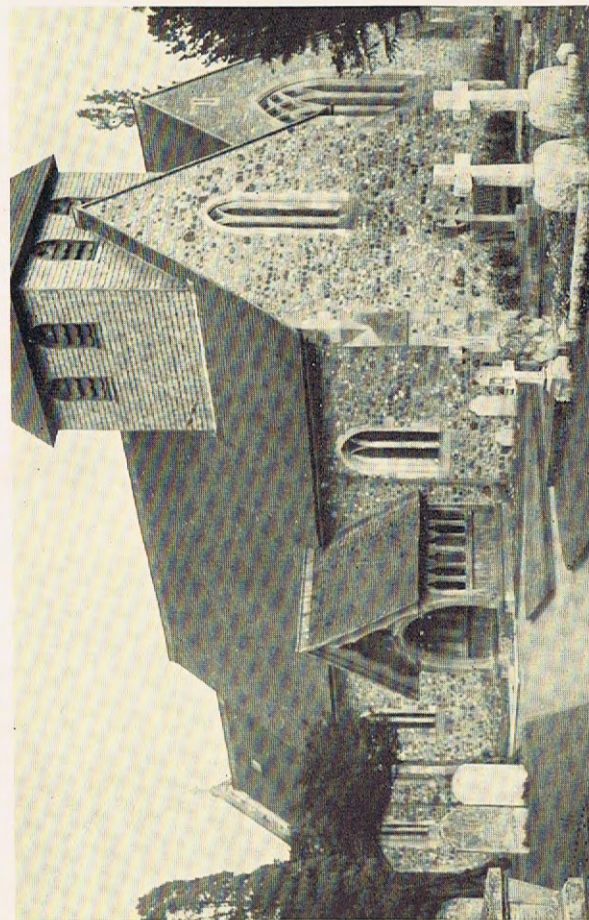
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Copyright.  
*The Exterior.*





Copyright.

*The Interior.*

## THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY

THE earliest reference to the existence of a church in Byfleet is in Domesday Book in the year 1086, and the present building was no doubt erected on the site of the earlier one.

It is not definitely known when, or by whom, this present church was built, but it was probably about 1310, although various dates are assigned to it from 1290 to 1320.

The church originally consisted only of the nave and chancel; the south aisle was added in 1841, the organ chamber and transept in 1864, and the vestry in 1881.

### Pulpit.

The pulpit is Jacobean, bearing on the front of it the date 1616, with the initials 'R.S.'. It has never been definitely established what these initials stand for.

### Font.

The font dates from the fifteenth century. It is octagonal in shape, with quatrefoil panelled sides to the bowl; three of these panels contain heads of angels wearing diadems, the carving of these angels being considered to be some of the best in Surrey. Two of the panels have plain shields and the other three contain paterae of foliage. The font has been several times moved. It was originally at the west end of the nave under the belfry; in 1841 it was moved to the south-west corner of the south aisle. In 1864 it was moved again to a different position in the south aisle, in the entrance passage to the south door; in 1881 it was placed near the entrance to the vestry; and in 1924 it was moved to its present, and more suitable, position at the west end of the south aisle.



Sedilia.

The two stone seats in the south-east corner of the chancel are old sedilia and were probably put in when the church was built.

Piscina.

Adjoining them is an old piscina. There is another old piscina, which used to be in the wall on the east side of the north door, which was probably used as a holy water stoup. This was moved some years ago and put in the wall near the vestry door.

Aumbry.

There is an aumbry in the wall at the north-east corner of the chancel, but this is now concealed by the oak panelling.

Ancient Brass.

A fine fifteenth-century brass of Thomas Teylar, who was Rector of Byfleet from 1454 to 1489, may be seen attached to a stone slab in the centre of the chancel pavement, beneath which he is buried. At the foot of the brass is engraved in black letter the following inscription :

‘Hic jacet Thom̄s Teylar Rector eccl'ie pochialis  
de Biflete et unus canonicus' eccl'ie Cathedralis  
Lincoln̄ qui quid̄m Thom̄s obiit . . . die mensis  
. . . A<sup>o</sup> dñi millio CCCCLXXX . . . Cuius Anime  
p'piciet de'.

which translated reads : ‘Here lies Thomas Teylar, Rector of the Parish Church of Biflete, and one of the Canons of the Cathedral Church of Lincoln, which Thomas indeed died on the . . . day of the month . . . in the year of our Lord 148—, on whose soul God have mercy’.



Hic jacet Thom̄s Teylar Rector eccl'ie pochialis de  
Biflete et unus canonicus' eccl'ie Cathedralis  
Lincoln̄ qui quid̄m Thom̄s obiit die mensis  
dñi millio CCCCLXXX Cuius Anime p'piciet de'

Reproduced by courtesy of the  
Surrey Archaeological Society.

Brass of Thomas Teylar,  
Rector of Byfleet, 1454-1489.



It will be noticed that the exact date of his death has never been filled in.

There used to be another little brass attached to the same stone, shaped like a scroll proceeding from the mouth, bearing the words: 'Bone Jesu misere quique venisti salvare perditos noli dampnare redemptos', which may be translated as: 'Good Jesu, have mercy; and Thou, who camest to save the lost, be unwilling to condemn the redeemed'.

This brass is referred to by authorities on the subject as being one of the most interesting of the clerical brasses, showing as it does the vestments which were worn at that time. Thomas Teylar, as a Canon of Lincoln, is represented as wearing the dress peculiar to Canons of Cathedrals and some other dignitaries—the almuce, or hood of grey fur of Major Canons, with surplice and cassock. The almuce, or amice, was a head covering which covered the shoulders, a part of it forming a hood which could be drawn up over the head or thrown back over the shoulders. It was introduced during the thirteenth century, as it was found necessary to protect the clergy from the cold during the long hours, night and day, they were engaged in the services of the Church.

#### Tablets.

The tablets on the west wall of the nave were originally attached to the walls of the chancel. They include memorials to three Byfleet rectors, Nicholas Braman, Thomas Morgan and George Sewell, and also one to Joseph Spence, who was a literary celebrity and a great Latin scholar. He was Professor of Poetry and Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford University, and was the author of *Polymetis, An Essay on Pope's Odyssey*, and many other works.

Of the other tablets the following are deserving of notice, either for their interest or beauty:

An artistic marble and alabaster memorial in the chancel to Lady Louisa Egerton, daughter of the 7th Duke of Devonshire.

An alabaster tablet on the side of the chancel arch in memory of one of her sons, Frederick G. Egerton, who was killed while serving with the Naval Brigade at Ladysmith in 1899.

Two brasses on the chancel arch to former rectors—Newton John Spicer and Granville Erskine Money.

A stone tablet on the north wall of the nave to Robert Sparks, a member of the Bombay Council.

#### Mural Paintings.

Over and around the north doorway are the remains of some interesting mural paintings which were revealed in the restoration of 1864. It is considered that they were executed at the time that the church was rebuilt. The basic design is a masonry pattern in dark red lines on a pink ground, and formerly covered the whole surface of the walls of the nave. By the west jamb of the door is a circular consecration cross of the Maltese form and over the door is a figure, apparently of a king seated on a throne beneath a canopy of pinnacles and flying buttresses. It is not known who this figure is intended to represent, but it is thought by some to be King David, others believe it to be the figure of Our Lord, and some authorities incline to the view that it is a representation of the reigning sovereign as patron of the church, who, if the conjectured date of the rebuilding, viz., 1310, is correct, would be Edward II, and this is somewhat confirmed by the similarity of the features of the painting to those of this king as shown in the alabaster effigy on his tomb in Gloucester Cathedral and on coins of his date. This theory is further supported by the fact that Edward II frequently stayed at Byfleet and would no doubt have interested himself during his visits in the progress of the rebuilding of the church.



Ancient Glass.

There are only a very few pieces of ancient coloured glass remaining in the church, which were originally in the east window. They were removed in the 1864 restoration and were placed at a later date in the inside window between the transept and the vestry. They have recently again been moved and are now placed with other glass in one of the north windows in the chancel.

Two of the pieces are early fourteenth century and consist of the upper portions of two figures, which formed part of a design representing the coronation of the Virgin Mary. The third piece, representing the head of Our Lord, dates about 100 years later, and is considered to be a very fine piece of work.

Windows.

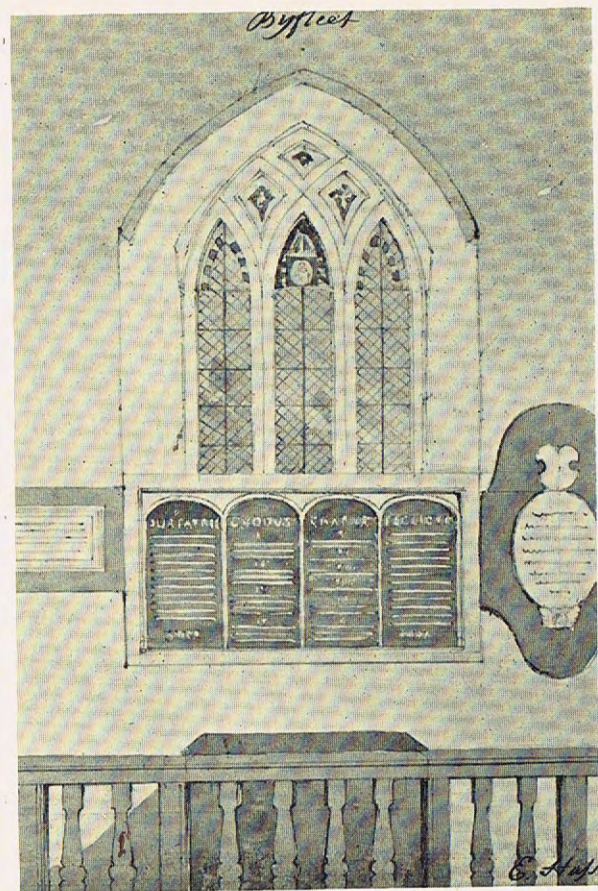
The modern stained glass windows were put in at different times in the second half of the nineteenth century, several of them forming part of the improvements carried out in 1864, and were given by various parishioners.

The latest addition to the windows is a gift of two portions of fourteenth-century glass, which have been incorporated with the original ancient glass in one of the side windows of the chancel.

War Memorial.

An interesting feature is the War Memorial, there not being another one like it in the whole of the country.

On the west wall are hung the actual rough wooden crosses from the graves on the battlefields of most of those whose names appear on the marble tablet below. The idea was originated and carried out by the late Mr. F. C. Stoop, of West Hall.



Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

East Window in 1829, showing fourteenth-century glass in original position.



Bells.

The three present bells are modern and were hung in place of the original three old bells in 1853.

On the largest of the old bells was engraved the following inscription :

' Protege prece pia quos convoco, Sancta Maria ',  
which may be translated as ' Holy Mary, protect with thy pious prayer those whom I call together '.

Plate, etc.

In the vestry are preserved :

A pewter flagon, about 1760, which originally formed part of the Communion Plate.

An old pewter tobacco jar, painted green and gold, and with the letters ' B.P. ' (presumably Byfleet Parish) as a monogram on it ; this was formerly used at vestry meetings.

Two carved oak panels and oak brackets which formed part of the old three-decker pulpit.

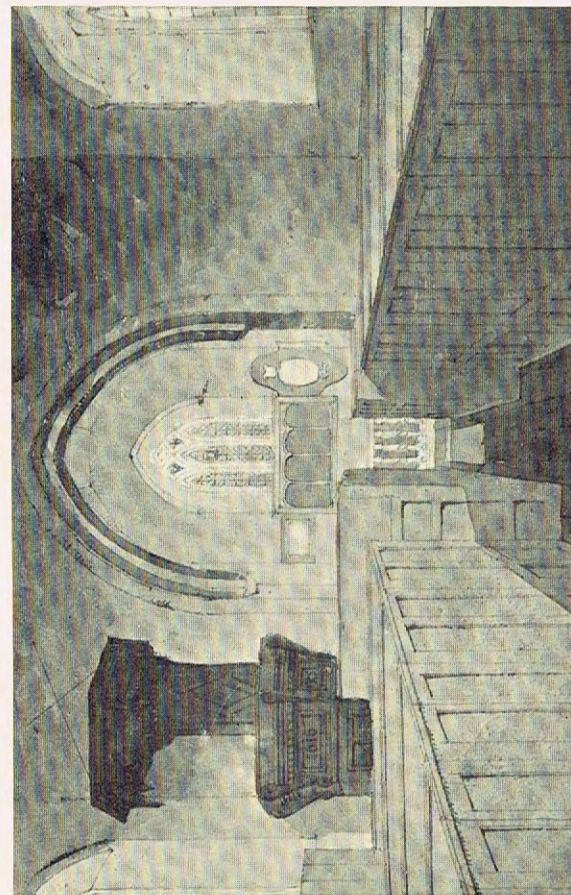
A massive lock beam which was part of the old door.

Old tiles (probably fourteenth century) dug up from the chancel.

A Hundred Years Ago.

In the early part of last century the church presented a very different appearance from what it does to-day. In the south wall of the nave there were three windows and a south doorway with a low wide-gabled porch, opposite the present north main entrance.

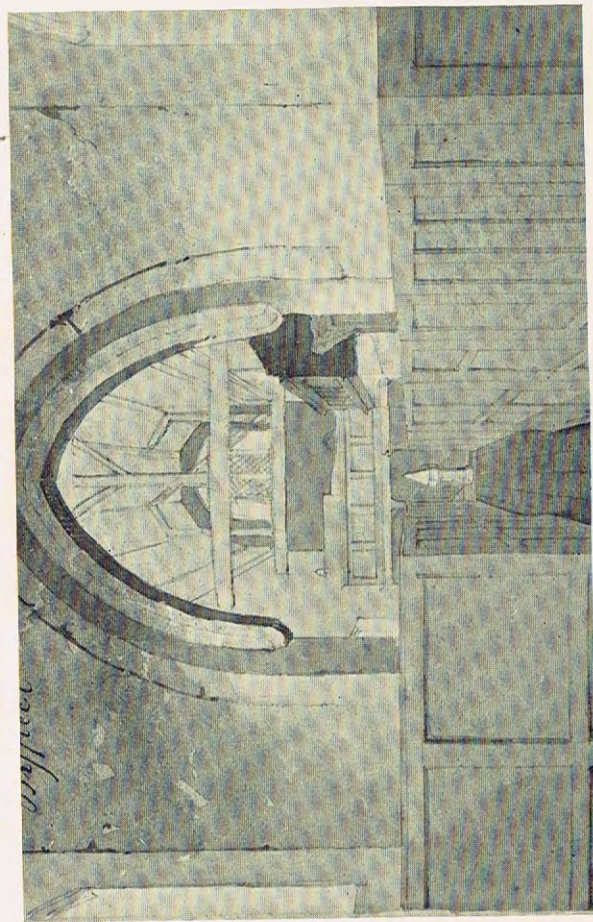
In the south wall of the chancel there were two windows, similar to those on the north side. There was a doorway high up in the north wall where the middle window now is, which was an entrance to a small



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The Interior, as it appeared a hundred years ago, looking east.





*The Interior, as it appeared a hundred years ago, looking west.*

*Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum*

private gallery, access to it being obtained from the outside. There were three galleries, two of them one above the other, at the west end of the nave, and the small private one, previously referred to, high up against the north wall, supported on two iron pillars. The galleries at the west end were reached by a stairway in the south-west corner of the nave, and there was a step-ladder from the lower to the upper gallery. This upper gallery was lighted by a dormer on the north side in the gabled roof, beneath the spire. The font was at the west end of the nave under the belfry. The pulpit was where it is now (it was moved later to the opposite side for a time) but was a more massive structure, combining pulpit and reading desk, with the Clerk's desk below. At the back was a high panelling with a large sounding board overhead. The whole of the nave was filled with high square pews, with the exception of a few benches for the poor people at the west end. These high pews extended half-way into the chancel, and there were large hat-racks fixed up all along the walls. A large diamond-shaped hatchment hung on the south wall of the chancel.

The lower part of the east window was obscured by a wide, oblong, wooden panel with the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments painted on it. The ceiling was lath-and-plastered, the interior walls white-washed. The floor was paved with stone, except part of the chancel, which was paved with tiles bearing a device of a lion and fleurs de lys.

1841 Alterations.

The church remained like this until 1841, when the first considerable alterations were carried out. The south aisle was then built. The south wall of the nave was taken away for three-quarters of its length. The old south doorway and porch was done away with and two iron posts were put up, where the two easternmost pillars are now. All the present arches and pillars



were made later. The materials of the windows which used to be in this wall were used to form the windows in the new south aisle. There were four windows on that side then, one of them later being replaced by the present south door. An entrance door was made in the west wall, where the War Memorial now is, and there were two lancet windows on either side of it. The space where the westernmost window in the old south wall had been, was blocked up. A gallery was erected at the west end of the new part with a stairway leading up to it in the south-west corner.

The font was moved from under the belfry to a place under this new gallery. A temporary partition was put up in the north-west corner of the south aisle, under the gallery, to form a vestry, and a fireplace was installed there. The three-decker pulpit was taken down and the three portions of it were separated, the pulpit being placed high up in the south-east corner of the nave, supported by a new standard and pedestal; the reading desk was also raised, but at a lower level; the Clerk's desk was on the opposite side of the pulpit, in the corner against the east wall of the new part, which was a blank wall when the south aisle was first built. A carved oak altar screen was put up and the oblong wooden panel at the foot of the east window was removed. These alterations cost £772, which was raised almost entirely by subscription.

#### 1864 Alterations.

The next substantial alterations were carried out in 1864. The transept was then added and the larger arch in the east wall of the south aisle was made; the smaller arch in that wall was not pierced until later. This addition provided an organ chamber, a new vestry in the south-east corner—its door hinges can still be seen in their original position—and further free seating accommodation, the whole of the transept being filled

with benches running north and south. Arches were made in the south wall of the chancel, thus doing away with the two windows that were there. The previous temporary vestry at the west end was removed. The west door of the south aisle and the two lancet windows were blocked up and the present west window made. One of the windows in the south wall was done away with and replaced by the present south doorway. The iron pillars between the nave and the south aisle were taken away and the arches and pillars were made as they are to-day. The roof was retiled and guttered, all four galleries were taken down, the old high square pews were done away with, and the present pews put in. The oak seating and desks in the chancel were also put in then. The reading desk and Clerk's desk were taken away and the pulpit was moved to its present position. A lectern was installed in the place where the old reading desk had been. A number of the windows, including the east window, were filled with stained glass, most of them being given by different parishioners. Many other gifts were also made at this time, including new oak altar rails. Altogether about £600 was expended at this time.

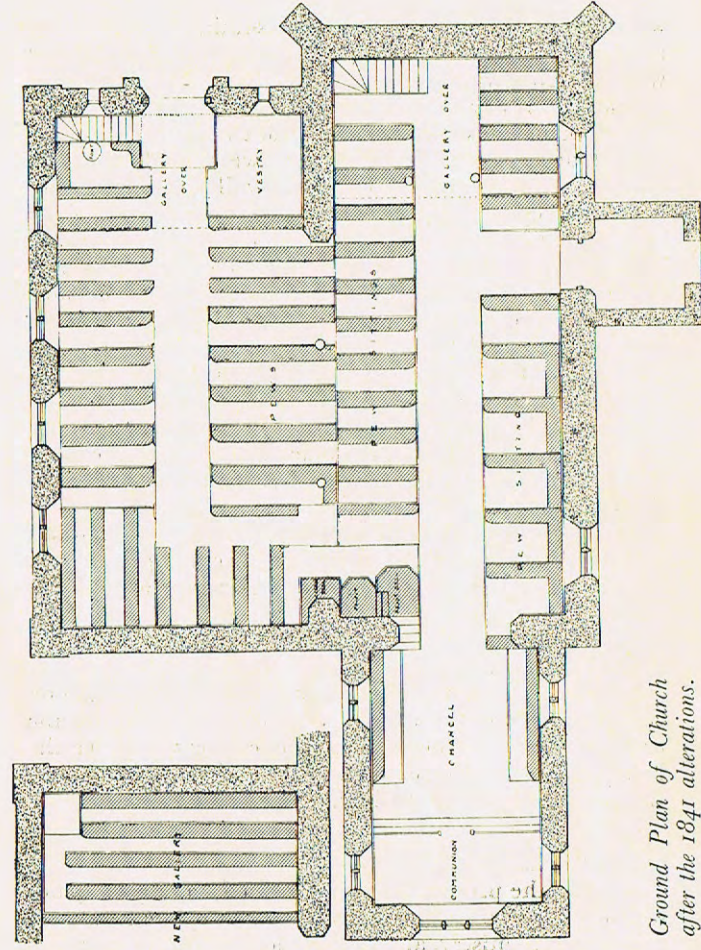
#### 1868 Alterations.

Four years later there was a further outlay of £210 on restoring the tower, and this restoration included the erection of the framework of wooden beams under the belfry, and also the removal of the old dormer window that used to light the gallery.

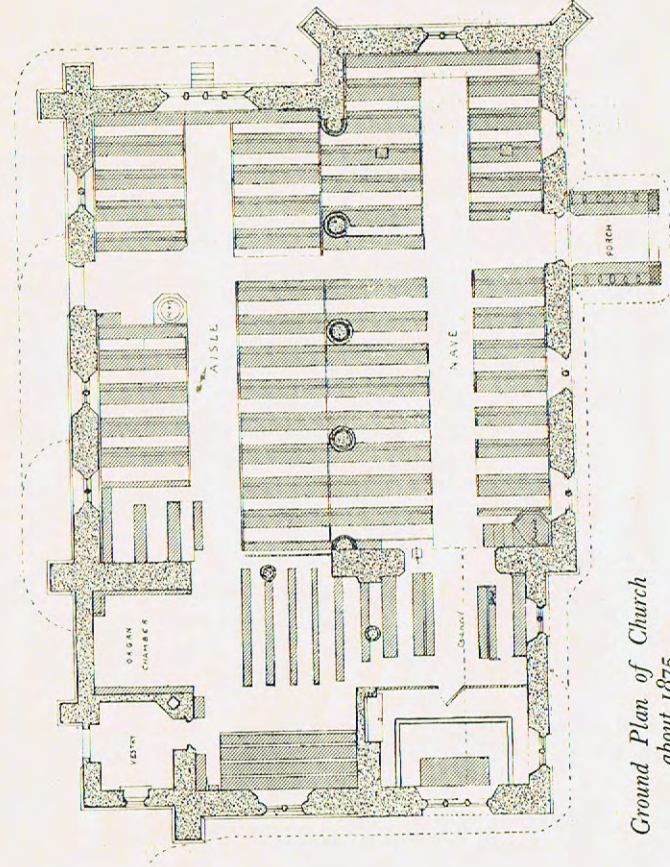
#### 1881 Alterations.

In 1881 the present vestry was added, taking the place of the vestry built in 1864, which was opened out and served as a baptistry, and the smaller arch in the east wall of the south aisle was also probably made at the same time.





*Ground Plan of Church  
after the 1841 alterations.*



*Ground Plan of Church  
about 1875.*



1924 Alterations.

The next substantial alterations were carried out in 1924. Then the chancel was repaved and the chancel ceiling was decorated. The ceiling used to be coloured blue with gold stars, and a small portion of this colouring still remains above the east window. The walls of the chancel were now lined with oak panelling. The floor of the church was relaid with wood blocks, and the walls were cleaned and whitened. The font was removed from near the vestry door to a more fitting position at the west end of the south aisle.

New oak choir seats were put up in the transept. Electric light was installed, and the organ renovated. Over £2,000 was spent at this time.

Recent Alterations.

Hot-water radiator heating has been installed, entailing the addition of a boiler house outside the south-east end of the church.

An electric discus blower has been fitted to the organ.

Music.

A hundred years ago the music was supplied by a small band of players, seated in the gallery, playing instruments such as the bass-viol, bassoon<sup>1</sup> and fiddle. It was not until 1835 that the first organ was introduced, a barrel organ with interchangeable barrels, manipulated by a well-known village character, Sophie Larkins, who turned the handle, while the bellows were kept going by one of the bigger schoolchildren. This organ was

<sup>1</sup> There is still in existence one of the actual instruments which was played in the church at that time, a bassoon, most carefully preserved and in beautiful condition, which has hung for many years over the mantel-piece in the house of the grandson of the original owner, who used to play it in the church—Mr. Eldred Chitty, a wheelwright whose name appears frequently in the Vestry Minutes, as he was Overseer for several years, also Vestry Clerk, and at one time Churchwarden.

apparently replaced by a similar one in 1844, as there is an entry in an account book, stating, '£40 was paid to T. Bates for organ, two barrels and fixing'.

The 1864 extension included the addition of an organ chamber at the south side of the transept, and it is probable that the barrel organ in the gallery was then done away with, and a more modern type of organ acquired. This evidently did not last long, however, as in 1875 a new organ was put up, replaced by another one in 1893, which has been improved from time to time.

Registers.

The Church Registers record the Baptisms from 1698, the Marriages from 1755, and the Burials from 1728. Some of the entries in the first Marriage Register appear to be copied from some former book and include records of certain special licences dating back to 1729.

Vestry Minutes.

The Vestry Minute Books date from 1795. The following are a few extracts of interest:

'5th July, 1795: Resolved to give two pounds and tenpence being the Remainder of the Sacrament Money to be given out to the poor in Bread at the Church the Next and following Sunday.'

'11th May, 1807: Resolved that it was now become necessary the old Regulations respecting the proprietorship of the pews in the parish Church should be done away. It was also further agreed that the pews should be allotted to each person according to the proportion paid by each towards the Poors Rate, beginning with the highest and going regularly downward.'

'25th October, 1821: It was agreed to walk the Bounds on Tuesday the fourth day of December next.'



'3rd January, 1834: A plan was exhibited of the intended Railway from London to Southampton, to obtain the Assent, Dissent or neutrality of the Parishioners of such parts of the Parish Lands, as may be thereby affected. After mature Deliberation, the majority of the meeting dissented from the proposed plan.'

'10th March, 1837: Agreed that the round house should be removed and set up at the north side of the pound.'

1552 Inventory.

There is in existence, in common with most of the other parishes in the country, a detailed inventory of plate, vestments and other goods belonging to the church in 1552. Almost everything of value, as disclosed by this inventory, was ordered to be sold and the proceeds paid over to the King, and so there are none of these now remaining. The portion of the inventory relating to Byfleet Church is as follows:

**BYFLETT :**

Imprimis iij belles in the steple, the beste waiethe vj<sup>e</sup> and the reaste after the rate.

Item j challice waing v ounces.

Item j corporas (and) an aullter clothe.<sup>1</sup>

Item j vestement.<sup>2</sup>

Item j towell.

Item j surplus with a rachett for the clarcke.<sup>3</sup>

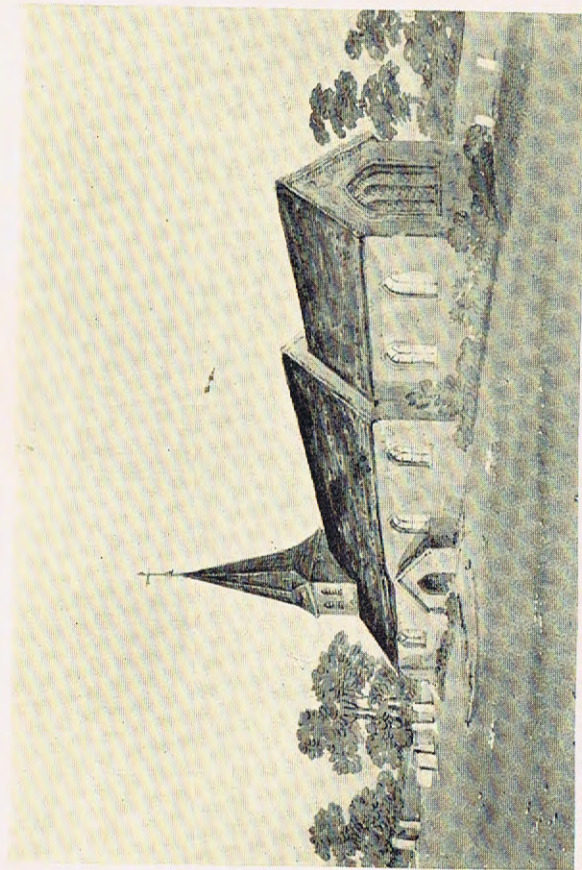
Item j sepullchre clothe.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The corporas (or corporal as it is now called) was a napkin on which the Communion vessels stood.

<sup>2</sup> A special robe for the priest in administering the Sacrament.

<sup>3</sup> The rachett was a close-fitting surplice with short sleeves used in baptizing or in helping at Holy Communion. The clerk here means the clergyman, who is still called 'Clerk in Holy Orders'.

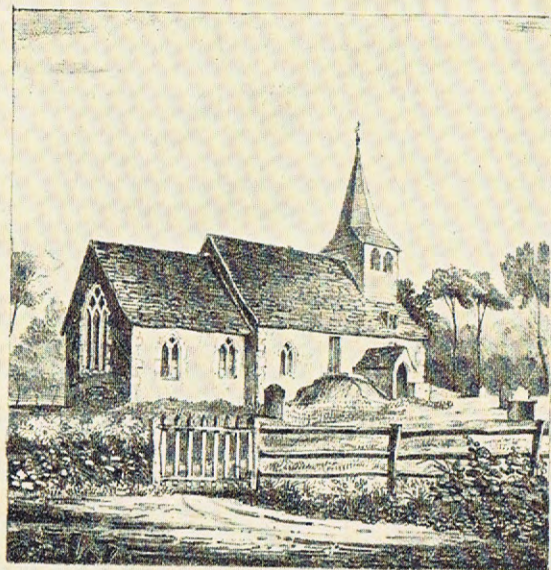
<sup>4</sup> A cloth used at a representation in church on Good Friday of Our Lord's burial.



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*The Exterior, from the south-east, as it appeared a hundred years ago, before the South Aisle was added.*





BYFLEET CHURCH N.E.



Ground Plan

Scale of 100 feet

Pub<sup>d</sup> by C. T. Cracklow (Surrey) Crane Court Fleet Street

Reproduced from Cracklow's 'Surrey Churches'.

*The Church as it appeared a hundred years ago, from the north-east.*

Item j veille (and) a crysmatorye.<sup>1</sup>

Item ij chestes.<sup>2</sup>

Item j holly wattar pott with ij Krewittes of pewter, all which is commytted to the custody of Richard Holloway John Bambar Thomas Nicolis Nicolis Bambar the vjth of October in the vjth yere of the reign of oure sovereign Lord. All suche goodes as lackithe of the former invitorie was stolyn bie thevis onely ij candell-stickes accepted which weare sollde for xiiijd.'

The church was also at the same time deprived of part of its revenues consisting of moneys given or bequeathed from time to time for the purpose of maintaining votive lights before the altar or images which were, no doubt, in existence when the Roman Catholic religion was in force in England. In the Survey made by the Commissioners, these are referred to as :

'Lampelighes used and maynteyned within the parisshe church of Byflete with yerely revenue gyvenne to that use for ever wiche are worth in landes by yere iiij. iiijd.'

<sup>1</sup> The veil was a white vesture held over the child in baptism, and the chrismatory was a vessel to hold the chrism, or consecrated oil, used in Baptism.

<sup>2</sup> These would be to contain the vestments and plate.



## LIST OF THE RECTORS OF BYFLEET.

William	Circ. Temp. Hen. III.	
Richard de Potesgrave <sup>1</sup>	— to 1318	Resigned.
Richard de Kerselowe	1318 to 1360	Resigned.
Richard atte Halle	1360 to 1362	
Ralph Knyght	1362	
John Petit	1362 to 1364	Resigned.
William Valerien de Caldecote	1364 to 1367	Resigned in exchange for Blatherwick, Northants.
William de Clyfton	1367 to 1368	Died.
John de Norfolk	1368 to 1375	Resigned in exchange for Silhamsted, Berks.
Thomas Besouth	1375 to 1383	Resigned in exchange for Seweneston, Leicestershire.
Edmund Caldecote	1383	Resigned in exchange for Leydone, Essex.
Roger Gervays	1383 to 1386	Resigned in exchange for Minor Canonry, St. Paul's Cathedral, London.
John Russell	1386 to 1389	Resigned in exchange for Shepreth, Cambs.
John Hunte	1389 to 1401	Resigned.
Robert Germethorpe	1401 to 1402	Resigned in exchange for Gamlingay, Cambs.
John Gamelyn	1402 to 1404	Resigned in exchange for Martin, Wilts.
John Colet	1404	Resigned in exchange for Bramley, Surrey.

<sup>1</sup> King's Chaplain and Keeper of forfeited lands. Also (from 1309) Rector of Heckington, Lincs.

William Knavenhurst	1404 to 1416	Resigned in exchange for Balham, London.
Peter More	1416 to —	
William Nuthale	— to 1422	Resigned in exchange for Creslow, Bucks.
Walter Boydon	1422 to —	
Richard atte Watere	1423 to 1427	Resigned in exchange for Peperharow, Surrey.
Robert Brown	1427 to 1436	Resigned.
John Kellynham	1436 to 1437	Resigned.
Thomas Symmysson <sup>1</sup>	1437 to 1449	Resigned.
William Frotyngnam <sup>2</sup>	1449	Resigned.
Thomas Yarme	1449 to 1454	Died.
Thomas Teylar <sup>3</sup>	1454 to 1489	Died.
John Dogan	1490 to —	
John Smalbende <sup>4</sup>	1504 to —	
Richard Elyot	1527 to 1540	Resigned.
George Hayles	1540 to —	
John Fryer	1556 to —	
William Waterer	1568 to —	
Richard Day, M.A.	1591 to —	
George Penn	1600 to 1605	Died.
John Skerratt, M.A.	1605 to —	
Nathaniel Dyke, M.A.	1616 to 1635	Resigned.
John Crosley, M.A.	1635 to 1637	Died.

<sup>1</sup> Was granted a pension of five marcs on account of age and infirmity.

<sup>2</sup> Held the living only twelve days.

<sup>3</sup> Canon of Lincoln Cathedral. Brass in Byfleet Church.

<sup>4</sup> Formerly Rector of Weybridge.



Hope Gifford, M.A.	1637 to 1645	Ejected.
Samuel Scudamore	1645 to 1662	Ejected.
John Kinde, M.A. <sup>1</sup>	1662 to —	
Thomas Smart	1687 to —	
Nicholas Braman <sup>2</sup>	1711 to 1728	Died.
William Williams	1729 to 1751	Died.
Stephen Duck <sup>3</sup>	1752 to 1756	Died.
Thomas Morgan, D.D. <sup>4</sup>	1756 to 1782	Died.
George Sewell, M.A. <sup>5</sup>	1782 to 1801	Died.
William Haggitt, M.A., D.D. <sup>6</sup>	1801 to 1834	Died.
Charles Vernon Holme Sumner, M.A. <sup>7</sup>	1834 to 1851	Resigned.
Newton John Spicer, M.A. <sup>8</sup>	1851 to 1884	Ceded.
Granville Erskine Money, M.A.	1884 to 1917	Resigned.
Hubert Vaughan Johnson, M.A.	1917 to 1926	Ceded.
Leonard Rhys Hancock, M.A.	1926 to 1930	Ceded.
Francis John Cheverton, L.Th.	1931	

<sup>1</sup> Also (from 1660) Rector of Weybridge. Was still Rector of Byfleet 1684.

<sup>2</sup> Tablet in Byfleet Church.

<sup>3</sup> A celebrity and poet.

<sup>4</sup> Tablet in Byfleet Church.

<sup>5</sup> Tablet in Byfleet Church.

<sup>6</sup> Tablet in Byfleet Church. Chaplain of Chelsea Hospital for forty-eight years.

<sup>7</sup> Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen.

<sup>8</sup> Curate of Byfleet 1848-9. Rural Dean of Emly 1875-84.