

GazNews

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TACS Gazetteer News

Issue 10

Out in the country

You may have thought the Gazetteer had disappeared completely, but it just managed to slip out of the last TACS mailing, so here's a surprise double issue to keep you up to date on progress. And following floods and rail problems, even the simplest visit to a rural church has been made something of a lottery by the foot & mouth epidemic. Visiting Bedfordshire in March-April, I was unable to see a couple of churches because they were stranded up footpaths—infuriating! But some of the ones I did see were very unusual, as you'll read overleaf.

General progress with writing the Gazetteer has been good, with still more sites coming in from a wide variety of sources—not a few contacts stemming from the TACS website, which is getting double the number of hits it did in its early days. OK, so it's not Amazon, but it's quality that counts! Counties completed (in first draft at least) include Staffs, Durham, Northumberland, Beds, Berks and Bucks. We now have invaluable volunteer site spotters working in most counties, although there are still some 'holes', notably the islands—Man, Wight, Channel—Norfolk and large chunks of London; any offers warmly received. And if you happen to be in Cambridgeshire, I could do with photographs from the churches at Bottisham, Tadlow, Waresley and Waterbeach, and the little RC church at Kirtling; they are all out in the country so visits can be time-consuming—but fun!

Lynn Pearson, Gazetteer Editor

Finding new paths to walk while the countryside was closed meant frequent changes of route; during explorations of South Shields, County Durham, I discovered a massive pub

called The Cyprus, built in 1901 and with a superb faience facade, most likely by Burmantofts. The name plaque is in very good condition, but the lower part of the facade has suffered some damage. The lettering 'JTL' (or 'JLT') on the plaque does not relate to any of the large brewers or pub owners in turn-of-the-century



Tyneside—bit of a mystery... There's a good tiled butcher's shop nearby.



Spring in South Shields More new finds!!

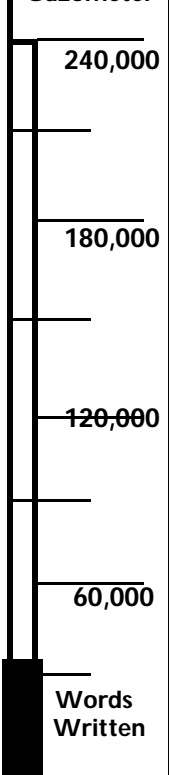
WILLINGTON CHURCH

This Bedfordshire church has a fascinating Victorian tile pavement which is a medieval lookalike (below) — to read full details, see the Gazetteer extract overleaf.



For comparison, the photograph (left) shows a small part of one of the 14th century pavements from Warden Abbey, seen in an excellent display at Bedford Museum.

Gazometer



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Database Site Count

Date	Number of Sites in Database
May 2001	4232
April 2000	3637
April 1999	2287
March 1997	1443

Bedfordshire—Extracts from the first draft of the Gazetteer

HAYNES

St Mary's is a most unusual church, medieval in origin but much rebuilt by Henry Woodyer in 1850; it stands, hidden by hedges, just south of Hawnes, a largely eighteenth-century mansion. Reconstruction of the church was the responsibility of the Reverend Lord John Thynne, an indirect descendant of the Carterets for whom Hawnes was built. Woodyer, an architect known for his inventiveness, was an adherent of Ecclesiological principles, thus St Mary's interior focuses on the colourful chancel, with its Minton pavement and reredos. The designs of the chancel tiles increase in complexity through the choir, where buff and red fleur-de-lys tiles form patterns defined by black diagonals, while the first step towards the altar has fleur-de-lys tiling in buff and blue. The next - narrow -step sports lozenge-shaped geometrics in red, green and yellow, while the sanctuary pavement is still more ornate. Two designs, a cross and the monogram IHS (for Jesus) are combined in the east wall tiling, which is topped by a reredos with lettering reading, rather oddly, 'Lo I am with you alway'.



The Builder reported that the reredos was given to St Mary's by Minton & Co, but Haynes does not appear in the published list of churches to which Herbert Minton donated tiles between 1844 and

his death in 1858. This unrecorded donation is the first such case to be identified, and at present appears to be a unique occurrence, although the reredos (apart from its spelling) is not an especially unusual design.

A surprise is in store behind the elegant iron screen which bars entrance to the north or Thynne Chapel: inside this multicoloured but gloomy cavity is the recumbent white figure of Lady Thynne (1868), angels at her head, set above a patterned marble floor with a central pictorial roundel; it also includes a few encaustic tiles. The floor, the canopy over the statue and probably the whole decorative scheme were designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott, while screen and floor were manufactured by Poole & Sons. At the head of the south aisle, railed off by fine ironwork, is the Carteret Chapel, its pavement composed of geometric tiles in a pattern made up of six-pointed green stars within red hexagons.

WILLINGTON

The village of Willington lies in the broad Great Ouse plain a few miles east of Bedford. Sir John Gostwick (d1545), Master of the Horse to Cardinal Wolsey, and later in the service of King Henry VIII, owned the manor from 1529 and rebuilt the church of St Lawrence during 1539-41. Sir John's manor house is long gone, but close to the church, in quiet parkland well away from the Bedford road, are his stables and a most unusual dovecote, a tall, louvered structure with nesting boxes for 1,500 pigeons.

Inside the church, the medieval atmosphere remains intense. The magnificent tomb of Sir William Gostwick (d1615) almost fills the little north chapel, where there are a few medieval tiles at the base of Sir John's rather smaller tomb. The chancel's Victorian pavement, however, is a complete visual shock: in the choir are line-impressed and relief tiles, square and rectangular,

in red, green and black, while the sanctuary is floored with highly glazed yellow, green and black geometric tiles along with a few line-impressed tiles, the latter buff, with a flower motif. The geometric tiles, many of them rhomboidal in shape, are arranged so as to create an illusion of three-dimensionality, provoked by the optically-reversing rhomboids.

The pavement was installed as part of the 1876-7 restoration by that highly original architect Henry Clutton (1819-93), convert to Catholicism (in 1856), expert on French medieval architecture and friend of William Burges. The source of its inspiration lies in the north chapel, with its lozenge-shaped medieval tiles; the new chancel tiling was apparently intended to be a copy of the original medieval pavement. It is unclear whether the pavement survived from the original church (the church guidebook suggests it dated from the fourteenth century), or was added in the 1539-41 rebuilding; if the latter, it would be a very late example of the genre. It is interesting to note that soon after 1537, the Gostwicks built a house four miles to the south of Willington at Warden Abbey, part of their Bedfordshire estate. The abbey itself was a Cistercian foundation dating from 1135. Its fourteenth-century tile pavements, which were probably made locally, are now displayed at Bedford Museum; their designs show remarkable similarities to the Victorian chancel pavement at Willington. It would therefore appear that the St Lawrence pavement is a copy of its fourteenth-century predecessor, which may have been installed by the same hand responsible for the Warden Abbey pavement. **FOR PICTURE SEE PREVIOUS PAGE**

The Victorian tiling certainly gives a real insight into the appearance of medieval pavements at the time they were laid. The brightness and intensity of the colours is unexpected, as is the stark geometry of the pattern and the optical illusion generated by the rhomboidal groups. Apart from its intrinsic attraction, the Willington scheme is therefore highly significant in that it effectively replicates the contemporary visual experience of a medieval pavement, in a way that excavated pavements, with their lack of glaze and muted colours, cannot. As to its manufacturer, the Willington tiles with a floret motif are based on a medieval design which also occurs at Bolton Abbey, West Yorkshire. Godwin's made replacement tiles for Bolton Abbey, and Willington also has some green-glazed buff tiles, typical of Godwin's, thus it would appear that this firm is the most likely manufacturer.

One remaining question concerns the reason for installation of this spectacular pavement. The 1876-7 restoration appears to have been largely funded by the Duke of Bedford, whose family took over the Willington estate in 1779. He was an active landlord who took an interest in the church, and was assisted in the rebuilding by the Reverend Augustus Orlebar. Both men may have been concerned about the effect on the congregation of the opening of a Methodist church in the village in 1868; the lavish restoration was perhaps an attempt to combat the forces of non-conformism. Although Willington was by no means the only church where medieval tiling was replicated by Victorian restorers, it appears unique in the scale and accuracy of its reproduction.