

The Church of All Saints,

Theydon Garnon, Essex

A Historical Guide

Map dated circa 1777



£1

Welcome to All Saints Church, Theydon Garnon

The oldest parts of All Saints Church, Theydon Garnon, date back over 700 years. Throughout the whole of this time the building has been used as a place of worship as it still is today.

This historical guide takes you round the Church, picking out the main points of interest from throughout this time.

- *Before we start our tour, please find a place to rest and read the history of our parish and those who have lived here over the past 700 years. This will give you some background on some of the artefacts we have.*

The parish of Theydon Garnon is in Ongar hundred in the diocese of Chelmsford. The church lies just to the north of the River Roding adjacent to a Roman Road. Originally an old road to London (The Monk's Way) ran past the site. The crossing of the M11 and M25 is now immediately to the north west.

The name Theydon Garnon comes from the name of a family descended from Robert de Gernon who came over from Normandy with William the Conqueror and was granted the manor after the Norman Conquest. One of his descendants married Beatrix, daughter of Henry de Taydon in Henry III's reign (1216-1272). So when she inherited the family land it became her husband's, Sir William de Gernon. From the names Taydon and Gernon the words Theydon and Garnon, Theydon Garnon.

Garnish Hall

The manor house was Garnish Hall, about ½ mile north-west of the church (by 1842 a farmhouse, and now in the shadow of junction 27 of the M25). A charter of 1305 grants certain rights to Hugh Gernoun.

It is almost certain that Queen Elizabeth would have visited All Saints' Church, Theydon Garnon because it is a fact that she stayed at Garnish Hall (Then Gernons Hall) during one of her 'Royal Progress' in 1572. As she was head of the Church of England it seems unlikely she would have been so close to the Church and not visited.

The estate passed to the Hampden family in the early 16th century; then to the Branche family later in the same century; then to Robert Dun, to his son Daniel Dun; to be sold to Sir Robert Abdy in about 1660.

Gaynes Park

There is another estate within the parish, called previously Park Hall, the house approximately 2 miles north-east of the church. This manor dates back to the 13th century, a brick house being recorded in the 17th century, and the house rebuilt in the mid 18th and 19th centuries. The estate was with the Welles family until the 16th century, when it passed to the Fitz Williams, then to the Wingfields, and by 1636 to Harrison. By 1662 it had become the property of the Earl of Anglesey, the family retained Park Hall until about 1792. It was sold to Sir Thomas Coxhead, who died in 1811 leaving it to William Coxhead Marsh, described as the natural son of Sarah Marsh late of Ashwell (Herts.). Marsh had been living at Park Hall from about 1806. From 1811 Park Hall descended in the Marsh (later Chisenhale-Marsh) family. The present owner is Mr. Hugo Chisenhale-Marsh.

In the 17th century Park Hall was described as a well-built brick house with gardens, orchards, yards, stables, and outhouses, enclosed with brick walls and fish ponds, and it was said to have cost £8,000 to build. This house existed in 1696 but had been demolished by about 1740.

By 1777 a new house had been built about ¼ mile farther north. This was usually known as Park Hall. A print of 1818 shows a long white front of two stories having a central bay flanked by Venetian windows. After the middle of the 19th century Thomas Coxhead Marsh incorporated this building in a large stone mansion of Kentish rag which he completed in 1870. The house is in Tudor style with a pierced parapet and many gables. It was at this time it became known as Gaynes Park



Coopersale House

There was a third large house in the parish, Coopersale about 2 miles north of the church. This was the seat of the Archer family. Originating from Simon de Bois, legend has it that de Bois had his name changed to Archer by King Henry V after an outstanding performance at an archery tournament. The last John Archer, son and heir of Sir John, died without issue in 1707, leaving the estate to William Eyre of Gray's Inn on condition that he should adopt the name of Archer and marry Eleanor Wrottesly, John Archer's niece. Eleanor died without children and William Eyre (now William Eyre Archer) later married Susanna, daughter of Sir John

Newton, Bt. Their monument is situated in the nave to the right of the altar. William Eyre Archer is recorded on his monument as having been a Member of Parliament, but otherwise little is known of him. Elinor Archer's father, also commemorated in the church, was of His Majesty's Judges of the Court of Common Pleas.

The house was much modernised for the last John Archer in 1763-4, and in 1840 had over 700 acres. The house was left empty for a period after 1776, but by the mid 19th century Coopersale appears to have had a revival under Miss Harriet Archer-Houblon when a church and rectory were built there in 1852, prior to which time All Saints Theydon Garnon appears to have served the estate. By 1908 the house was empty and the contents had been disposed of, sold to a religious order in 1914, sold again in 1920, and shortly afterwards much reduced in size.

Simon de Bois (fought at Agincourt, 1415)

|
John Archer

|
John Archer

|
Richard Archer

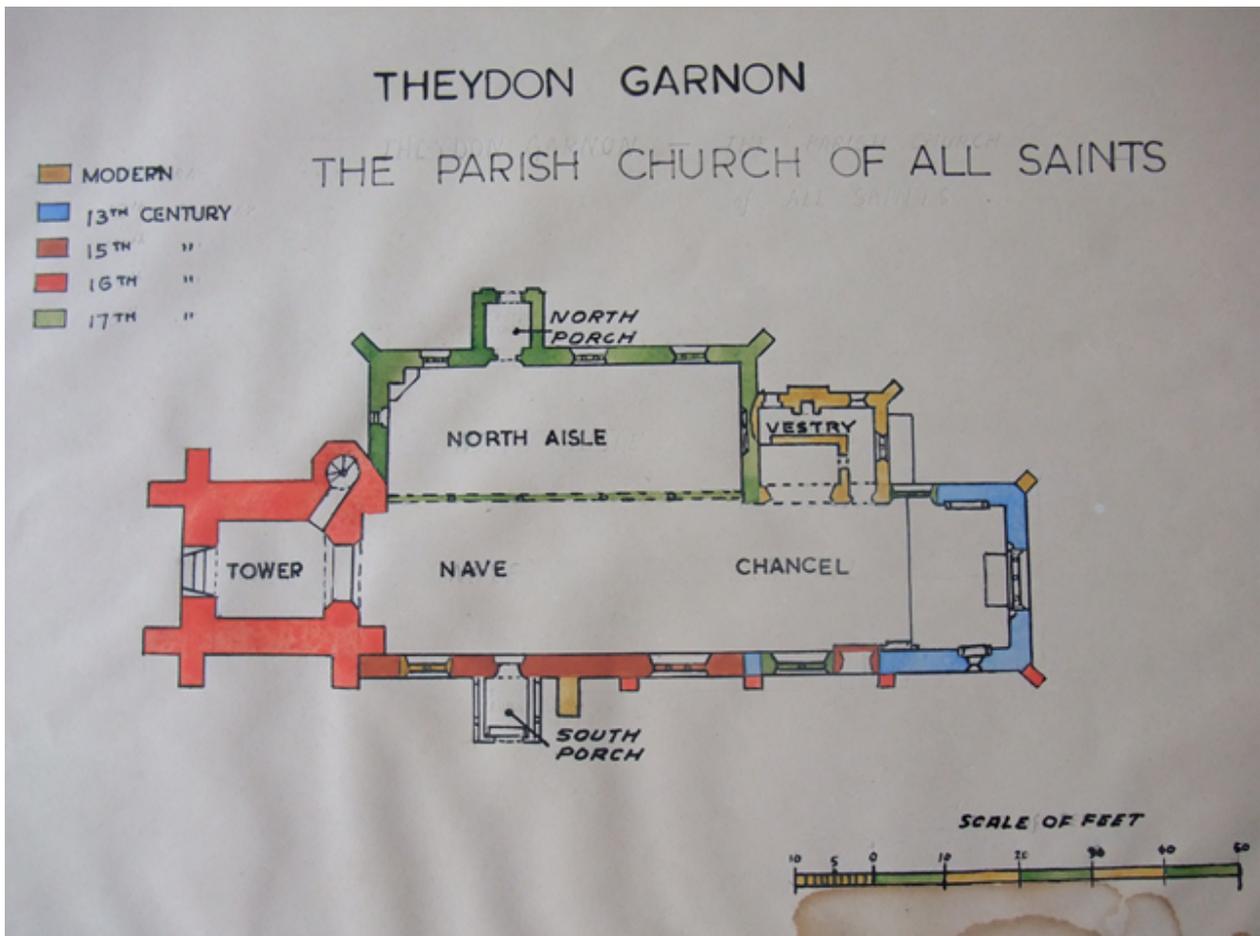
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William Archer

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Henry Archer d.1615

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John Archer (1598-1681/2)

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John Archer 1707 Elinor Archer m. William Eyre

- *Return outside the way you came in to start our tour.*



The South Porch

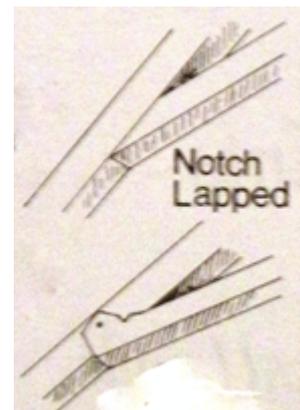
The way into the church from the south is through an 18th Century porch, but the doorway itself is of 15th century. On entering the Church you will notice that the north arcade opposite you is of wood. The arches and octagonal columns are of oak - a reminder of the days when the forests of the area (Epping, Hainault and Hatfield remain today) provided a building material cheaper than stone.



The nave is thought to date from the 13th century with 15th century additions, the timber arcade being added with the north aisle in 1644. This date can be seen outside on a brick gable.

The Nave and its Roof

As you stand in the nave, look up at the roof. This was formerly thought to date from a 15th century rebuilding, but Cecil Hewitt, the authority on the dating of ancient timber buildings from the carpenters' joints, concludes that the roof is of the 13th century, the west end being older than the east. The roof was originally of scissor-based couples, notch-lapped together and attributed to about 1200-1250. In about 1300-1350



the three eastern bays of this were renewed, and at this time the crown posts and collar-purlins were fitted and evidently carried to the west end for the sake of symmetry. Eleven couples of the ancient scissor-braces remain at the west end.

Now look back above the door through which you entered and see the four bequest boards which record ancient charities. These were first written in 1681 on the order of the Churchwardens as the Parish records show. The writing on the larger board tells us that in 1518 John Baker, a mercer directed in his Will that money from the rental of this farm, Stonehursts, still standing today on Stonards Hill, Epping, should be used for among other purposes "acts of pity and charity". The rental is divided between Theydon Garnon and the adjoining Parish of Epping, as he requested. Today the Theydon Garnon Charities are divided into two parts - an Educational Charity and a Relief in Need Charity.

On either side of the south door hang hatchments. The word "hatchment" is an abbreviation of "achievement" and these paintings with lozenge shaped frames show the heraldic achievement, or the arms, crests etc. of local people of importance. They were carried in the funeral procession, and then hung outside the deceased's house for several months before being placed in the Church. The hatchments on the walls of this Church belong to local families buried in or around the Church. - do we know who they are?

To the right of the door as you look at it is the previous wooden altar table and is thought to date from 16th Century.

The West End

A glass screen fills the steeple arch and shuts off the choir vestry and access to the bell tower. To the right of this stands an old oak door frame, adapted as book shelves, which came from the medieval priest's house which stood in the Churchyard, west of the tower until 1924.

Above the frame is a very fine stone memorial of Denton Nicholas M.D. who practised as a doctor in the Parish of St Paul's Covent Garden and died in 1714. He is buried in the nave or chancel, floor slab. (See also 'The Chancel and Windows'.)

In 1979, a firm of London chartered accountants opened an ancient chest in their offices and found a Charter dated 1305 sealed with the great green seal of Edward the First in which he granted to Hugh Gernoun "and his heirs for ever" various privileges including the right to have a market every week on Thursday "at his manor of 'Theydon Gernoun' in the County of Essex".

This historical document, beautifully preserved, is now in the Essex Records Office at Chelmsford and a copy now hangs in the Church. This is displayed on the last column in the west end of the Church. A translation can be found nearby on the north side of an oak column.

The Bells

In 2007 it was decided that the bells, which had not been rung properly for over 100 years, should be refitted. The five existing bells were lowered, and a new lower belfry installed, with a new ringing chamber on a separate floor. We also ordered a new treble bell, as six bells give more scope for change ringing. The first four bells were cast by Miles Graye at Colchester in 1628 and the fifth by Richard Phelps in 1732 at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. The sixth bell was made in Holland in 2008. The bells are rung for most services, and at Weddings, funerals and State Occasions.

The restored bells were finally returned in September 2008 and rehung with new ringing gear. We were delighted to welcome the Bishop of Chelmsford to a special service to rededicate the bells on All Saints Sunday (2nd November 2008).

- *From here please turn left towards the font (opposite the South Entrance)*

The Font

The present 19th century font in the north aisle is thought to have replaced an earlier, smaller one of white marble. From 1774 in this aisle there was a "singers gallery" but that was removed in the reconstructions of 1863 when the windows in this aisle were enlarged. Until 1863 the vestry was partitioned off from the north west corner where you can still see the floor tiles and the outlines of a fireplace.

At the east end of this aisle can be seen the window that was blocked up when the vestry was added.

The North Aisle and Porch

This was added when the Church was expanded in 1644, at the time of Oliver Cromwell. The timber arcade that divides the nave from the North aisle also dates from 1644. It consists of five bays with octagonal oak columns and semi-octagonal oak responds. The oak arches are roughly three-centred to the east bays and semi-circular to the west bays and have a horizontal moulded fascia above them mitred down in the middle of each arch to form a key block. The nave roof was probably reconstructed at this time but retains several rebated king-posts of the 15th century. It was paid for by Sir John Houblon, of Coopersale House, (whose initials are on the outside of the wall). His son John also worshipped here and later founded the Bank of England that now sits on the site of John's house in Threadneedle Street. His portrait is on the previous £50 note.

Above the north door are two more hatchments and the Royal Arms of George III. It was painted in Chigwell in 1762, at a time when the monarch still claimed to be King of France.

➤ *Continue down the North Aisle.*

At the east end of this aisle is the Memorial Board to the 33 men from our Parish who gave their lives in two world wars. Many of them were in the Essex Regiment. Please browse through our Memorial book to find out more about them.

The Archer Chest (positioned to the left of the Memorial board) is a heavy oak chest that Sir John Archer gave to the Church in 1668. Made of broad oak slabs crossed with iron bands it has nail heads which make regular patterns. The Rector and Churchwardens would each have a key to one of the three locks on the chest, and for 300 years it kept parish records. (They are now in the diocesan record office).

➤ *Move into the Nave and turn left*

The Vestry and Organ

The organ was built in 1840 (just in time as Mendelssohn had just written the Wedding march) and was rebuilt in 1969 and a new console provided. It has 458 pipes, the largest being 16 foot high. The vestry and organ chamber were added in 1891-92. As detailed above the previous vestry was until 1863 partitioned off from the north west corner of the north aisle where you can still see the floor tiles and the outlines of a fireplace.

The Chancel and Windows

There is no structural division between the nave and the chancel as is so often seen.

The windows on the left by the vestry show the Easter scene, with Mary Magdalene with red hair and a blue gown, and Jesus saying "do not touch me". They were designed for us by Henry Holiday, who also painted the famous Pre-Raphaelite picture Dante meeting Beatrice, with Dante being overcome by her beauty but Beatrice ignoring him.

The east window restored in 1973 and originates from 1896. Our stained glass windows include 16 angels playing trumpets, harps etc. Three of them are each playing two trumpets at once, which is clever! There is also wildlife, and one shows a goldfinch. (there is a legend that a goldfinch plucked a thorn from Jesus' head on the Cross, and was marked with a drop of his blood). In the south wall of the chancel, on your right, is a small

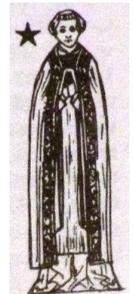
lancet window, which dates this part of the Church to the 13th Century. It was blocked for 200 years by the wall monument to Denton Nicholas who died in 1714, until this was removed to the west end of the Church in 1934. The window was restored in 1975.

The other windows in the chancel were inserted in the 17th century.

The priest's door in the south wall beside the choir stalls also dates from the 15th century.

Chancel, Tombs and Memorials

On the north wall of the chancel, (to the left of the organ pipes) the fine brass shows the figure of a priest in a cape. It commemorates William Kyrkeby, rector of Theydon Garnon from 1442 to 1458. Formerly on the chancel floor it was removed to its present position in the early 19th Century. The inscription is not original.



Also set in the north wall of the chancel, to the left of the altar, is an unidentified grey marble canopied altar tomb of about 1520. At the back of the recess is a brass of a kneeling man in armour, his wife, two sons and three daughters, with indents of two inscription plates, two shields, a Trinity and another group. Opposite in the south chancel wall is another unidentified altar tomb of slightly

later date. There are also indents for brasses here.

To the left of the east window is a memorial to Sir John Archer, a Justice of the Common Pleas, who died in 1682. He lived at Coopersale House, at that time, within this Parish, but which still stands and is still lived in.

To the right of the east window is a memorial tablet listing the charitable works of Lady Anne Fitzwilliam (of Gaynes Park), who died in 1602. Her Will directed that "a hospital (almshouses) be erected in this Parish for the perpetual maintenance of fower poor widowes". She gave "to every of them twelve pence a weeke". The building originally two dwellings, now a single private residence, still stands to the south-west of the Church, just past Hobbs Cross Farm, on the opposite side of the road.

High up on the east wall above that of Lady Anne Fitzwilliam there is a white marble tablet to James Meggs, rector of Theydon Garnon from 1661 to 1672. Dr Meggs is stills remembered today by the pair of tankard type Cronwellian flagons for wine and water that he gave to the Parish in 1671 and which are still used to this day at festivals. His floor slab of slate in the chancel states "Expecting ye second summons" and it is claimed by some to forecast the weather - when dark spots appear on it, rain, they say can be expected!

The large standing monument on the south wall is a memorial to William Eyre Archer, (of Coopersale House) who died in 1739 and members of his family. The monument, that was fully restored in 2012, was designed by Peter Scheemakers, who also made the monument to William Shakespeare in Westminster Abbey.

Communion Rails

The wooden rails were set up in 1683-4 at a cost of £4 on the command of the Archdeacon at his visitation in 1683. Today there is still an annual visitation by an Archdeacon to check that all is in order with the Church.

The Pulpit

As you move up the nave, look at the early 18th Century pulpit with attached reader's desk, large finely detailed hexagonal sounding board and elegant twisted balusters to the stairway. The pulpit may originally have been a "three-decker" with a clerk's desk too.

As you continue up the nave back to the South Porch, the window on your left in the south wall was enlarged in Victorian times and the dormer windows in the nave roof were restored soon afterwards. These were largely remodelled but the frames probably date from 1644.

- *On leaving the Church turn right out of the South Porch.*

The Tower

Look at the Tudor tower, added about 1520. It is of three stages with an embattle parapet, and is of red brick with some blue bricks interspersed. Notice on the outside South Wall the stone panel, protected but now practically illegible which bears the arms of the grocers company and of "Syr John Crosbe" (of Crosby Hall fame) Alderman and Grocer of London and note that he and his wives Ann and Annes gave £50 towards its building. A portion of the inscription has been cut out and this was probably done in puritan times. Note also on the south East buttress a starched aisle, and above it a larger sun dial - reminders that we have not always had clocks to tell the time for services.

On the outside of the west wall picked out in dark brick on a panel on the outside has the letters i. h. representing John Houblon who built the North Aisle.

Continue around the tower to the far side of the Church when the North Aisle and Porch were built they were also done in red brick, it is interesting to compare with the earlier brick of the tower. The date, 1644, is picked out in a corresponding panel on the outside of the Eastern Gable End.

Continue to walk around the Church until you reach the eastern end high above this east window is a small opening that was discovered and glazed during restoration work in 1966. It is not visible inside the church, although it must have been before the chancel roof was cased, and several theories about its purpose have been put forward.

The Churchyard

Dutch elm disease killed off some of the beautiful trees that edged the tranquil, well-kept churchyard but many new trees have been planted and have over time acted as a barrier against the motorway traffic noise. Amongst the many interesting and noteworthy tombs in the churchyard are the Cheveley family vault (of Coopersale Hall) at the east end of the church, dating from 1608 and outside the south door, the Rogers family vault. Members of this family lived in this Parish over a period of hundreds of years and several acted as Churchwardens.

The Gatehouse

Outside the gate is the new church hall, built in 2000. We call it the Gatehouse after an earlier building on the same site. In ordnance maps it was called the 'Sunday School' and was once used as a stable for horses. We now use it for Children's Church, coffee after services, social occasions and is hired out to local groups. It won a design award.

As you leave the churchyard and walk into the car park turn to the left, walk to the concrete road that turns left past the north side of the Church and look down at Garnish Hall, once the manor house of the Parish. It is on the site of an old residence of the Gernon family, one of whom Sir Thomas Gernon may be buried in the chancel of the church.

A list of some of those who are buried or worshipped at the Church and their connections with London throughout the Centuries

<i>Died</i>	<i>B = buried in Church</i>	
1475	<i>Sir John Crosby</i>	<i>M.P. for London 1466. Auditor of the City Accounts. Sheriff 1470. Warden of The Grocers Company 1452-4 of which the Arms appear on the Church Tower as Sir John donated £50 towards its building.</i>
1513	<i>Robert Fabyon Historian. B</i>	<i>Clothier in London and Member of the Drapers Company. 1495 Sheriff.</i>
1567	<i>Ellen Branch. B. Brass tablet.</i>	<i>Wife of John Branch, citizen and merchant of London. (Garnish Hall)</i>
1602	<i>Anne Fitzwilliam. B. (Gaynes Park)</i>	<i>Wife of Sir William closely connected with the Court in London. Queen Elizabeth held a Council at Gaynes Park, Sir William's home and in the Parish.</i>
	<i>Nicholas Wright. D.D.</i>	<i>Rector of Theydon Garnon. In 1634 held a house to house collection in the Parish for the repair of old St. Pauls.</i>
1672	<i>James Meggs. B.</i>	<i>Rector of Theydon Garnon 1661-1672. In 1666 collected £27.5s.0d. For the relief of victims of the "sad and lamentable fire in the City of London".</i>
1681	<i>Sir John Archer. B. Coopersale House</i>	<i>Law Student at Grays Inn. Barrister 1620. M.P. 1656.</i>
1682	<i>James Houblon</i>	<i>Lived at Coopersale House and in Walbrook ward. Pepys called him "Father of the London Bourse". Built North aisle of the Church in 1644.</i>
1688	<i>Richard Butler B.</i>	<i>Of the Middle Temple, London</i>
1714	<i>Denton Nicholas B.</i>	<i>Practised as a doctor in the Parish of St Paul Convent Garden.</i>

1724	Jane Wormlayton B.	Wife of John Wormlayton of this Parish, Citizen and Skinner of London.
1732	Richard Rogers B. Churchyard	Lived in Aldgate High Street, London. Members of this family lived Theydon Garnon for over 400 years.
1733	Joseph Truman B. Gaynes Park	Citizen and Brewer of London
1792	Charles Moody B.	Merchant in London.
1796	Jamineau Cheveley B. Churchyard	Barrister and eccentric. The family lived in the parish before 1608 and were connected with the law in London. All buried in family vault outside east end of the church. (Coopersale Hall)
	The Chisenhale Marsh family	Closely connected with the City of London. Still resident in Theydon Garnon. Memorial windows.

A time-line is as follows, showing known major restorations.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
<i>13th c</i>	<i>Earliest date at which the church is known to have existed. The Chancel seems to be still largely of this date.</i>
<i>15th c</i>	<i>East window</i>
<i>1520</i>	<i>Brick tower built (dated)</i>
<i>1644</i>	<i>North aisle, aisle arcades, dormers built. (dated)</i>
<i>18th c</i>	<i>North porch built, west door inserted in Tower</i>
<i>c.1740</i>	<i>William Eyre Archer monument erected</i>
<i>1762</i>	<i>Major repairs to roof</i>
<i>1774</i>	<i>West gallery built</i>
<i>1863-4</i>	<i>Major restoration & alteration by Thomas Jeckyll, under Revd. Sir Cavendish Foster Bt. West Gallery removed; new aisle windows.</i>
<i>1892</i>	<i>Vestry and Organ Chamber added</i>
<i>1899</i>	<i>New heating apparatus</i>
<i>1934</i>	<i>Lancet in south wall of Chancel unblocked</i>
<i>2001-6</i>	<i>Lead valley to roof renewed (from 2006 QQI)</i>
<i>2007-8</i>	<i>Major works to bells carried out (from CBC files)</i>

Pictures of the Church over time:

