

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST WYSTAN

REPTON, DERBYSHIRE
(DIOCESE OF DERBY)

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN



NOVEMBER 2019

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1. Preliminaries

1.1 Summary

The Conservation Management Plan has been produced following the designation by the Church Buildings Council and Historic England of St. Wystan's as a Major Parish Church of exceptional historical significance. The need for a CMP follows from this designation in order to:

- bring together documents concerning the church building and its conservation
- meet the requirements of major funders
- demonstrate to funders and other interested parties that the PCC values and understands the building in its care.

St. Wystan's is the parish church of Repton, a village community (population about 3,000), situated between Derby and Burton on Trent. The village sits on a sandstone bluff overlooking the Trent. The earliest evidence of settlement is from the Neolithic period. By the mid 7th century it was an important centre of the Mercian kingdom and with arrival of missionaries from Northumbria in 654 was the earliest Christian presence in Mercia. The first church building is believed to date from around 675 at the same time as the founding of a Benedictine monastery. The dedication of the church to St. Wystan arises from the murder of Wystan, a prince of the Mercian royal family, and his subsequent canonisation. His remains were interred in the crypt of the Saxon church in 849.

The exceptional importance of the church building lies in the surviving crypt and chancel above thought to date from the 9th century (or 10th according to some authorities). Repton was a centre of pilgrimage to the time of the Viking occupation of 873-4 when the building and surroundings were ransacked. Restoration took place prior to the Norman Conquest following which an Augustinian priory with extensive buildings just to the east of the church was founded in the 1150s.

The monastic foundation was dissolved at the Reformation and its surviving buildings incorporated into Repton School founded in 1557. In the meantime the parish church has developed into its present form with the last major structural addition being the spectacular 212ft spire completed in the 15th century.

From about 1800 Repton and its parish church became known for the importance of its Saxon remains. Various repairs and restorations were undertaken over the following 200 years, particularly to the spire and crypt, and also in 1885-6 a thorough restoration and re-ordering of the interior by Sir Arthur Blomfield.

In recent years the parish has undertaken major repairs, notably to the spire in 2013 and the chancel 2014, together with the updating of facilities including the provision of kitchen and toilets in 2009-10 and rewiring and new lighting in 2017. During this time the PCC has been mindful of its responsibility to balance the care of the exceptional historic fabric with the needs of worship and community use. This is reflected in the thinking about the future and proposed policies included in this document.

1.2 Message from the Vicar and Parochial Church Council (PCC)

St Wystan's maintains an important presence in the community of Repton, immediately to the south of Derby. Repton is equally well known for the church, with its Anglo-Saxon and Viking heritage, and for Repton public school. It is less well known for being the place where the Kingdom of Mercia was converted to the Christian faith in 653AD. The church is in the middle-of-the-road Anglican tradition offering a range of services from choral evensong to Messy Church, and a variety of opportunities for spiritual growth from Bible study to Youth Alpha. It seeks to be an inclusive parish church warmly welcoming all people. Within its family are some who have an allegiance to other denominations. While offering opportunities for spiritual growth there is a strong pastoral team supporting people within the church community with particular needs. In a community that is quite wealthy the church looks further afield to support groups working with the most vulnerable in society. Within the parish it seeks ways to support the more hidden needs [mental health issues, loneliness] that trouble local people regardless of wealth or position.

The Church has over the years become somewhat isolated from the village, being almost entirely surrounded by School property. Since Victorian times the School has had its own chapel. Along with the United Reformed Church there is co-operation and sharing between the three churches of the benefice, St Wystan's, St Mary's Newton Solney and St Saviour's Foremark. St Wystan's has no church hall. A few years ago toilets, a small kitchen and storage area were sympathetically installed at the west end. This has enabled the church to be increasingly used as a venue for concerts and charitable events. Local schools use St Wystan's for art displays while their choirs often perform at special services such as major festivals and Remembrance. The lack of parking in the community is a constant challenge and the church is reliant on the generosity of the school in this regard.

The historic significance of Repton as the one time capital of Mercia; of the Anglo-Saxon Crypt; and of the archaeology within the surrounding area is of international significance. On-going archaeological exploration continues to reveal more of the story of early Repton and its environs, and looks likely to continue to do so for some time. The Vicar, supported by the PCC, seeks to make the most of the potential that such an inheritance brings. Tours of the building take place each year, as well as film crews and researchers coming to experience stepping back many centuries into the Saxon Crypt. The church encourages local schools and uniformed organisations to use the building, both as an historical resource but also to understand the nature of a living church, of Christians seeking to live out their faith in Jesus Christ in this modern day and age.

The PCC takes very seriously the challenge of maintaining a building of such significant importance as St. Wystan's. It acknowledges that doing so may hinder what must be its prime function of mission and ministry within the parish, benefice and beyond. It has whole-heartedly embraced the creation of this document to demonstrate its commitment to reconciling these aspects and as a practical means of securing support from stakeholders for the ongoing conservation of the building.

The P.C.C. prides itself in keeping the church open every day for visitors and that there is unrestricted access to the crypt. It is hoped that the newly formed Friends of Repton Parish Church will help to extend the ways in which we use St Wystan's, to ensure the future care for the building, while making certain it remains a place of vital and sound Christian worship, teaching and fellowship.

Revd Martin Flowerdew
Vicar

2. Introduction

2.1 About the Conservation Management Plan (CMP)

This CMP document has been compiled in line with guidance from the Church Buildings Council, see

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/conservation-management-plans>

In March 2018 Virginia Davis and Richard Finch from St. Wystan's attended a meeting in Chesterfield with representatives from the other Major Churches in Derby Diocese, the Chair and Secretary of the DAC, and Joe Elders, Major Projects Officer of the Church Buildings Council. Joe gave a briefing and context for CMPs and subsequently provided an outline template that has been used as a basis for this document.

The CMP has been mostly written by Richard Finch (former churchwarden) working with Virginia Davis (Chair of the PCC's Building & Churchyard Group and former churchwarden) who has written Section 3.6 based on information contained in the 2018 Quinquennial Inspection Report. Mark Parsons RIBA (the church's architect) and Emma Bagot Jewitt (a student working with him) have contributed to Section 4. Members of the Building & Churchyard Group and subsequently the PCC have seen drafts and made comments and corrections. The final document was adopted by the PCC at its meeting on 6th November 2019 and it was then made available to interested parties.

2.2 Objectives

The objectives of this CMP document are to:

- Provide an understanding of the history of the church building and its site, and how its role as a parish church has evolved over the centuries. (Section 3)
- Assess its significance locally, nationally and internationally. (Section 4)
- Define its vulnerability and potential by identifying current and possible future issues affecting the significance of the site and church building, how threats can be mitigated, and potential realised. (Section 5)
- Define management policies to identify risks and develop potential. (Section 6)

2.3 Scope and status

The CMP includes an account of the historic development of the church, its contents, the surrounding site, and its setting within the Repton village community.

Sources used include published works as listed in the bibliography (section 7), parish records held in the Derbyshire Record Office (DRO) and in the parish church (PA); archives of the Council for the Care of Churches, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, and the Repton Village History Group.

References to the bibliography are provided in the text rather than as footnotes.

This is not a closed "once and for all" document but will require regular updating to take account of ongoing repairs and enhancements to the building, new insights gained from historical research and archaeological investigations, and the evolution of parish life.

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2.4 Acknowledgements

Help from the following is gratefully acknowledged:

Andy Austen for advice on Section 3.4 and researching documents and illustrations from the Repton Village History Group's archive.

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Staff from the various libraries and archives consulted: Church of England Records Centre, Derbyshire Records Office, Derby University Library, Derbyshire Archaeological Society, Leicester University Library, Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

Unless otherwise acknowledged in captions, illustrations have been provided by Brian Davis, Virginia Davis, Richard Finch and Martin Wimbush.

Professor Martin Biddle, Church of England Record Centre, Derbyshire Record Office, Martin Stancliffe, Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, for permission to quote from documents.

3. St. Wystan's Church and its setting

This section provides a context for the church building by giving a brief description of the Repton village community today (3.1), the role of the parish church in the village (3.2), details of the church congregation and its work (3.3), an historical overview of Repton as a settlement (3.4), a detailed chronology of the building through the different stages of its development (3.5), an account of the building and its surroundings as they exist today (3.6), a listing of the principal contents of the building (3.7), a description of the churchyard (3.8), and brief explanation of how the church and churchyard are maintained (3.9).

3.1 The Repton community

Repton is a large village about eight miles from Derby to the north-east and five miles from Burton on Trent to the south west. The population is around 3000. The civil parish population was 2,867 at the 2011 census. There are about 1,100 households. Approximately 80% of these are owner occupiers. There is local authority housing dating from the 1950s and more modern social housing incorporated in new developments. A significant number of houses are owned by Repton School and occupied by its staff. There is an historic core along the High Street and adjoining roads with most modern development dating from the 1960s onwards. In recent years there has been extensive house building, over 150 houses, on the outskirts of the village to the east.

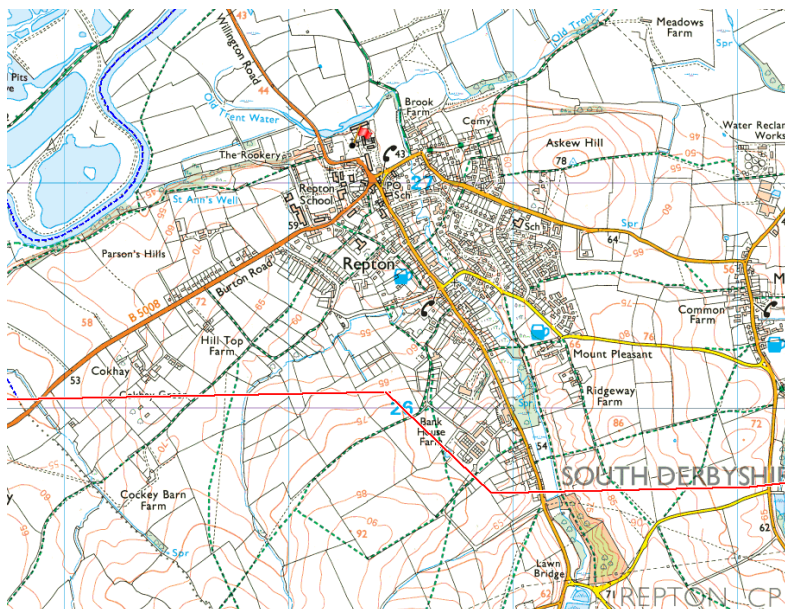


Fig. 1 Map of Repton Copyright: Anthony Short and Partners LLP



Fig. 2 High Street, Repton

Repton School is a significant employer. Many teaching and support staff live in the village. Other employment in the village is limited to shops, small businesses and Gibson Technology, a specialist engineering company manufacturing components for racing cars. Most people commute to Derby or Burton on Trent, with a significant proportion travelling further afield to Birmingham, Nottingham, Sheffield or Stoke. There is a major manufacturing plant for Toyota cars three miles away at Burnaston. Other major industrial employers are Rolls Royce in Derby and the breweries in Burton on Trent.

Repton School, founded in 1557, is one of the country's historic public schools. Now mixed, it has about 650 pupils, mostly boarding. It is a significant presence in the village with its buildings and playing fields occupying much of the historic centre.

Repton Primary School has approximately 210 pupils, incorporates nursery facilities and has modern buildings on the outskirts of the village. St. Wystan's School, in the village

centre, is an independent preparatory school also with a nursery and has about 100 pupils, most of whom come from outside the village. There is further pre-school provision at Wood End Nursery on Main Street.

For local authority secondary education, the village is within the catchment area of John Port School at Etwall (4 miles away). Most 11-18 year olds from the villages attend there, although a significant minority travel to other schools in Burton, Derby and Swadlincote.

There is a limited range of shops and other facilities in the village. In common with other communities these have reduced significantly over the last twenty or thirty years. There are four pubs, an Indian restaurant, Chinese take-away, fish & chip shop, hairdresser, general store, butcher's, Post Office, and dental practice. The nearest GP practice surgery and pharmacy are in Willington a mile away on the other side of the Trent towards Derby.

There is a variety of active societies and groups in the community, including Scout and Guide groups, Baby & Toddler Group, Women's Institute (WI), Evergreen Club, Village History group, Football Club, Royal British Legion, and Repton Village Society.

The history of the community is detailed in 3.4 below.

3.2 The church in the community

St. Wystan's fulfils the traditional role of the English parish church as a focus for its community. The occasional offices of the Church, baptisms, weddings and funerals bring residents into the church who are not otherwise part of the regular congregation. In the same way major festivals and commemorations bring large congregations. The church is full to capacity on occasions such as Remembrance Sunday and for Christmas services.

Church members are active in village organisations such as the Village Society, Royal British Legion, WI, the Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee. Ventures, such as the Parish Magazine and the Friday Lunch Group for older people, that began as church activities, now involve many volunteers from beyond the congregation and are very much community enterprises.

The community takes pride in the church building and its national historic importance, particularly as this has now led to its featuring in TV programmes and general books on the Anglo Saxon and Viking periods. This has resulted in generous support for appeals made to the community in recent years for financial contributions to the cost of providing kitchen and toilet facilities in 2008-9, and repairing the spire in 2013.

More detail of current and potential future community involvement is in 5.2 below.

3.3 The church community today

3.3.1 A parish profile

St. Wystan's Repton is the largest of the three parishes that make up the United Benefice of Foremark and Repton with Newton Solney, in the Mercia Deanery and Diocese of Derby. The staff team serving the benefice is made up of the Vicar, whose parsonage house adjoins St. Wystan's churchyard, a retired priest who acts as Assistant Priest to the Benefice, and two Readers.

According to 2019 IMD data (<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/research-and-statistics/resources-publications-and-data#na>) the parish is among the least deprived in the country, ranking 11,911 out of 12,425 where 1 is the most deprived. The church congregation broadly reflects this being generally at least moderately affluent with a significant proportion of professionals with higher education qualifications.

The regular worshipping community is about 150 (December 2018) with an average Sunday attendance of 73, and 108 on the official Electoral Roll (April 2019). Usual Sunday attendance has fluctuated over the last ten years:

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
53	71	70	64	61	67	95	90	86	73

(Church of England Statistics for Mission)

The significant drop in 2018 reflects several families moving out of the parish to relocate for work or to downsize. Of the 2018 regular worshipping community about 20% were under 18 reflecting a thriving monthly Messy Church event attracting younger children.

The main Sunday service is 9.45 parish communion or "Worship Together" family service, with occasional joint services for the benefice. There is 8.00 am Communion and an evening service on two Sundays in the month. A weekly Wednesday morning communion attracts its own small congregation.

In common with many other parish churches the congregation is predominately older retired people. A Sunday Club runs alongside the main Sunday morning service attracting a relatively small number of loyal families. The monthly Messy Church event on Sunday afternoons regularly attracts 30-40 children with a similar number of accompanying adults and the very recently started Alpha Youth attracted 9 young people aged 11-16 to its first session.

There is close co-operation with Repton School. The Chaplain assists with services from time to time, and joint services with the School take place on Ash Wednesday and Ascension Day. Pupils assist with churchyard maintenance as part of their community service.

The focus for ecumenical work is Christians Together in Repton, a small group of Anglican, United Reformed Church and Roman Catholic representatives. As many activities as possible are combined with Repton United Reformed Church whose secretary has a standing invitation to attend St Wystan's PCC meetings as an observer. Repton is within the Roman Catholic parish of St Peter & St Paul Swadlincote. Catholics from Repton attend there or other parishes in Burton and Derby.

There are close links with the village schools – Repton Primary School and St. Wystan's Preparatory School. Both schools come into church for their carol services and other celebrations, and also enjoy a team from the parish coming in weekly during term time acting out Bible stories using "Open the Book" material.

As well as the Parish Magazine, which is financed through advertising and consequently delivered free to every household in the benefice, there is a parish church website (reptonchurch.uk) giving full information about parish activities and the history of the building. The church is on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Repton-Parish-Church-St-Wystans-106667034009217/>.

A dedicated team of pastoral visitors does valuable work keeping in contact with people who are housebound or in residential homes and sustain this through prayer and occasional "Quiet Mornings."

There are currently two house groups that meet regularly for prayer and study. Additional groups meet during Lent to follow a York Course or similar study programme.

An active band of bellringers makes full use of the fine ring of eight bells, with a weekly practice night, ringing before the main services and for weddings.

An informal singing group leads the congregation at some Sunday morning services, and a choir organised by the organist leads choral evensong once a month.

Further details of community involvement are in 5.1 below.

3.3.2 Parish governance

The Parochial Church Council is a registered charity (no. 1132330) and its annual report and accounts can be found on the Charity Commission website <https://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Showcharity/RegisterOfCharities/CharityWithoutPartB.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=1132330&SubsidiaryNumber=0>.

The PCC currently has seventeen members and meets about six times a year, with its standing committee meeting a similar number of times between Council meetings. Detailed consideration of different areas of parish life is delegated to sub committees and groups: Building & Churchyard, Children & Young People's Work, Christian Nurture, Communication, Finance and Stewardship, Liturgy, Pastoral Care, and Social Events. This enables the PCC to focus its meetings on mission, planning and strategy.

Following investigations during 2013 that indicated practically every property in the parish was potentially within the scope of Chancel Repair Liability, the PCC has resolved not to exercise its right to pursue contributions to chancel repairs from property owners.

3.3.3 Finance

Expenditure on building repairs and renewals is a budget priority. During the five years 2014-18 the PCC spent £108,630 on the church building (excluding utilities, insurance and churchyard maintenance). This represented about 25% of its total expenditure over this period.

Most major projects in recent times, though benefiting from the generous support of grant awarding bodies, have been dependent on fundraising appeals to the village community and charitable trusts: for the new organ and work on the crypt in the 1990s, for the kitchen and toilets project in 2009-10, and to a lesser extent for the spire and tower restoration (the majority of funding for this was from English Heritage) in 2013.

There were two significant projects during 2014-18, both financed without recourse to a special appeal. This was fortunate as the wider village community was working hard throughout this time to raise funds for rebuilding the Village Hall.

The first was **stripping and replacing tiles from the chancel roof** which became urgent during 2016 as there was a danger of tiles slipping off into the neighbouring Repton School grounds. The total project cost including VAT was £18,460 and was funded by grants from the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund (£10,000), the Derbyshire Churches & Chapels Preservation Trust (£2,000), the PCC's fundraising (£3,450), with £3,100 VAT recovered under the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme.

The second more costly project was the **replacement of 1960s wiring and light fittings**. After careful consideration of schemes from three specialists this was undertaken during the autumn of 2017 costing £60,200 including VAT. It was only possible to proceed given the timely availability of generous legacies contributing £30,000 which after £11,350 VAT refund left £18,850 to be found from PCC funds.

It can be seen from these examples that the funding of essential work is dependent on grants from conservation bodies and charitable trusts, the VAT recovery scheme, windfalls such as legacies, and in the right circumstances appeals to the wider community.

3.4 Archaeology and history of Repton

This section deals with the origins and history of settlement in the Repton area, Repton's importance as a Mercian royal centre, its associated monastic communities, the post-Reformation foundation of Repton School, and the subsequent evolution of the settlement into a village or small town community. 3.5 below covers specifically the history of the church building.

Repton's ancient site sits on a sandstone bluff overlooking the Trent valley. The settlement extends southwards away from the river. Its linear settlement along the course of the Repton Brook sits in a glacial valley at what evolved as a natural cross roads. Repton thus combines a strategic defensive position on the bluff with the resource of a spring fed water supply from the brook sufficient to power mills, and so has been an attractive site for settlement from the earliest times.

3.4.1 Prehistory and Roman

Excavations and field walking around the current settlement have produced worked flints and pot sherds from the Neolithic period. Excavations at Willington, just to the east on the other side of the Trent, show evidence of at least intermittent settlement from this same Neolithic period through to Saxon times.

The Roman Ryknield Way (the current A38) is just two miles away to the north east. There is some evidence of Roman settlement in Repton itself. Excavation of the site of Repton School's new Science Priory building west of the church, in 2012 showed evidence of boundary ditches spanning 2nd – 4th centuries AD that may have enclosed a small settlement or field system. More recent excavation in the vicarage garden has produced Roman brick and other material.

3.4.2 Saxon and Viking

The same Science Priory site has produced further evidence indicating continued human activity into the Saxon era. By the time of Penda who ruled Mercia from 626 it seems that Repton was a significant settlement and one of a number of royal centres. Around 653-4 (see 3.5.1 below) missionaries from Northumbria brought Christianity to the kingdom, specifically to Repton, as part of Penda's son Paeda's marriage settlement. Rather than being the capital (in the modern sense) of Mercia, Repton at this time might perhaps be seen as analogous to present day Windsor as one of a number of royal residences and the customary place for burial of members of the royal family.

Following from the arrival of the missionaries and Repton becoming at least the base if not the seat of Diuma the first bishop of Mercia, a monastery was established sometime in the second half of the 7th century, possibly around 660 by Werberga granddaughter of Penda. This was a Benedictine community and following the custom of the time, a double house for both men and women. It would have been west of the church in the vicarage garden area, initially with wooden but later stone buildings. The life of Guthlac tells us more about the monastery. Guthlac, born in 674 of a noble family, after an energetic youth as a mercenary entered the monastery during the 690s and subsequently became a hermit in the Fens. He was sufficiently regarded that on his death in 714 the abbess in Repton sent a shroud and lead for his coffin.

Further evidence for Repton's importance comes with the reign of king Aethelbald 716-757. He consolidated Mercia's power and was described by Bede around 730 as ruler of England south of the Humber. On his murder at Seckington in Warwickshire in 757 his body was brought to the royal monastery at Repton and interred there. The Repton Stone, part of a large Saxon cross excavated by the Biddles in 1979, is believed to depict Aethelbald and is "perhaps the oldest surviving large scale representation of an English king" (BIDDLE 1985). It was discovered broken and upside down just outside the eastern window of the Anglo-Saxon crypt.

Wiglaf, died 839, was another king interred at Repton, by that time in the crypt largely as it exists today (see 3.5.1 below). His grandson Wystan was murdered and subsequently buried at Repton in 849 as recorded by Florence of Worcester in the early 12th century: "*Beorhtfrith, son of Beorhtwulf, king of Mercia, unjustly put to death his cousin St Wigstan [ie Wystan] on the Kalends of June [1st June] being the eve of Pentecost. He was grandson of two of the kings of Mercia; his father Wigmund being the son of king Wiglaf and his mother Aelfflaed the daughter of King Ceolwulf. His corpse was carried to a monastery which was famous in that age, called Repton, and buried in the tomb of his grandfather, King Wiglaf.*" Wystan's pious life, the circumstances of his death, and subsequent miracles led to his canonisation which in turn consolidated Repton's position as it was now not only an important royal centre but also a place of pilgrimage.

Repton and its monastic community therefore enjoyed a prosperous and glorious period over about 100 years prior to the Viking incursion in the early 870s. In 873 the Great Heathen Viking Army came up the Trent on their summer campaign, arrived at Repton (the main course of the Trent at that time was what is now the Old Trent Water at the bottom of the sand stone bluff), sacked the monastery, stayed over the winter, and moved on in the spring of 874. The Biddles' excavations identified the extent of a D-shaped defensive enclosure of about 0.5 hectares incorporating the church building that was occupied over the winter. This could have

accommodated a few hundred men, but it is assumed that the army was much larger. The camp site at Torksey near Lincoln occupied during the previous 872-3 winter is over 50 hectares accommodating several thousand men. It is now thought that the occupation army might have been dispersed over a much wider area around Repton during 873-4. There is evidence of activity around Foremark and Heath Wood for example.

As well as the Repton Stone mentioned above, the Biddles' excavations also uncovered Viking graves to the north and south of the crypt with indications of violent deaths, presumably from fighting in 873. The most significant was the skeleton of a 35-45 year-old man, nearly 6 ft tall. In an adjoining grave was a younger man, perhaps a retainer to his older companion. Both burials had been subsequently covered with an oblong setting of broken sandstones heaped up over the double-grave. Other intact Scandinavian-type burials in the vicinity included one with a gold finger-ring, and was neatly dated by five silver pennies minted in the mid-870s. South of the chancel were three other contemporary graves, though none contained weapons.

Further evidence from the Viking occupation was uncovered by the Biddles in their excavations in the vicarage garden just to the west of the church. A mound recorded by the antiquary Simon Degge in 1787 and again by Bigsby in his 1854 history was found to contain the remains of at least 264 individuals thought to have been from the Viking army of 873-4. These remains were arranged within what seemed to have been a two roomed chapel style building of the 7th/8th century. More recent work by Dr Cat Jarman of Bristol University has confirmed the 9th century dating of the skeletal remains that had previously been queried due to radio carbon dating pointing to at least some of the remains being of earlier origin.

The church was wrecked and plundered over the 873-4 winter. The monastic community fled and it is thought took Wystan's remains with them. Repton came within the area of the Danelaw and with the division and decline of Mercia its importance was much diminished and it became merely a local centre.

However by the early 900s the church building had been restored and was re-established as a minster church for the surrounding area. Repton seems to have been the centre for the Wapentake or Hundred covering roughly the current South Derbyshire. This would have arisen because of the importance of the church and of the position of the settlement at a crossroads.

3.4.3 Medieval

We know little more until the time of the Domesday Survey when it is recorded that Repton had a church and two priests. The manor of Repton was granted to the Norman earls of Chester who around 1100 built a motte and bailey castle to the north east of the church on the current site of Repton Hall. The motte or surrounding ditch was identified in the Biddles' excavation adjacent to the Hall in the 1980s.

About 1160 land around the church was granted to the Augustinian community at nearby Calke to found a priory. Building work started immediately to the east of the church and proceeded steadily until the large priory church complex dedicated to the Holy Trinity was completed in 1254. The buildings were subsequently extended and elaborated through to the 15th century. Prior Overton's Tower, a very early brick building, c 1450 was later incorporated in to Repton Hall, serving the School as a boarding house and headmaster's residence.

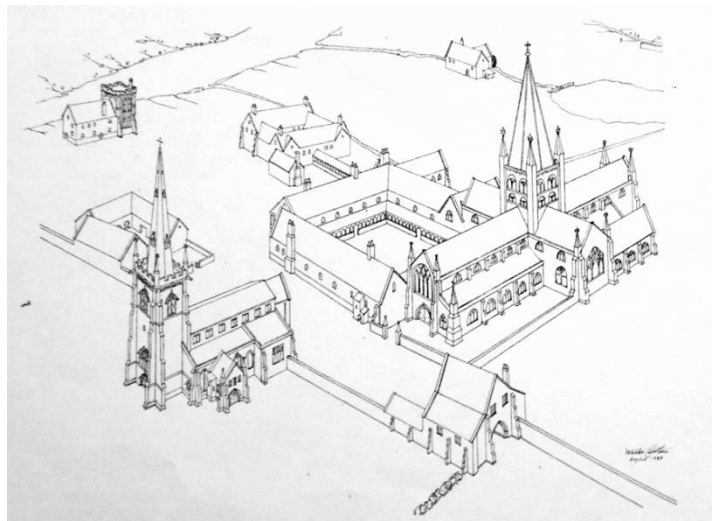


Fig. 3 Drawing of Priory and Hall by Walker Carlton RVHG

Repton during this time was therefore a significant settlement in a strategic position serving the surrounding area. The existing central street pattern and earliest surviving buildings date from this time. The oldest intact building is

believed to be the small timber-framed house on Burton Road (no. 10) possibly originally a 14th century aisled hall.

By the 1530s when Henry VIII ordered the assessment of the resources of religious foundations, Repton Priory was stated as having a clear income of £118 8s which put it in to the category of a smaller monastery. The Priory was surrendered to Crown representatives in October 1538.

3.4.4 Post Reformation

The Priory buildings, surrounding land and mill were granted to Thomas Thacker of Heage. He died in 1548 and was succeeded by his son Gilbert (see 3.7.5 for details of his tomb slab). Following the accession of Catholic Queen Mary in 1553 it was thought that monastic properties might be reclaimed. To sabotage this possibility Thomas proceeded to demolish the Priory Church buildings, leaving only the Guest House (now the Old Priory), the Gate House (the remaining Arch) and Overton's Tower which had been taken over as the Thacker family residence. It is recorded in Thomas Fuller's *Church History* 1655 (quoted in THOMAS p 10) that "*one Thacker, being possessed of Repingdon Abbey in Derbyshire, alarumed with this news that Queen Mary had set up these Abbeys again (and fearing how large a reach such a precedent might have) upon a Sunday (belike the better the day, the better the deed) called together the carpenters and masons of that county, and plucked down in one day ... a most beautiful church belonging thereunto ...*"

Repton School was founded in 1557 by the will of Sir John Port of Etwall, a wealthy landowner without a surviving male heir who was therefore in a position to make substantial provision for the foundation of "*a grammar school in Etwalle or Reptone*" (THOMAS p 11) together with a hospital (ie almshouses) at Etwall. Following his death in 1557 Port's executors purchased the former Priory Guest House from Thacker to accommodate the School.

Repton was therefore subsequently distinguished by the presence of the School which helped consolidate its position as a local centre in addition to its having two mills, and a market dating from 1330.

The village was more or less unscathed by the Civil War but in 1643 it is recorded that the inhabitants of Repton were moved to protest against the marauding incursions by Parliamentary forces based in Derby under Sir John Gell.

From the 17th century onwards there are more surviving buildings and other evidence of development. The thatched cottages on Willington Road near the church are believed to date from c1600 and Tudor Lodge in the High Street c1650.

The Thacker male line died out in 1712 and their Repton property passed to the Burdetts of Foremark who together with the Harpurs of Calke became the main landowners in the area. The Harpurs as principal landowner became the lay rectors and patrons of the parish church living.

Nonconformist presence in Repton dates from 1672 when a house was licensed for preaching. The origin of the first organised congregation seems to have been a mission from the Victoria Street Independent Church in Derby overseen by its minister Revd John Smith in 1780.

3.4.5 19th century

By around 1800 the rise of antiquarian studies was making Repton known as a place of historic interest. James Pilkington's *View of the present state of Derbyshire* 1789 records "*Repton is a place of great antiquity. It is said to have been formerly a large town and was rendered famous by being the burial place of several Mercian kings.*" Revd D P Davies in his *New historical and descriptive view of Derbyshire* 1811 states that Repton "*is celebrated by antiquaries as the principal city in the Saxon kingdom of Mercia.*"

A Wesleyan Methodist chapel was built in 1815 and survives as a private house on Well Lane. The Independent congregation mentioned above built a chapel on the High Street in 1801, superseded in 1837 by a larger building and minister's house on the corner of Pinfold Lane and The Square. This survives as the United Reformed Church with a small but energetic congregation that currently works closely with St. Wystan's (see 3.3.1 above).

Access to Repton from the Derby direction was transformed in 1839 with the opening of Willington Bridge crossing the Trent and making the ford and ferries redundant. Initially it was a toll bridge with pedestrians and passengers in vehicles charged at 1d and vehicles between 9d and 1/-. The toll notice board survives at the west end of St. Wystan's Church under the tower. Tolls were abolished and the bridge taken over by Derbyshire County Council in 1898.

Also in 1839 the railway came to Willington further opening up the area. The diary of William Astbury, a visitor to Repton in the summer of 1843 gives some insight into travel at the time. He visited Derby on several occasions from Repton, at least once via the Twyford ferry, several times by train from Willington, and also by various horse drawn conveyances.

Astbury also gives an account of the October Statutes Fair which was clearly a major event of the year. His diary for 10th October includes the following "*numerous young women, men, boys and girls to be hired ...farmers and others come to engage servants. In the course of the day there were several fights ... there were a great many stalls etc: quite a fair.*"

White's Directory of 1857 gives details of a significant community, with a population of around 2,000 supporting three bakers, six butchers, two blacksmiths, seven inns and three beer houses. The seven tailors and two stationers also mentioned would have owed their presence to the School.

The School benefited from the improved access making attendance by boarders from all over the country possible, and also from the energetic and far sighted headmastership of Dr Pears (1854-74) who transformed the School, raised numbers from less than fifty to 260 with corresponding development of buildings and playing fields.

New School buildings included the chapel on Willington Road, completed in 1858, having been proposed and funds raised to build it following the tercentenary celebrations the previous year. The school masters and pupils were therefore no longer part of the St. Wystan's congregation

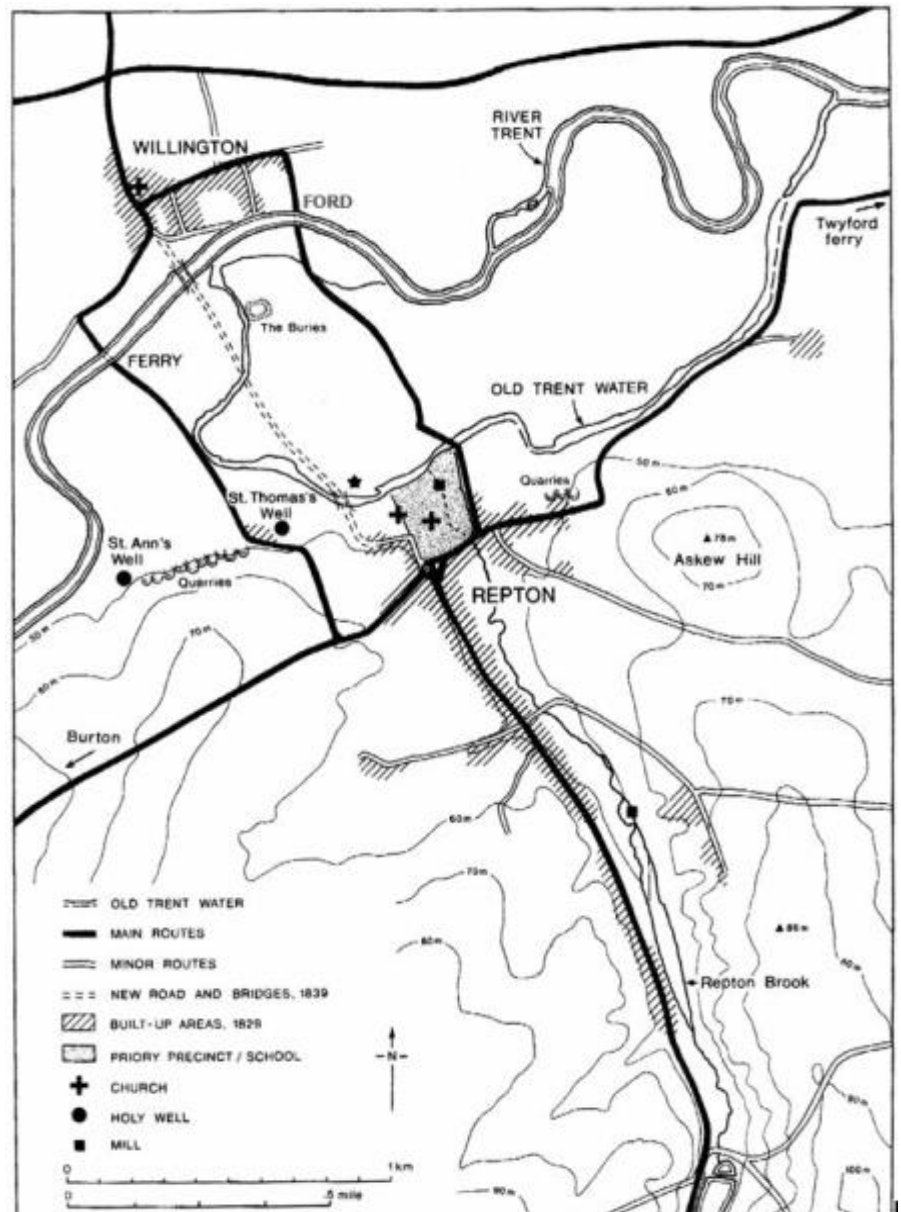


Fig. 4 Map showing strategic river crossings. Source: M Biddle

and the consequent reduced pressure on seating made it possible for the galleries to be removed from the parish church.

At the 1891 census the parish population was 1,926. *Kelly's Directory* of 1900 entry for Repton shows a substantial village or small town community with a post office, gas works, steam laundry, fortnightly magistrates' court alternating between the Bulls Head and Boot public houses, and a national school with about 240 pupils.

3.4.6 20th century to date

Repton School continued to expand during the early 1900s, particularly during the headmastership of Lionel Ford 1901-1910 during whose time pupil numbers rose from 280 to 368. The impact on the village community was seen in terms of new boarding house buildings, particularly New House on Burton Road in 1910, the only purpose built boarding house of this period, designed by W A Forsyth who also worked on the parish church producing a design for the north aisle chapel (see 3.5.5.3).

Some of the school masters played an influential role in the community. Revd Arthur Foreman on the staff from 1874 until his early death in 1905 was a member of the Parish Council, assisted the vicar especially in establishing and running a mission hall in Milton, and was commemorated by the church lych gate erected in his memory and a memorial plaque in the church with the wording *"he linked together the school and the parish by the sunshine of his presence and the readiness of his service."* Henry Vassall, a master from 1885 until his death shortly after his retirement in 1926, was again someone involved in village affairs and also worked on Repton history of both the parish church and priory. As housemaster of the boarding house in the Old Priory buildings he was very much involved in its restoration in the early 1920s incorporating the School's war memorial.

The growth of the School, improvement in transport links and amenities by this time was making Repton a pleasant place for the well-to-do to reside, leading to some handsome Arts & Crafts houses being built – Easton House on The Pastures 1907 designed by Lutyens, and on Burton Road 1907-9 (no. 31) what Pevsner describes as *"one of Parker & Unwin's most original small houses."*

The impact of the First World War on the village community is starkly recorded by the Vicar noting casualties and war news month by month in the *Parish Magazine*. In November 1914 he writes: *"It was with great regret we heard that Lance-Corporal Adams was our first Repton soldier to be written on the "Roll of Honour" of those fallen in the war"* and finally in December 1918: *"Victory and peace! Armistice Day was celebrated right well and joyously in our village ... We could not be quite sure that the news was official. But at noon all was confirmed and our Church bells broke out in joyful message ... But in the midst of our joy I have alas to record the names of three more Repton men who have given their lives for their country..."*. The church war memorial (3.7.10 below) was installed and names recorded in 1917 before the end of the war.

During the War the village was host to Belgian refugees. Again the *Parish Magazine* records in December 1914 *"Our Belgians are all going on well. One family, the Bens, departed for Weston-on-Trent a fortnight ago, but we have received in their place M. & Mme Jerard, who are being well looked after by the Laundry [presumably being employed by the Steam Laundry on Tanners Lane]. M. Van Braeken has obtained a job at Rolls Royce"* and then in July 1919 *"Belgian Refugees – The Belgians have all returned home, having had a fat and prosperous time [!!] in England. They wrote very kind letters of thanks to the committee and people in Repton for their hospitality."*

During the 1920s and '30s Repton appears as a thriving community with British Legion, WI, Scouts and other uniformed organisations, all active. Buses and coaches opened up the possibility of outings and excursions. The local Blue Bus Company began services connecting Burton and Derby via Repton from 1922. There were improved facilities for meetings and events. The Court House on Boot Hill was acquired by the WI and made available for community activities. The roller skating rink on the High Street that opened before the 1st World War was improved and evolved in to the Village Hall. The 1932 *Kelly's Directory* listed a growing variety

of shops and trades, now including two banks (Lloyds and National Provincial), two garages, and a branch of Derby Co-Op. The village population remained at around 2,000.

The impact of the 2nd World War was seen in the evacuation of King Edward's School, Birmingham to share the Repton School facilities, pressure on the local farming community to maximise production, and the long hours of priority work for those commuting to the Rolls Royce works in Derby. Derby Airport at nearby Burnaston became an RAF flying training school. There were several fatal accidents in training and the casualties were interred in St Wystan's churchyard, in the area now maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (see 3.8 below). The only significant incident directly affecting Repton was an RAF Hurricane whose pilot had bailed out which crashed on to School gardens opposite the church, the current site of the 400 Hall.

The post-war period saw significant new housing developments, firstly local authority houses in the Springfield Road area followed by infilling with new housing on Askew Grove and off Pinfold Lane. A new primary school for 200 pupils was built off Springfield Road replacing the Victorian building on the High Street.

Repton came to national attention with a celebration in 1953 marking the 1,300th anniversary of Christianity coming to Mercia. The *Church Times* 18 Sept 1953 with a striking headline hopefully still applicable today "*Mercia is taken out of the history books by a living church*" reported "*six bishops and close on two thousand pilgrims from the fifteen dioceses in the Midlands went to Repton in Derbyshire last Saturday for a service of thanksgiving to commemorate the thirteenth centenary of the conversion of Mercia.*"

A further cause for celebration in 1957 was the 400th anniversary of the founding of Repton School marked by a visit by the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, chairman of the School governors and a former headmaster.

A new village hall opened in 1973 replacing the old rink building that had burnt down in 1963. This in turn has been replaced by a new building on the same site on Askew Grove opened in September 2019.

Repton's importance during the Mercian era was highlighted with the series of excavations by the Biddles from 1974 through to 1988. These brought volunteers from around the world and the local community. The results shed new light on Repton's early history particularly the Viking activity of 873-4 and dating of the crypt as outlined in 3.4.2 and 3.5.1., and generated significant literature on the history and archaeology of the church and its surroundings (See the Bibliography Section 7 below). This in turn has given rise to interest from film and TV companies and the inclusion of Repton in general histories of the pre-Conquest period.

Archaeological investigation continues led by Dr Cat Jarman of Bristol University, focussed on the vicarage garden west of the church, site of the mass burial and the first monastery.

Repton has continued to grow in population with infilling and the development of new housing areas on the eastern side bringing the current population to just over 3,000. The Parish Council has produced a *Neighbourhood Development Plan* with accompanying *Village Design Statement* to guide future planning, see www.reptonvillage.org.uk/n_p/np_home.html. The current version of the Plan (November 2018) recognises that "*the crypt and the area around the church is of national historical importance. It has featured in many television documentaries ... and also definitive historical texts.*"

South Derbyshire District Council has adopted a Local Plan Part 1 2016, Part 2 2017, see <https://www.southderbyshire.gov.uk/our-services/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy/local-plan/adopted-local-plan>. The Plan explains that, apart from Swadlincote the urban core of the District, "*the remainder of the District is predominately rural with many villages of varying sizes. Considerable efforts have been made to conserve their character and some, such as Repton are of particular historic value. The villages and rural areas are attractive places to live and important for tourism, but a key challenge for the Local Plan will be to ensure their sustainability by promoting the right amounts and types of development.*"

In common with many other village communities at the same time as the population is growing, facilities have diminished with the closure of both banks and several shops, and the removal of the GP practice and pharmacy to Willington. However the media coverage of Repton's history attracts growing numbers of visitors and helps sustain four pubs, Chinese and Indian restaurants and a fish & chip shop.

3.5 Church building chronology

The building had reached its current shape and plan by the Reformation. 3.5.1 and 3.5.2 below are therefore concerned with the structure of the building and the chronology follows broadly the phases set out by Dr Harold Taylor in the church guide book and in more detail in his article in the *Archaeological Journal* 1987. The substance of these sections is based on the work undertaken during 1974-88 – the detailed study of the building structure by Dr Taylor and archaeological investigations by Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjolbye-Biddle.

The subsequent parts of this section 3.5.3 – 3.5.6 are mostly concerned with repairs and alterations.

3.5.1 Pre-Conquest

Both Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* tell of missionaries from Northumbria bringing Christianity to the Middle Angles of Mercia in 653-4. The story is that when Elfleda, daughter of the King of Northumbria, married Paeda, son of Penda King of Mercia, she brought with her four monks from Lindisfarne, including Diuma who became the first Bishop of Mercia with his seat at Repton.

There was an abbey established at Repton, and therefore a significant church building, prior to 700 to the west of the existing church (see 3.4.2 above).

Dr Taylor states that the first church on the present site was built around 675 and lay below the present nave, ie west of the crypt. The crypt site may originally have been a baptistery. The crypt itself dates from the early 8th century built partially below ground with arched window openings to the north, east and south, with a single set of steps down from the west. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that King Ethelbald 716-757 "was murdered at Seckington and his body lies at Repton," probably in the crypt.

The chronicler Florence of Worcester says that St Wystan was buried in 849 "in the mausoleum of his grandfather Wiglaf." (Quoted in TAYLOR: *St. Wystan's Church guide*) It's likely therefore that Wiglaf elaborated the previously simple crypt space into a more ornate setting for his own interment and that this was subsequently the natural place for a shrine to Wystan, as Dr Taylor wrote in 1978 (*Anglo Saxon Architecture* vol 3 p743) "it seems impossible to deny that the crypt represents the mausoleum of King Wiglaf in which the cult of St. Wystan flourished from his death in 850 at least until the Danish army wintered in Repton in 874-5." He dates the northern and southern stairs into the crypt between 849 and 873-4, on the basis that these provided circulation for pilgrims to Wystan's shrine, but could not be after the wrecking of the church by the 873-4 Viking occupation. The new stairways would have freed the original western stairway space to create a recess for the shrine itself. The surviving eastern structure of the church, the crypt and chancel above, therefore date from the early 9th century. This chronology is supported by the detailed archaeological work of Dr Taylor and the Biddles, but is questioned by Professor Fernie, writing in the *Antiquaries Journal* 1978, who suggests that the surviving arrangement of the crypt may date from the 10th century in line with earlier thinking.



Fig. 5 The Crypt

The Viking army occupation used the church as a strongpoint for their fortified encampment and on leaving in 874 set fire to the building. The church may have been restored early in the 10th century. The remains of Wystan, removed when the monks fled before the Viking occupation, were returned but subsequently removed again by King Cnut who according to the *Chronicles of Evesham Abbey* "caused that glorious martyr to be moved from Repton to Evesham".

At the time of the Conquest the church would have consisted of the crypt and chancel above, broadly in the present form, with a small church building extending to the west.

3.5.2 The Conquest to the Reformation

The *Domesday Survey* 1086 records Repton as having two priests serving the parish and acting as a minster church for the surrounding area. In the 1150s the Countess of Chester established an Augustinian Priory in buildings east of the church, the previous 7th century community having been driven out by the Danes. The clergy of the priory served the parish church and their likely pre-occupation with their own monastic buildings mean that little was done to the parish church until sometime before 1200 when a narrow south aisle was constructed. This was subsequently widened to its present form and a similar north aisle added in Early English style during the 13th century.

The north aisle was widened during the 14th century, and a doorway and stone steps leading down were inserted in the north wall of the crypt – possibly a convenient short cut for monks from the Priory into the church. During the same period the four western arches each side of the nave were built, and subsequently the existing south porch and Fynderne Chapel added. The church by this time was beginning to assume its current layout. The east end of the church was opened up to the nave by the removal of the separating wall and construction of the current chancel arch. The rood opening above would have been filled in at this time and the existing doorway constructed to leave a way in to the chancel roof space. The wide rood opening could not have been left as the larger arch below would have destabilised the wall. The eastern Saxon nave arches were filled in at the same time with doorways to the aisles.

There is confusion about the dating of the tower and spire based on different interpretations of Bassano, a visitor in 1710, noting a plaque recording completion of the "tower steeple of the Priors Church of this town" in 1340. Views differ on whether this reference is to the Priory Church or St Wystan's. Dr Taylor in the church guide (*St. Wystan's Church Repton – A Guide and History* p.28) argues for it referring to the priory church and dates St Wystan's tower and spire to the 15th century perpendicular period.

Subsequently the clerestory and existing roof were added to the nave. The roof was lower than the previous probably thatched roof, as can be seen from the outline of the earlier pitched roof on the east side of the tower.



Fig. 6 Tower arch showing earlier roofline

3.5.3 The Reformation to 1880

The Augustinian priory community was dissolved in 1538. St. Wystan's assumed a more standard parish church role with an incumbent minister responsible for the parish – a list of incumbents from 1547 survives. Repton School was founded in 1557 (see 3.4.4 above) and occupying the former priory site had a significant influence on the parish, particularly prior to the building of the School's own chapel in 1858-9.

Alfred Fletcher the vicar writing in 1938 in an appeal leaflet for his restoration plans described this post Reformation period as "four centuries of neglect". This does not seem entirely true as there is plenty of evidence of ongoing maintenance and care for the building.

3.5.3.1 The tower and spire

The tall tapering spire given its exposed position required regular attention. In 1722 it was struck by lightning and rebuilt, and again in 1784. There was a ring of five bells prior to 1722. Following the storm damage repairs that year Francis Thacker of The Hall nearby donated a new bell (the current no. 3 – see 3.7.6 below) making a ring of six. In 1804 the weathercock was brought down by Joseph Barton, a local steeplejack, and repaired. Major repair work was done in 1857-8. A Repton pupil at the time recalled being involved *"I was one of a party of boys who were asked to come and pull at a rope which had stuck at the top of the spire; we gave but one pull when the topmost 15 feet of the spire came down with a crash into the churchyard striking one of the pinnacles of the tower"* (MESSITER p 27). There would be continuing problems with the spire for the next 150 years with repairs needed every 30-40 years, generally due to corrosion and consequent expansion of the iron fittings used to secure the stone work. At least damage by lightning was avoided following the fitting of a lightning conductor as part of the work done in 1857.

For details of the tower clock see 3.7.6 below.

A gallery for singers was constructed across the tower arch at the western end of the nave in 1719, subsequently enlarged and ultimately taken down in the 1885-6 restoration. It's likely that there would have been a small band of musicians, at least prior to 1844 when the church's first organ was installed.

The church was able to attract benefactors, for example, a silver chalice and patens hallmarked 1713 were donated by Revd George Roades in memory of his father.

3.5.3.2 The crypt

Existence of the crypt was evidently forgotten and access blocked. It was rediscovered in 1779 when a workman who was digging through the chancel floor above to prepare a burial vault fell through to the crypt. Around this time antiquarian interest in old buildings was reviving and contemporary writers begin to mention the crypt, such as Stebbing Shaw in 1790 – *"the chancel stands over an ancient crypt lately discovered ..."*. One reason for the crypt being lost sight of was that the ground level around the east end had been raised and various outbuildings connected with the School had been constructed against the chancel walls. In 1802 the north doorway and steps to the crypt were rediscovered when a shed was removed. Sir Stephen Glynne visiting in 1841 states *"the crypt is approached by a staircase within the chancel through a trap door."*



Fig. 7 Engraving: publication by Stebbing Shaw c1790

3.5.3.3 The 1792 alterations

Major alterations were done in 1792 that cleared away many of the surviving post-Reformation monuments and furnishings. The faculty (DRO D638/A/PI/66) has survived though it appears more work was done than was authorised: *"... that the seats, pews and sitting places in the parish church of Repton aforesaid are very old irregular and un-uniform and that the minister churchwardens parishioners and inhabitants of the said parish duly assembled in vestry have unanimously agreed resolved and agreed that the same should be taken down and that new seats pews and sitting places should be erected in a regular and uniform manner by which much room would be gained and that the charges and expenses of new paving the said church..."*. The result was that the medieval pews with fine carved ends were removed and new pine replacements installed.

It would seem that the desire for new pews was driven by a perceived need to increase the seating accommodation. Bigsby gives a full account of parish discussions that led to the faculty

application "... a meeting was held at the Mitre on Feb 28, 1792, and attended by thirty of the principal inhabitants. It was then and there unanimously agreed that the church should be new pewed, and that a faculty should be applied for ...". Bigsby goes on to record that the work costing £500 was awarded to Mr Seth Smith of Repton. The result was a church packed with pews, with the north and south aisles completely open to the nave. The archdeacon's visitation of 1824 that records accommodation for "900 or more" must have been an exaggeration as the Religious Census 1851 notes sittings for 770 which would have included galleries over the south and north aisles erected in 1842 and 1848 respectively. This would have been partly due to the growth of Repton School whose pupils attended the parish church until the School Chapel was built in 1858-9.

The removed pews had fine carved ends. Stebbing Shaw says these included the arms of the Earls of Chester, Earls of Gloucester, and Port, Thacker and Legh families. It seems that these were mostly removed by local families. Surviving panels were later incorporated in the screen around the outer vestry at the western end of the north aisle and when this was dismantled in 2009 they were added to the panelling on the southern side of the font under the tower.

The new paving referred to in the faculty involved raising the nave floor to the same level as the chancel. The rationale for this appears to have been anxiety about damp (STEVENS Journal pp 29-30). The floor was altered back to its pre-1792 level in the 1885-6 restoration (see 3.5.4.1 below).

The 1792 work included removing the dead walls blocking the eastern arches of the nave. Cox says this is "*the only part of the work with which we are not disposed to quarrel*". Bigsby suggests that on the southern side remains of the stairs to the rood loft were removed at the same time.

The parvise room over the porch was used as a school room during this period and at some time around 1820 a new staircase from the porch was constructed giving pupils access without having to go into the church itself and use the stairs set in the north aisle wall, now simply a cupboard within the storage area.



Fig. 8 Panelling under tower south side

3.5.3.4 Removal of the Saxon columns 1854

In 1854 the Saxon columns at the eastern end of the nave were replaced by the present hexagonal columns, matching the 14th century work to the west. This work was apparently done without a faculty. Surviving documents (DRO D638/A/PI/95) include a specification 3 June 1854 "*the present four semi-circular arches to be removed and to be replaced by four pointed arches in every respect similar to those on each side of the nave...*". Notes record that the work was done by George Ensor and Joseph Barton of Melbourne for £105 and that this cost was borne by the vicar Revd Joseph Jones. Protests about the destruction of this Saxon work led to two round pillars being retained and placed in the porch either side of the inner doorway where they remain today.



Fig. 9 Base of pillar in nave showing original Saxon base of pillar now in porch

A drawing by Repton School pupil R M Gorham shows the interior of the church in 1847, ie before the reconstruction of the eastern arches of the nave and the 1885-6 restoration. The central pulpit, close packed pews, south aisle gallery (but not the north aisle gallery added in 1848) and royal coat of arms above the chancel arch can all be seen.



Fig. 10 Drawing by R M Gorham showing church in 1847

3.5.4 1880-1914

3.5.4.1 Blomfield's restoration

By the early 1880s the nave roof was in bad state and there was general dissatisfaction with the overbearing clutter of pews and the gallery at the west end blocking the tower arch. The initiative of the new vicar Revd George Woodyatt from 1883 and the increasing antiquarian interest in St. Wystan's led to an appeal for a comprehensive restoration. The work was entrusted to the eminent London based architect Arthur Blomfield who had just completed the new Pears School building nearby.



Fig. 11 Photograph dated 1895 believed to be 1885 RVHG

A photograph from the Village History Group archive dated September 1895 but believed to be 1885 would have been taken just before the restoration work started as it shows the 1792 pews, flat floor into the chancel, no lectern and the pulpit on the south side. The organ is visible at the end of the north aisle. The aisle galleries have already been taken down.

The faculty dated 31 August 1885 (DRO D638/A/PI/69) gives full details of the proposed work: "... the roof of the parish church of Repton is in a dangerous condition and the interior of the said

church much disfigured by ill constructed pews and an unsightly gallery at the west end which blocks up a noble tower arch and certain alterations and improvements and repairs are greatly needed which are as follows – The nave and porch roofs to be restored. The aisle roofs to be entirely new. To rebuild and restore walls and parapets where required. To insert and alter windows and remove the present doorway so as to form an entrance to the new vestry. To alter

and raise the chancel arch. To build a heating chamber with all necessary flues thereto. To restore the south porch. To take out modern stonework in the aisles and insert new work corresponding in style with the old work. To chip off old plaster on walls and replaster leaving all stone quoins and jambs showing. To form stone drain round the aisle walls. To lower the nave and aisle floors and relay same on six inch bed of concrete. The floor of the chancel to be tiled and steps laid. To lower ground outside the church and lay new drain. To take down gallery at the west end of the nave. To remove seats in church and reseat in oak or pitch pine. To remove the organ and form vestry. To provide a new pulpit, font and other fittings. To restore the tower and rebuild pinnacles at angles of tower. To clear away the present ceiling and new oak groining. To alter the east window retaining all old remnants or remains of Saxon work. The crypt to be kept exactly as it is at present with the exception of clearing out the soil which has accumulated on the floor and stopping up the ends of the passages opening into the nave ... that the cost of the works herein described is estimated at the sum of four thousand five hundred pounds ...".

An appeal was launched for £4000 in July 1885 and work started almost immediately. The *Derbyshire Mercury* reported in July 1886 on the completion of the work and re-opening of the church with a thanksgiving service led by the Bishop of Southwell. It seems that not all the planned work was done, as the newspaper report mentions "*the north aisle still retains the whitewashed boards which do duty for a roof.*" Plaster was removed from the walls but not replaced. This was presumably because insufficient funds were raised. A printed account of the Restoration Appeal Fund dated April 1892 shows £3,405 spent of which £3,180 was paid to the contractor John Thompson of Peterborough and £181 to Sir Arthur Blomfield the architect. With the restoration of the building and the addition of new pews, choir stalls, pulpit, lectern and font, the nave, aisles, and chancel took on their current appearance.

3.5.4.2 The tower and spire

In 1896 the bells were overhauled, and what are now nos 7 and 8 were recast by Taylors of Loughborough.

By the late '90s there were problems with the spire again. The *Parish Magazine* for April 1899 tells us that "*for some time past now a crack has been observed on the eastern facet of the spire, three or four courses from the top. A careful examination [by steeplejacks] proved that in the repairing done in 1857 iron clamps were used to brace the stones; these clamps have oxidised and swollen so as to split many of the stones and joints. The pinnacles and about thirty feet of the spire will have to be taken down and rebuilt, and in addition the whole of the tower and spire require pointing and other repairs, which the architect Mr R Naylor of Derby estimates will cost £400.*" This work was duly done and it was in the 1920s when further problems arose.

3.5.4.3 The crypt

Apart from being cleaned out the crypt was untouched by the 1885-6 restoration. This was partly due to reluctance to interfere with what was recognised as an important historic structure but also to objections from the lay rector Sir Vauncey Harpur Crewe of Calke Abbey who did not wish to see changes to what he regarded as his property. A petition of September 1912 sought a faculty, along with other work, to "*repair the ancient crypt to erect therein an altar of stone or wood with cross and candlesticks and other ornaments or furniture, ie flower vases and seatings. To be lit with electric light.*" In the event in the face of Sir Vauncey's objections the vicar withdrew the application insofar as it related to the crypt and the faculty was granted for the other work – for the opening of blocked 13th century lancet windows (in the west wall of the south aisle and the NE angle of the nave), new stained glass, and a mural tablet in memory of Revd A A McMaster who had died in office in 1911.

Interestingly a report (Harper Crewe archives Derbyshire Record Office DRO D6910/8/6) by Mr Fuller, the Calke estate agent, to Sir Vauncey 14th March 1913, proposed minor work on the crypt remarkably consistent with Martin Stancliffe's work in the 1990s (see 3.5.6.1 below). Mr Fuller wrote:

In company with Mr Godfrey Mosley [solicitor to the Calke estate], I visited the Crypt under the Chancel at Repton Church on 12th February and there met the Rev S J Selwyn [vicar], Mr P H Currey [architect], Mr H Vassall [Repton schoolmaster and antiquarian], Dr Cronk

[churchwarden]. We went carefully into the suggestions made by Mr Currey on behalf of the Derbyshire Archaeological Society and by Mr W Weir on behalf of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. The recommendations made by these gentlemen practically agree and are as follows viz:-

- (1) The construction of an area below ground level outside the walls all round.
- (2) The restoration of the windows by the insertion of new stone mullions and glazing with lead lights.
- (3) Repairing the stone steps outside the doorway on the north side.
- (4) The provision of oak doors at the North entrance and at the entrance to the Church.
- (5) The cleaning down and pointing of the inside stone work and dressing same with a preservative.
- (6) The cleaning down of the groining and the repair of the plaster thereon, including a color wash.
- (7) The taking up of the floor and relaying same on a concrete bed.

The present condition more particularly the dryness of the building is surprising and this is probably due to the free current of air through the open windows. It seems that the recommendations go considerably beyond what is really necessary for the simple preservation of the structure and rather contemplate the use of the Crypt for services or some similar purpose and on the assumption that you wish merely to do what may be necessary to preserve the building in its present state as a "priceless monument of past ages" I think that the works undermentioned are all that need be done viz:-

- (1) The provision of movable glass shutters for the window openings which could be put up during winter months, but which could be mistaken by no one to be in any way a part of the ancient structure.
- (2) The provision of a good oak door at the north entrance with a grille for ventilation.
- (3) The cleaning down and careful pointing of the inside stone work, including repair to one of the pillars which is badly cracked and also the dressing of the stone where necessary with a preservative.
- (4) The cleaning down of the groining with a soft brush and some small repairs to the plaster which however must be very carefully done to avoid destroying the antique character.
- (5) The taking up and relaying of the centre portion of the floor only on a concrete bed leaving untouched the slabs under the pillars and near the walls which are very large and would probably be broken if moved.

As to the method of carrying out the work I see no reason why this should not be done by Walter Gaskin and Dolman and Sanders the local bricklayer and joiners, but it should be done under direct and constant supervision and there would be no objection to Mr Currey assisting in this, the object being to have done only such things as may be necessary for the preservation of the building without in any way interfering with its Archaeological interest. I estimate that these works will cost from £25 to £35.

In the event it seems that the work proposed by Mr Fuller was carried out later in 1913. An article in *The Athenaeum* 9 August 1913, possibly by Cox, gives details and confirms that the idea of an altar had definitely been abandoned: "the famed Saxon crypt beneath the chancel of the church has had a dangerous pier most carefully mended, near the base, with cemented tiling, so that the repair cannot possibly be mistaken for old time work; a much-needed new oak door of simple and non-imitative construction, with an oak grid for ventilation cut in the centre, has just been placed in the outer doorway; and movable glazed window frames are about to be fixed in the outer openings... Other projected improvements necessary for the occasional use of the crypt are perhaps wisely relinquished or deferred." A letter in the SPAB archive from Mr Currey to the SPAB Secretary 30 September 1913 confirms this saying "the work in progress at Repton Crypt is being carried out by the lay rector. His agent Mr T A Fuller has the work in hand. Very little is being done, the crack in one of the columns and one or two open joints in the walling have been carefully pointed... a new oak door is being put in place of a ledged deal door of no interest and glazing is to be made for the windows in movable frames which can be fixed in winter to keep out the driving rains..."

3.5.4.4 The chancel arch

The interior today is dominated by the bare east wall of the nave with the doorway to the chancel roof space.(3.5.2) The wall is described by Simon Jenkins in his *England's Thousand Best Churches* as "looking like the cliff face of a stone quarry." It would seem that plaster was stripped off during the summer of 1913 as the *Athenaeum* article referred to above says: "The smooth surface of modern plaster immediately around and above the pointed chancel arch has been stripped off, thereby revealing the interesting fact that the hood-mould of this arch was cut away in the fifteenth century, to make room for the adjustment of a great rood-screen and loft. The much elevated rood-loft doorway, probably approached by a wooden stairway from the chantry chapel, has likewise been opened. But the most interesting result of the removal of this modern plaster is to expose more of the Anglo-Saxon masonry, showing a former opening of at least 6 ft. in width, flanked on each side by long-and-short work, which must have opened into an upper chamber of the tenth-century chancel."



Fig. 12 Chancel arch

3.5.5 1914- 1980

As detailed in 3.7.10 below a war memorial was planned and put in place in the church porch in 1917 well before the end of the war. A faculty was granted 26 November 1917 for an oak memorial tablet in the south porch.

3.5.5.1 Post-war plans

Following the end of the war the vicar was keen to proceed with further work. The Derby architects Currey & Thompson at his request developed proposals to re-order the chancel including opening up the window on the south side, and also proposals for reconstructing the organ on a gallery on either side of the chancel arch. The chancel work had to wait until the late '30s and a new organ until the late '40s. In the meantime basic services were installed, electric lighting in 1921 and a proper heating system in 1927. The cast iron radiators and pipework remain in place as part of the current heating arrangements.

3.5.5.2 The spire

By the mid-20s there were again problems with the spire. A letter from Mr Thompson the church architect to the secretary of the SPAB 1st August 1925 gives some background "In 1856-58 the spire was strengthened with 2" round tie bolts and bands which were bolted in to the masonry. There are 6 of these in IRON and wherever these have been inserted the stones are fractured... Naylor & Sale looked after reparations in 1900 when they had 30 feet of the top of the spire taken down and rebuilt with new stone...." Writing in the *Parish Magazine* for November 1925 the vicar explained what was being done "You will see great things happening to the Church Spire during the coming months. Another firm has been employed, viz Messrs Thompson of Peterborough [Furse of Nottingham had done the 1899 work] and they are going to remove the faulty stone which has been very badly cracked owing to iron girders running through the spire. Each stone, 78 in all, is to be taken out separately and new ones put in their place. The bells are also to be re-hung on a new cage which is to be considerably lowered. This will give more strength and will do away with a great amount of vibration, which has undoubtedly done a great deal of damage to the Spire. Of course this has all been carefully considered by the Parochial Council from the reports sent in by the architect ... The cost of the whole work is to be roughly £950. This seems a lot of money, but there will be no work needed to our Spire, at any rate in our lifetime". The last point was not fulfilled, at least for some Magazine readers, as further major work was undertaken in 1960, and subsequently in 1987 and 2013.

3.5.5.3 Restoration and reordering

In 1928 plans were discussed for reordering the north aisle chapel. A design was commissioned from W A Forsyth but not proceeded with. Money set aside from the Shaw Legacy was diverted to the roof repair fund. Subsequently in 1937 rails were installed alongside the north side crypt stairs as a memorial to Francis Shaw and an oak altar table that had previously been in the vestry was moved to the north aisle and furnished with a dossal and riddel curtains.

During the autumn of 1931 the nave roof was found to be seriously affected by beetle infestation and rot. The church was closed while treatment and repairs were undertaken and services held in the School Chapel.

The arrival of Revd Alfred Fletcher as vicar in November 1932 brought to the parish an energetic former barrister, Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, and someone very much committed to the history and maintenance of the building. He was soon proposing several projects. Conachers quoted for a new organ. A new vestry was discussed. Plans were made for churchyard improvements (see 3.8). Following a report by Taylors of Loughborough early in 1935 a thorough overhaul of the bells was commissioned with the addition of two new bells to make the ring up to eight (see 3.7.6). The main project of the mid-30s though was reordering of the chancel with a new oak altar table, oak panelling to the lower walls of the sanctuary, new Hopton stone floor, and reinstating communion rails in place of kneeling desks.

The existing vestry behind the organ at the end of the south aisle had been thought to be unsatisfactory for a long time. Randall Blacking's design for a new vestry to be built in the angle between the tower and west end of the north aisle was accepted in May 1939 with an estimate from Bridgeman of Lichfield for £730. This was promptly completed and avoided being overtaken by wartime restrictions.

3.5.5.4 The chancel

More controversially the vicar was keen to strip the plaster from the chancel walls to uncover evidence of its building history. He reported to the PCC in July 1939 that he was preparing to petition the chancellor anticipating a negative decision from the Diocesan Advisory Committee. There was indeed very strong opposition from the DAC and the bodies concerned with historic church buildings reflected in correspondence in the archives of both the Council for the Care of Churches and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. A consistory court was held in the church 9th December 1939 (DRO D638/A/PI/447). Against all expert opinion the chancellor agreed to a faculty and the work proceeded including the opening up of the Early English window in the south wall of the chancel. The vicar was able to report to the 1941 Annual Meeting that *"during the course of the last year the wish of the parish to have the plaster*



Fig. 13 1936 photograph shows organ in south aisle, no window in south chancel wall and panelling across east window.
Photo H M Taylor



Fig. 14 George III Arms

removed from the chancel walls was fulfilled. The result has added greatly to the dignity and historic interest of the church."

After this little other than routine maintenance was done during the war. PCC minutes from November 1943 record that Mrs Pattinson had returned to the church the George III Royal Coat of Arms that had until 1885 hung over the chancel arch, but was subsequently removed and sold. It was reinstated in the south aisle over the door to the porch.

3.5.5.5 The Fynderne Chapel and Compton organ

Alfred Fletcher retired as vicar in 1944. He had been immensely energetic in restoring and caring for the building. He had initiated plans for the new vestry, a new organ, re-ordering the chancel and refurbishing the bells. He wrote and paid for the printing of a new guide book, which with minor updating by others, continued in print until it was superseded by Dr Taylor's work in the 1970s. The parish was sufficiently inspired by his restoration scheme to maintain the impetus and work resumed immediately after the war on plans for a new organ and restoration of the east end of the south aisle as a chapel.

A faculty was granted in August 1950 for the new Compton electronic organ with its console behind the choir stalls on the south side, and the provision of a stone altar, oak communion rail, and credence table on the south wall to restore the south transept as the Fynderne Chapel. As part of the scheme the north side steps to the crypt were reopened. The arrangement of the chapel remained in place until 1998 when the new Collins organ took over the space.

The work on the Fynderne Chapel included removal of a small area of plaster. The church architect, Lawrence Bond, summed up nicely the rationale for this *"although as a general principle the rubble walls of medieval churches should be plastered I feel that this case is an exception. The masonry of the walls is of particular interest and contains much of the evidence of the building history. After much discussion a faculty was granted for the removal of the plaster in the chancel. In these circumstances I recommend that the small amount of plaster remaining in this transept should be removed and the walls cleaned down and pointed in lime mortar."* (PA Letter Bond to vicar June 1949)

3.5.5.6 The north aisle

In 1957 a scheme was approved for re-ordering the north aisle chapel prompted by the gift of an elaborately carved oak altar table by the family of Mrs Esther Hayward, widow of a Repton schoolmaster (see 3.7.1). The refurnished chapel was dedicated in January 1960.

Following an architect's report recommending renewal the lead on the north aisle roof was recast and relaid in 1959.

3.5.5.7 The crypt

Throughout the 1950s the condition of the crypt was a concern. In a letter to the church architect August 1951, the vicar wrote *"[the crypt] is now locked and I am awaiting your letter to hear about treatment. I gather it is a fungus which was probably attached to the stonework before..."*. Advice was sought from the SPAB and Dept of Scientific & Industrial Research. A specification for crypt work in July 1952 included insertion of damp courses around the pilasters, cleaning and improvement of dry areas, investigation of damp in the western recess, experimental treatment of decayed portions of the pilasters, and making it weatherproof around the windows. (DRO D638/A/PI/282-295)

Having secured the structure, the parish turned again to thinking about how the crypt could be used for worship and prayer, a re-run of the 1912 proposals (see 3.5.4). In July 1959 the DAC approved proposals for a stone altar. A design for candlesticks and a cross was commissioned from Dennis Hawkins, Head of Art at Repton School. Hawkins's work when installed caused controversy, being admired by some for its striking modernity but deplored by others. The crypt was at some stage cleared of these items prior to the Biddles' investigations from 1974.

Dr Harold Taylor, who made a life-time study of Anglo-Saxon architecture, first visited St. Wystan's in 1936. His continued work on the building into the 1970s led him to dating the surviving structure of the crypt to the early/mid 9th century, at least 100 years earlier than previously proposed (see 3.5.1 above). He came to believe that detailed archaeological investigation was needed to understand fully the significance of the early history of the church and its surroundings. Having consulted Martin and Birthe Kjolbye-Biddle they began a fifteen year campaign of summer excavations 1974-88.

3.5.5.8 Replacement organ

As detailed in 3.7.8 below, the Compton electronic organ had reached the end of its life by the early '70s and was replaced 1973 by an instrument removed from a redundant Methodist church in Burton on Trent.

3.5.6 1980 -

From around 1980 a succession of major projects has seen significant repair and restoration work to the historic fabric together with the sensitive introduction of modern facilities.

3.5.6.1 The crypt

Following archaeological investigation inside the crypt and excavation outside around the east end of the church during 1974-88 it became clear that a comprehensive conservation project was necessary to secure the future of this important survival from the Anglo Saxon era. A report was commissioned from Martin Stancliffe of York in 1989. His proposals included:

- *a new French drain around the exterior, draining to a sump to the north east incorporating a pump to take water to the drain alongside the road above.*
- *Repointing of the external walls*
- *Restoration of the steps to the north door to the crypt*
- *New stone arches on the east and south walls replicating the originals.*
- *Comprehensive conservation treatment of the interior stone work.*
- *Reinstatement of plaster and limewash to the interior.*

Given the importance of the crypt detailed discussions followed with English Heritage, the DAC, SPAB and Council for the Care of Churches. Proposals for reconstruction work to the east and south recesses proved especially controversial. It was not until September 1992 that a faculty was granted for the restoration work. A contract for the external work was awarded to Linford Bridgeman of Lichfield and this initial stage of work was completed by the spring 1994. Martin Stancliffe's report summarises the work done in Phase 1:

The first phase of repairs to the crypt began on site in July 1993 ... The contract included the installation of a ground drainage system, the reduction of light levels within the Crypt, the improvement of external weathering details and the pointing of open joints.

Prior to the work beginning on site the crypt flooded on two occasions. The flooding prompted the commissioning of a survey and ground investigation report... The report indicated that the water table appeared to fluctuate and was generally higher than the level of the proposed soakaway... the specification was amended to install a sump and pump instead of the previously proposed soakaway.

... the contract was let to Linford-Bridgeman Ltd and work began on site in July 1993. At the request of the archaeologist [Prof Martin Biddle] a structural engineer [Frank Haywood & Associates of Coventry] was appointed to verify that the proposals would not undermine the structural integrity of the crypt. The archaeologist and contractor worked together to excavate the drainage trenches. It soon became evident that the walls of the crypt were not constructed in the conventional manner, but had been formed by lining an earth pit with thin stone slabs edge bedded. The Engineer was consulted and the drainage trenches

re-designed to maintain the stability of the building. The trenches were dug one metre from the building to avoid undermining the chancel...

A 1:3 lime:sand plaster mix was applied in one thin coat to the areas of damaged ceiling plaster. White limewash was applied in six thin coats.

Finally the two doors in the passages from the Crypt to the Church were repaired and draught proofed. The contract [Phase 1] was completed in March 1994.

There then followed a protracted period of monitoring and conservation work on the interior stonework (Phases 2 & 3 of the project) complicated by a flood caused by failure of the external sump pump. Again, Martin Stancliffe's report summarises this work undertaken by Hanna Conservation of York:

Following the phase 1 Crypt repairs carried out in 1993-1994, the Crypt was allowed to dry out before conservation work was undertaken. The drying out was monitored for 12 months, after this period it was established that the interior had dried out enough to undertake conservation repairs. [These] were undertaken to consolidate friable and damaged stone and bring it back to a stable condition. This included removal of surface dust, salt deposits, salt which had collected after flooding, algae, the re-adherence of loose stone fragments, grouting and filling.

Ultimately the project was completed in the autumn of 1997. Total cost of the work was approximately £80,000, the principal funders being the Getty Foundation (£27,000), English Heritage (£20,000), and St. Wystan's PCC (£20,000). Detailed accounts of the work done are in reports to the Getty Foundation, March 1995 and July 1999.

In the autumn of 2005 proposals were made by the PCC to the DAC to enhance the crypt environment and improve access, prior to a major diocesan event in February 2006 to mark the 1350th anniversary of the consecration of Diuma as the first bishop in the Mercian area. It was planned to:

- Repair the steps on both the north and south side
- Improve the lighting
- Renew limewash to the ceiling
- Install handrails to the access steps
- Place a votive candle stand in the crypt

The DAC was unwilling to agree these proposals on a *de minimis* basis and involved English Heritage and the Council for the Care of Churches. The resulting delay and lack of consensus on what could be done meant that apart from the votive candle stand none of this work was proceeded with. However improved lighting over the steps was put in place in 2017 and further lighting improvement is being considered in 2019.



Fig. 15 North Crypt Steps

3.5.6.2 The Peter Collins organ

By the mid 1980s the 1973 organ was proving unsatisfactory and specialist advice indicated that major repairs would not be satisfactory. As explained in 3.7.8 below the current Peter Collins organ was installed in 1998 in the Fynderne Chapel.

3.5.6.3 Social facilities and access

The PCC in June 2000 agreed that "*preliminary sketches be prepared [by a local architect] for discussion as to how the vestry area could be developed and improved. The priorities mentioned included "the provision of a WC, a better kitchen facility, storage space, a possible meeting room... etc."* Ideas were refined through the diocesan Parish Focus process to include making the building more accessible and welcoming. A committee was set up to investigate developments in other parishes and to further develop ideas. Proposals were invited from three architects. Smith & Roper of Bakewell were commissioned to undertake designs. The *Statement of Need* submitted to the DAC in early 2006 summarised the different aspects of the proposed development:

- Toilet facilities
- Kitchen
- Disabled access
- Social space
- New entrance doors and welcoming area
- Meeting room within the church

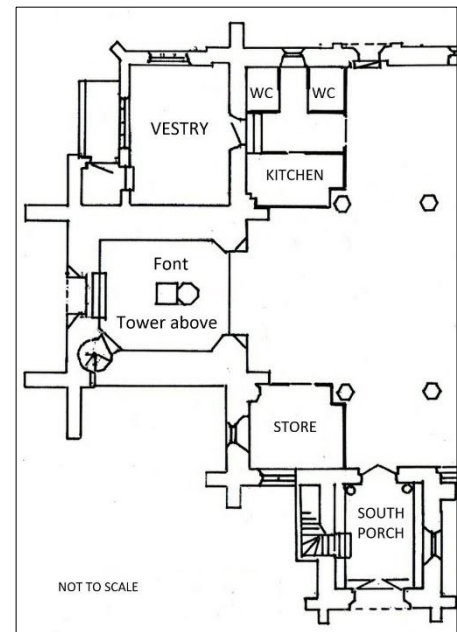


Fig. 16 Plan of new facilities 2009

After consultations a DAC certificate for the scheme was granted in April 2008 and the faculty followed in December. A contract was entered into with Linford Bridgeman and work began in April 2009 on the initial phase of the project – toilets and kitchen. Archaeological investigation uncovered the foundations of the original 13th century narrower north aisle.

Plans for a screened storage area in the south-west corner of the church matching the screening around the kitchen and toilets to the north-west had been incorporated in the project. The store was constructed during the summer of 2010, having been delayed awaiting a ruling from the Chancellor to allow the height of the store screening to be approximately 23" lower than that around the kitchen and toilets. Other works completed as part of the project were:

- new glazed doors between the church and porch
- a sloping wooden ramp over the porch floor to facilitate access
- removal of the front pews from the nave and north aisle and re-arrangement of radiators
- removal of pews from the west end of the nave to provide an open social space
- lighting and resurfacing of the main path from the lych gate to the porch



Fig. 17 Leaflet rack over cupboards and notice boards screening storage area



Fig. 18 Nave looking west showing panelling around storage area (left) and kitchen (right).



Fig. 19 Panelling around kitchen and toilets

After 10 years planning, and expenditure of around £240,000, the church now had modern facilities and the ability to host events other than traditional services, fulfilling requirements set out in the original brief. The provision of a meeting room, although authorised by the faculty as Phase 2 of the project, has not yet been undertaken (see 5.6).

3.5.6.4 The tower and spire

In 1987 work was done to secure the spire capstone by replacing the iron tie rod and horizontal beam below. Unfortunately this was no more of a permanent solution than previous repairs had proved to be. The 2008 quinquennial inspection found cracked stonework around the top of the spire. Initial investigation prompted the installation of metal bands to secure the stonework temporarily. A detailed survey largely funded by English Heritage followed indicating the need for extensive repointing and repairs to the tower and spire stonework and rebuilding the top of the spire.

Unlike earlier repairs that were done from ladders and staging it was necessary to scaffold the spire at significant cost. A contract was awarded to AJ Restoration of Nottingham who undertook the work during April-July 2013. It became clear that previous repairs had not entirely removed iron work and that specifically the lower portion of the iron capstone tie rod had been left in place in 1987. This was rectified and generous funding from English Heritage enabled comprehensive repairs to the tower and spire stonework to be included in the project, as well as repainting the clock face and replacement of the louvres to the bell chamber openings.



Fig. 20 Photograph spire survey 2008

Access to the top of the spire via the scaffolding and detailed photographic records provided confidence that the work had been thorough and that troublesome iron work had finally been removed from the spire stone work so that it really is likely that major work on the spire will not be needed for another generation or two.



Fig. 21 Taking down the weather cock



Fig. 22 Work in progress 2013

3.5.6.5 The chancel roof

In November 2014 the annual maintenance inspection indicated problems with tiles slipping off the chancel roof. A survey the following summer confirmed that fixings had failed and that it would be necessary to strip the roof and refix the existing tiles. This was done, again by AJ Restoration, during 2016. Having the roof stripped enabled access to the chancel roof space (otherwise only accessible via the very high doorway above the chancel arch inside the church) and photographs taken to record the roof structure.



Fig. 23 Chancel roof timbers north side. A Austen



Fig. 24 Chancel roof timbers east end A Austen



Fig. 25 Chancel roof timbers west end A Austen

3.5.6.6 Other recent work

Details of other recent work and enhancement of facilities are given in 5.2 below. The most recent major project has been rewiring and replacement of the 1960s light fittings. The new lighting was designed by Benedict Cadbury and installed during the autumn of 2017. The church was closed for seven weeks to enable work to progress quickly and efficiently. Services were held in the Village Hall, the United Reformed Church, and at Newton Solney. The project included additional power points, an automatic entry circuit to assist visitors, and lighting around the outside of the building to enhance safety and security.



Fig. 26 Lighting work about to start.



Fig. 28 New Lighting complete



Fig. 27 Lighting work in progress

3.6 The church and its setting today

3.6.1 The setting

South Derbyshire District Council's Conservation Area Character Statement 2013 is clear that *"the focal point of the oldest part of the village is the Church of St. Wystan"*. As the tower and spire extend to 212 ft there are striking views from the approach from Willington, from the Milton direction, and also along the High Street from The Cross from where the tower clock provides a particular focus.



Fig. 29 St Wystan's from Willington Bridge



Fig. 30 St Wystan's from High Street



Fig. 31 St Wystan's from Monsom Lane allotments



Fig. 32 St Wystan's from Askew Grove

The churchyard and adjoining vicarage grounds provide a significant green space with a mix of mature trees, mostly lime and yew. For details of the churchyard see 3.9.2 and 3.8.

With the School grounds immediately to the east the historic links between the parish church and priory are clear.

The building is listed, grade 1 (see 4.3), located on the north side of the village on a prominent sandstone bluff overlooking the Trent floodplain and adjoining Repton School property (the former Priory).



Fig. 33 Aerial view of church and vicarage
Photo M Horton

The church has a west tower and spire extending to 212 ft, nave with north and south aisles, modern flat roofed vestry in the north west angle between the tower and north aisle, south porch with parvise room above and chancel with crypt below.

The building incorporates work from the Saxon, Norman, and Early English periods, with the crypt being an exceptionally important survival of Saxon work.

3.6.2 The exterior

The walling is generally of coursed rubble sandstone and ashlar. The roofs are lead covered apart from the chancel which is clay tiled, the tower and the flat roofed vestry. The lead is protected by a monitored alarm system. Rainwater from the roofs discharges through mainly cast iron down pipes (though some have been replaced with PVC) into an open deep channel which runs round most of the perimeter of the building.

3.6.2.1 The tower and spire

The west tower, generally dated to the 15th century but possibly earlier, has three unequal stages divided by moulded string courses and with a moulded plinth. There is a pair of square buttresses on each angle, tapering towards the parapet level where each pair take the form of one diagonal pier, terminated with a small pinnacle, capped with a square shaped crocket. The pinnacle on the south west corner was rebuilt in the 1980s to match. The parapet is crenelated with a quatrefoil frieze below and four gargoyles.

The west elevation has a doorway with continuous moulded jambs and arch and a hood mould, with flush oak doors. Above is a 3-light perpendicular window with castellated transom. The south elevation has a clock dial with face painted black with a white outer rim and gold leaf numbers and hands. The north side has a small trefoil lancet

On each tower face, sitting on a stringcourse there is a cusped twilight belfry opening with decorated ogee arched hood mould terminated with a crocket, and a horizontal stone middle transom. At parapet level there is a small door in the south west corner leading from the internal stairs. The bulkhead is in stone with a sloping stone roof screened by the parapet. The parapet concrete has been overlaid with timber roll lead sheet to sump outlets.

Rising from the tower is a fine octagonally shaped slender spire with three tiers of diminishing apertures on the cardinal facets, the lowest ones having small central mullions with cusped bars and ogee arches with crockets. It is topped with a gold leaf covered weather vane.

The tower and spire underwent a comprehensive repair programme in 2013 (see 3.5.6.4).

3.6.2.2 The south porch

The 15th century gabled south porch which adjoins the south aisle has a parvise room above accessed by a staircase which is contained within a small west projection. The south wall has a square buttress on each angle extending above eaves level, each with small decorative crenelated pointed obelisk terminated with finial. There is a central niche feature containing a statue of St Wystan in crocketed ogee arch. The doorway, containing ancient oak doors, has unbroken moulded jambs and arch and the hood mould is square, returned to the arch. Above, on either side of the niche are small, twin light, flat headed windows. On the west face there is a small square headed window with cusping and square

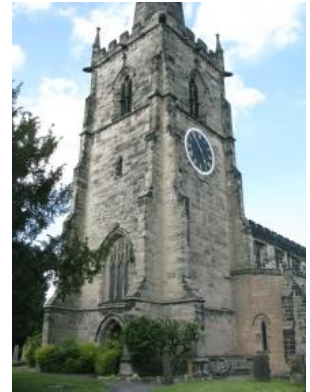


Fig. 34 Tower from south west



Fig. 35 Spire from south



Fig. 36 South porch and parvise room

headed roll architrave merging into a projecting sill, and on the east face there is a square headed window in reveals

The roof is lead covered with wood core rolls and the eaves are simple without parapets. The sheets running from ridge to eaves are overlength and showing signs of needing replacement.

3.6.2.3 The south aisle and Fynderne Chapel

The south aisle has a straight parapet and a lean-to gable at its western end with old coping stones. At the eastern end it abuts the Fynderne Chapel which is higher and extends further south. There are square buttresses at the south west corner of the aisle and south east corner of the Fynderne Chapel but on the west wall of the chapel there is a 19th century square buttress with a flying arch above the boiler room steps. There is a stone chimney in the angle.



Fig. 37 Fynderne Chapel

In the west wall of the aisle there is a lancet type window with hood mould. In the south wall west of the porch the former triple window with simple mullions has its right light blocked where it is intersected by the stone staircase. To the east of the porch is a four light window without cusplings. It has a hood moulding with east mask terminal. The adjacent twin light window has no cusplings and a simple hood mould. The south wall of the Fynderne Chapel has a four light square headed, decorated style window with cusps, trefoils and quatrefoils. The tracery and jambs are in relatively new stonework. The arched doorway has a hood mould and a pointed oak door. The east wall of the Fynderne chapel has a three light window with hoodmould with masked terminals.

The lead covered roofs are lean to against the nave with wood cored rolls and with a lead covered upstand to the higher Fynderne Chapel roof. There are some repairs evident.

3.6.2.4 The north aisle

The north aisle has a straight parapet though the stones are not straight but this is clearly historic. There are square buttresses at the angles and towards the east end. The east face has a lean to solid parapet with moulded copings. The west wall is a lean to solid gable above the flat roof of the vestry, merging into the north east tower buttress.

In the west wall above the vestry there is a two light window with hood mould and mask terminals and with cusped tracery. At the west end of the north wall there is a single light window, with almost half round arch and hood mould. Adjacent the north arched doorway has a single oak door. The surround stands proud from the normal face in old stone, but the infilling, complete with round detached shafts, moulded capitals and bases is in 19th C rubbed sandstone. To the east of the door there is a twin light window with no cusps but hood mould with mask terminals and adjacent is a three light window similarly finished. Further east beyond the buttress is another twin light window with hood mould. In the east wall there is a triple window with hood mould and terminals and no cusplings.



Fig. 38 North aisle towards east

The roof was recovered in 1959 with lead divided by hollow cored rolls, with a drip half way down the slope.

3.6.2.5 The vestry

The vestry was added in 1939 (3.5.5.3) in the corner between the north aisle and tower. It is constructed of ashlar and built up to a buttress of the north aisle. It has simple, moulded stone, level parapets, with stringcourse beneath and a flat roof behind. There is a small diagonal buttress on the north west angle.

There is a three light window in the north wall and a four light window in the west wall. Both have flat heads and external saddle bars. On the short return north facing wall there is a doorway with camber head and single oak door.



Fig. 39 Vestry

The flat roof in concrete finished with asphalt has been patched and will need repair or replacement within the next few years.

3.6.2.6 The nave

The nave roof is shallow pitched, covered in lead with wood cored roll joints, lead gutters and flashings. There is no ridge roll and sheets lap the ridge alternately. They extend from ridge to eaves, are overlength and have been repaired in several places. All the parapets are battlemented including the east gable which is topped with a stone finial cross. A cavetto moulded string course runs below the parapets and a splayed string course runs above the lead flashing level. The walling to the south clerestory has had work done in the past and is well pointed but that of the north shows hard pointing and signs of some stone erosion. On the north east corner of the nave the large stones of the foundations are now exposed.

In the south clerestory there are seven flat headed 15th century twin light windows with cusplings in deep splayed reveals. They are glazed with diamond leaded lights. On the north face of the nave a tall, narrow window without hood mould is squeezed in next to the north aisle. All the other windows are at clerestory level similar to the south side.



Fig.40 Nave clerestory above north aisle

3.6.2.7 The chancel and crypt



Fig. 41 Chancel south side

This Anglo Saxon part of the church has no buttresses and the walls are of roughly coursed irregular stone with large stones at the angle of chancel and nave. A string course runs along three sides of the chancel and returns of the nave. Tall narrow pilaster strips run up the walls from the string course.

In the south wall there is a low level round headed window to the crypt which has been partly blocked and has bottle end glazing in its square light. The lancet window above at chancel level, breaks the string course, and has a hood mould with return terminals. The

stone cill is lead covered. The east wall has a similar low level window and a simple four light window above with hood mould and no cusplings. In the north wall, there is a lancet type window similar to that in the south wall. A flight of stone steps leads down to a low arched door into the crypt.



Fig. 42 Chancel from east

The chancel roof is of steeper pitch than the nave and aisles and has a clay tile covering which was completely re-laid in 2016 (see 3.6.2.7).

3.6.3 The interior

On entering the church through the south porch one is struck by the lofty space. There is an arcade of six bays dividing the nave from the north and south aisles, a wide pointed chancel arch to the east and a tall tower arch at the west end. The clerestory windows provide natural light to the nave and windows and doors are as described in 3.6.2 and 3.7.4 At the west end of the north and south aisles there is high quality modern oak screening befitting the Grade 1 status of the church providing storage, kitchen and toilets (See 3.5.6.3.).

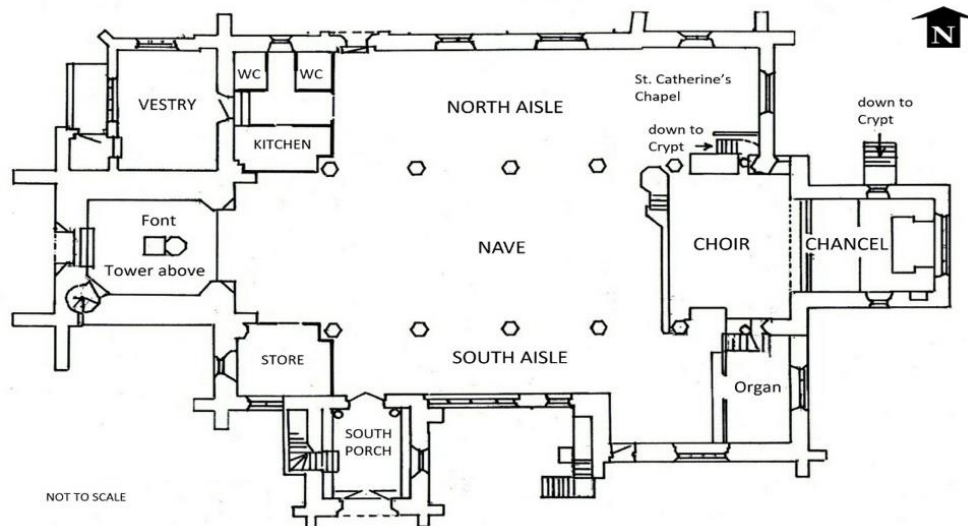


Fig. 43 Plan of St Wystan's church as existing

3.6.3.1 The tower and spire



Fig. 45 Tower looking west

The base of the tower has ashlar walls and timber panelling on the south side (3.7.3) and contains the font (3.7.1) and bell ropes with two guide frames. The high ceiling is a stone ribbed vault with stone infill panels, a central wooden trap door and holes through which the eight bell ropes pass. A door in the south west corner gives access to an enclosed spiral staircase leading to the clock chamber, bell chamber and open spire. The treads get narrower and the risers higher towards the top. There is a rope hand hold.



Fig. 44 Tower ceiling

The clock chamber has a joist and boarded floor with a central trap door and a timber ceiling above. The clock mechanism cupboard is in the north east and the old clock weights cupboard in the north west. The driving rod to the clock face runs at high level north/south. There is a small unglazed, aperture with pointed arch and deep reveals on all sides, the one on the south having the reveals blocked to provide a blank face for the clock and the others being fitted with black stainless steel mesh and timber frames. The one on the east face is hinged to provide access on to the nave roof.



Fig. 46 Tower staircase

The bell chamber is open to the spire. The iron bell frame on stout wood contains eight bells which occupy the whole area (3.7.6) There is a stone squinched arch in each corner where the square tower merges into the octagonal spire.

3.6.3.2 The south porch and parvise room

The south porch forms the main access to the church and its stone floor has been covered with a boarded permanent ramp. The walls are of stone and the ceiling with exposed heavy joists has plasterboard infilling. The joists are carried on continuous corbel stones on the east and west sides. On the west side, through a square headed opening, a stone staircase leads to the parvise room above. Glazing to the windows on the east side is generally of diamond leaded lights. Two Anglo Saxon columns removed from the nave stand either side of the inner doorway which has a pair of modern oak glazed doors. Stone benches stand each side of the porch and a timber war memorial is mounted on the east wall.



Fig. 47 South Porch

The parvise room is entered through an old oak door at the top of the stairs. It has a pitched roof with exposed rafters and purlins with boarded infill. The walls are plastered and the floor boarded.

3.6.3.3 The south aisle and Fynderne Chapel

The south aisle is four arcades widening out from two further eastern bays to form the Fynderne Chapel which now houses the organ. The western bay is screened to form a storage area. In the north east corner there is an aperture high up which opens into the nave and has infilling beneath. The walls are of exposed masonry. The south aisle roof is supported by oak beams with stout oak rafters and boards above. The Fynderne Chapel boarded roof structure is higher and consists of oak beams supported by wall posts on lower stone corbels and a central purlin. There is an external door in the south wall which has a wheelchair ramp up to it. Flooring is as the nave (3.6.3.6). but there is an area of wood blocks at the west end in a different pattern, possibly marking the position of the former staircase to the gallery.



Fig. 49 North aisle



Fig. 48 South Aisle towards west with temporary exhibition

3.6.3.4 The north aisle

The north aisle is screened at the west end to form kitchen and toilets. To the east of the screen there are three steps up to a single oak external door. The walls are exposed stonework with some brick infilling at high level above the eastern pair of arches. The roof comprises raked cross beams, lateral purlins and diagonal struts top and bottom, all joined to wall posts supported on stone corbels, with boarding above the rafters. Floors are woodblock and stone (3.6.3.6)

3.6.3.5 The vestry

The 1930s vestry is accessed from the kitchen/toilets area up three stone steps and through a heavy oak door. Walls are fair faced stone with the original stonework of the north aisle, tower and buttress. A further step in the south west corner leads to a lobby which has an oak external door. Oak cupboards line the vestry walls. A steel joist in oak casing supports the flat roof and the ceiling is plastered. The floor is of pine blocks covered with carpet.

3.6.3.6 The nave

The roof to the nave and choir area has eight oak tie beams with curved brackets leading down to moulded stone corbels and 2 oak purlins on each side of a ridge purlin. An elaborately carved boss is at the intersection of each principle beam and purlin. The underside of the roof is wood boarded.



Fig.50 Ceiling boss RVHG



Fig. 51 Ceiling grotesque
Repton Village History Group

The chancel arch is of random stone ashlar containing blocked up openings of Anglo Saxon origin. A relatively new oak door at high level gives access into the Chancel roof void. The arcade of six bays has hexagonal columns with moulded capitals and splayed bases. The arches have hood moulds on both sides. A continuous string course runs along both walls, broken to a higher level above the two eastern bays. The windows are as described in 3.6.2.6. Under the pews and in the areas where they have been removed there is wood block flooring in a herringbone pattern which is level with circulation aisles of natural stone slabs with some memorials and heating grates. The position of the former Angle Saxon walls and piers at the east end are recorded by a different pattern of blockwork and tiles. The choir area has two steps up to a floor of polished square stone pavings laid on the diagonal in a chequer board pattern.



Fig. 52 Nave towards east

3.6.3.7 Chancel

The chancel is effectively the sanctuary. The lath and plaster flat ceiling has a moulded plaster cornice. The walls are of rough coursed stone with oak dado panelling around three walls. The plain four light East window with clear glazing is an effective focus at the East end of the church. The floor is of square laid polished stone with black lozenges and is a step up from the Choir area, with a further two steps, one where the altar now stands and the higher level where it was originally.



Fig. 53 Chancel

3.6.3.8 The crypt



There are two flights of very worn and uneven stone stairs to the Anglo Saxon crypt, one on the north west and one on the south west corner. The one on the south west is only used occasionally for safety reasons. There is an external doorway in the north wall. The windows on the east and south sides have hardwood frames with louvres under the windows to provide ventilation. The lime washed roof has nine square vaulted bays formed with semi-circular arches of early Romanesque design. The outer arches spring from square pilasters beside the walls and the centre is supported by four stone spirally wreathed columns with square capitals and roughly shaped bases. They stand on a floor of irregular stone flags. The walls are of natural stone with string courses at the top and with a small recess on each side.

Fig. 54 Crypt steps



Fig. 55 Views of the crypt

3.7 Furnishings and fittings

The wealth of fittings and furniture in the church today, apart from their own individual significance, provide a context for the worship that continues as the church's core function. They are important historical evidence for the evolution of the building, and highlight the devotion and regard for the church by the many donors, designers and makers of the various features.

There is a more comprehensive listing in the [*Church Property Register*](#).

3.7.1 Principal features

The **furnishing and arrangement of the sanctuary** dates from 1935. A brass plaque at the south end of the communion rail records: "*the new altar, the panelling of the east wall and the stone flooring were placed in this chancel and the old communion rails were re-instated in the year 1935 as a memorial to Mary and Alice Twigg...*".

The **oak altar table in the north aisle** (St. Catherine's Chapel) was given in 1960 by her family in memory of Mrs. Esther Helen Hayward, wife of a Repton School master. A brass plate records that she carved the elaborate frontal design in her spare time between 1930 and 1950. The design consists of three tracery panels with a Celtic cross in the central panel.



Fig. 56 north aisle altar

At the east end of the south aisle, the former Fynderne Chapel, the organ stands on the plinth of the stone altar table given in memory of Maude Prothero 1953, and removed in March 1997 to St. Augustine's Bolton prior to the installation of the organ.



Fig. 57 Pulpit

The **octagonal oak pulpit** on the north side of the chancel steps stands on a stone base and was put in place following the 1885-6 restoration. A brass plaque records *"erected by parishioners and friends in memory of the Rev. William Williams BA, Vicar of Repton for 25 years. Died 3rd November 1882."* It seems to have been put in place just prior to the 1885-6 restoration. A photograph believed to have been taken in 1885 shows it on the south side. It was presumably moved to the north to make way for the lectern.

The **brass eagle lectern** on the south side of the chancel steps was given in memory of Adam Bell by his widow in 1887.



Fig. 58 Lectern



Fig. 59 Font

The **sandstone font** under the west tower dates from 1885. Hipkins says that during the restoration work at that time *"the base stone of a font of Decorated period was discovered. This has been used as the base of a new font."* It has an octagonal oak cover with an iron cross and ring handle.

The church also has a small free-standing alabaster font with matching lid. The bowl is cracked and leaks. It is currently stored in the vicarage. A new free-standing font, the gift of Rt. Revd. Henry Richmond former Bishop of Repton, was commissioned in 2017. The ceramic bowl was made by John Wheeldon of Repton School's Art Department and its wrought iron stand was made by David Tucker, blacksmith, to a design matching his chancel step handrails.

3.7.2 Church plate

The most important items of communion plate are:

Chalice – Silver, Elizabethan with leopard's head maker's mark. Kept in the Cathedral Treasury (Ref 144).

Chalice – Silver 1713. Maker's mark: Richard Green. Inscribed: *"the gift of George Roades Rector of Blithfield born at Repton and educated in the free school there..."*. Kept in the Cathedral Treasury (Ref 283)

Chalice – Silver, gold plated inside the bowl. Inscribed: *"Thurston Ireland 1909-1980 St. Wystan, Repton"*

Patens – Silver pair on truncated feet. Inscribed: *"the gift of George Roades to the church at Repton"*. Kept in the Cathedral Treasury (Ref 285/6)

Paten – Silver Elizabethan. Kept in the Cathedral Treasury (Ref 145)

Paten – Silver. Inscribed: *"the gift of George Roades to the church at Repton"*.

Paten – Silver. Inscribed: *"Thurston Ireland 1909-1980 St. Wystan, Repton"*

Ciborium – Silver, silver lid with brass decoration. Inscribed: *"In memory of Gilbert Firkins Parker"*.

Pyx – Silver. Latin inscription in memory of Revd Acheson Archibald McMaster, vicar of Repton who died in office 1911.

3.7.3 Woodwork

The oak pews and choir stalls date from the 1885-6 restoration, replacing the deal pews of 1792.

The chancel altar rails were put in place in 1935, see 3.7.1 above.

There are several interesting chairs, including the Bishop's Chair in dark oak with Celtic style carving, and in the north aisle St Catherine's Chapel an oak chair given by Dr G A Auden. This (apart from the carving) is a replica of the 12th century bishop's chair from the Church at Tyldale, Osterdalen, Norway, now in Bergen Museum. The carving represents motifs from 9th or 10th century pre-Conquest work in England or Wales. There is a list of these on the underside of the seat.

The oak rails in front of the organ with blue and gold decoration, incorporating a gate to the north side crypt stairs, were originally altar rails for the Fynderne Chapel designed by Lawrence Bond, church architect in the 1950s, and made by Bowmans of Stamford 1951.

The large cupboard housing lighting and heating controls was made by Peter Collins in American white oak, echoing the organ case design, and was donated in 2003 by Rosalind Hudson in memory of her father Mr W A Daniel, a former churchwarden, and her husband Revd O B Hudson former curate of Repton.

The oak screens around the storage area and kitchen, the sidesmen's table, and book case by the south door were all part of the re-ordering of the west end 2009-10 and were designed by Smith & Roper and made by Linford Bridgeman.

There is an ancient iron bound parish chest, approximately 7' 6" long, in the parvise room.

The panelling on the south side wall under the tower was placed there in 2010 having previously been part of the screen around the outer vestry. It was originally panels salvaged from medieval pews that survived the 1792 alterations and incorporates arms of local families.



Fig. 60 Parish chest

3.7.4 Stained glass

With one minor exception there is no ancient stained glass. The most notable windows are:

South transept – An elaborate flat-headed window, heavily restored but a 14th century design. The glass was given in memory of the Revd A A McMaster, Vicar of Repton, who died in office 1911. Most is believed to be by Ballantine & Sons of Edinburgh and dates from 1913. Two panels asterisked below are by Dudley Forsyth and were donated in 1916 by Repton School master, Henry Vassall, who also gave the window in the south-west corner. The four window lights represent:

Diuna, with the arms of Mercia below.

St Wystan, with the panel below* showing Guthlac being received into Repton Abbey by the Abbess Aelfritha.

St Guthlac, with below* Prince Peada being baptised by Bishop Finan of Lindisfarne.

St Chad, with the arms of the Diocese of Lichfield below.

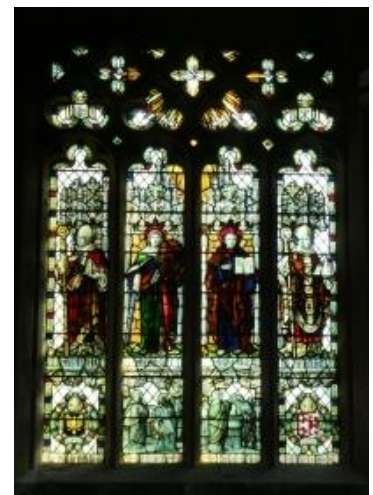


Fig. 61 Window in south transept



Fig. 62 Aelfritha, Abbess of Repton

South aisle – two light window by Powell in memory of Revd John Hare and his wife Sarah, depicting Christ the Sower with an Angel Reaper.

South aisle, west wall within the storage area – lancet by Dudley Forsyth, donated by Henry Vassall. This Early English 13th century lancet opening, previously blocked was opened out and glazed in 1913 with a design showing Aelfritha, Abbess of Repton, above an angel bearing a shield.

West wall under the tower – A large three-light window, 1904, representing Christ blessing little children.

North aisle, west wall above the vestry door at the end of the kitchen corridor – A two-light window by Powell 1897, showing Christ commissioning St. Peter "Feed my Sheep."

Along **the north wall** there are several windows by Powell from the 1890s.

3.7.5 Monuments

According to both Bigsby and Cox many monuments were damaged or buried during the 1792 alterations. However, fine and interesting examples remain. These were surveyed by the Skillington Conservation Workshop in 2000. The following descriptions are based on their report. Material for the alabaster monuments may have come from Chellaston nearby where there were quarries from c. 1400.

The Derbyshire Family History Society's *St. Wystan's Repton Derbyshire* (Monumental Inscriptions vol 7) 1993 also provides a complete listing.

Starting from the west end of the north aisle and moving eastwards around the church notable monuments include:

William Bagshaw Stevens d 1800, headmaster of Repton School 1779-1800. Grey veined white marble wall tablet.

William Boulton Sleath d 1842, headmaster of Repton School 1800-32. Elaborate white marble wall tablet on a black background. Cleaned and repaired by the Skillington Workshop 2016.

Francis Thacker d 1710. Large alabaster wall monument with a bust set within Corinthian columns. Described by Bigsby as "*this chief and presiding monument of the church.*"

Franceys Thought to be Robert Franceys d circa 1463 or possibly his son Thomas d 1482. A tomb chest with alabaster effigy alongside the northern steps to the crypt. Prior to 1792 this formed an altar tomb at the east end of the north aisle. It was moved to the crypt around 1802 and to its current position in 1911. There are extensive graffiti, some of it recent.



Fig. 63 Alabaster effigy c1463



Fig. 64 Memorial to Francis Thacker

George (d 1617) & **Ellen Waklin** (d 1614). An elaborate alabaster wall monument incorporating kneeling effigies of a man, woman and boy. The figures of the man and boy have been removed

to storage. The monument itself on the south wall of the Fynderne Chapel has since 1998 been obscured by the organ. The Skillington survey explains what would be required to move it to a new location, estimated cost in 2000 approximately £5,000.

John Heyrick Macaulay d 1840, headmaster of Repton School 1832-40. An elaborate white marble wall monument on a black background. The inscription reads "strict but kind and having the respect and affection of his scholars" which contrasts with contemporaries who described him as a "*big bullying man, a strict disciplinarian and ferocious flogger*" (PLOWRIGHT p 20).

Richard Bull d 1850, a chorister for over sixty years. A simple plaque high on the west wall on the north side of the tower arch. This position for a chorister's memorial is a reminder that the singers' gallery ran across the west end at this level until its removal during the 1885-6 restoration.

Against the wall of the south aisle there is an alabaster slab originally from a tomb that prior to 1972 was at the east end of the north aisle. It commemorates **Gilbert Thacker** (d 1563) and his family. He was the son of Thomas Thacker who acquired the Priory property in the 1530s.

There are also significant floor slabs, including:

Revd Mr **Beech** (d 1752). First Usher of Repton School for 23 years. Located in the chancel.



Fig. 65 Alabaster memorial slab to Gilbert Thacker

Elizabeth Shaw (d 1763). Wife of the Revd Stebbing Shaw, minister of Foremark and mother of the antiquarian Stebbing Shaw 1762-1802. Located at the east end of the north aisle.

3.7.6 Bells and tower clock

There is a fine ring of eight bells. The present arrangement dates from 1935 when the bells were rehung and two new ones (1 & 2 in the list below) added to the existing six. Ringing is from the ground floor. This means that the long ropes make ringing difficult but allows the ringers to be seen in action. There is a regular weekly practice and bells are rung before all main services, for weddings and other special occasions.

To make ringing easier and safer additional rope guides were put in place during 2019 by Taylors of Loughborough.

Bell No: 1 (Treble)

Cast in 1935 by John Taylor & Co. Loughborough

Diameter 2' 4", Height 1' 10³/₄", Weight 5 cwt 0 q 10 lbs. Tuned in the note E . Inscription: '*Ring out the false, ring in the true. Alfred Woodroffe Fletcher, Vicar. 1935*'.

Bell No: 2

Cast in 1935 by John Taylor & Co. Loughborough

Diameter 2' 5⁵/₈", Height 1' 11⁷/₈", Weight 5 cwt 3 q 2 lbs. Tuned in the note D# . Inscription: '*1935 this bell was given by William W. Worthington to the glory of God and in memory of his father Albert Octavius Worthington of Maple Hayes, Lichfield, who was a pupil at Repton School under Dr. Pears and was later appointed a governor of the school. He died in May, 1918.*'

Bell No: 3

Cast in 1721 by Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester

Diameter 2' 9", Height 2' 3", Weight 7 cwt 3 q 19 lbs

Tuned in the note C# . Inscription: '*Fravncis Thacker of Lincolns Inn, Esqr. AR 1721*' AR are the initials of the bell founder, Abraham Rudhall, of Gloucester

Bell No: 4

Cast in 1622 . Diameter 2' 10³/₄", Height 2' 4¹/₂", Weight 7 cwt 2 q 27 lbs. Tuned in the note B.

Inscription: *'I sweetly toling men do call to taste on meats that feed the soul 1622 Godfrey Thacker Jane Thacker'*

Bell No: 5

Cast in 1774 by Pack & Chapman, London

Diameter 3' 0½", Height 2' 4½", Weight 8 cwt 1 q 18 lbs. Tuned in the note A . Inscription: *'Thos. Gilbert & Jno Tetley Church Wardens 1774 Pack & Chapman of London Fecit.'*

Bell No: 6

Believed to have been cast by Richard Brasyer, Bell Founder of Norwich, who died in 1513. However, recent study of the Brasyer marks suggests that it may have been made by Richard's father in the 1490s. Diameter 3' 2", Height 2' 6½", Weight 9 cwt 2 q 21 lbs . Tuned in the note G# . Inscription and bell mark: *'+ Melodie Nomen Tenet Magdalene'*
Bell mark of Richard Brasyer, of Norwich, Bell founder, who died in 1513. A shield; a lion's head; a crown: a cross

Bell No: 7

Also cast by Richard Brasyer

Re-cast in 1896 by John Taylor & Co, Loughborough

Diameter 3' 6", Height 2' 10", Weight 12 cwt 2 q 26 lbs . Tuned in the note F#. Inscription and bell mark: *'Vox dni ihu xri vox exultacionis'* Bell mark of Richard Brasyer ; a king's head ; a cross Bell mark of John Taylor & Co.

Bell No: 8 (Tenor)

Bears the date of 1677

Re-cast by John Taylor & Co, Loughborough in 1896

Diameter 3' 11", Height 3' 1", Weight 17 cwt 3 q 0 lbs

Tuned in the note E. Inscription and bell mark: *'Hec campana sacra fiat trinitate beata Gilb. Thacker Esq ; IC ; MW ; Ch Wardens 1677 (recast 1896) G. Woodyatt, Vicar J Astle TE Auden Churchwardens'* Bell mark of John Taylor & Co.

The tower clock with its exceptionally large 10 foot diameter dial on the south wall of the tower was installed by Edwin Rippon of Sheffield in 1868. It is unusual being painted directly on to the stonework of the tower. It was repainted during work on the tower in 2013. A plaque at the base of the tower records *"The clock was placed in this church tower as a memorial of Catherine Temple Pears by many friends of all classes to whom she was dear. AD 1868."* She was the wife of Dr Pears, Headmaster of Repton School from 1854 – 74.



Fig. 67 Clock face

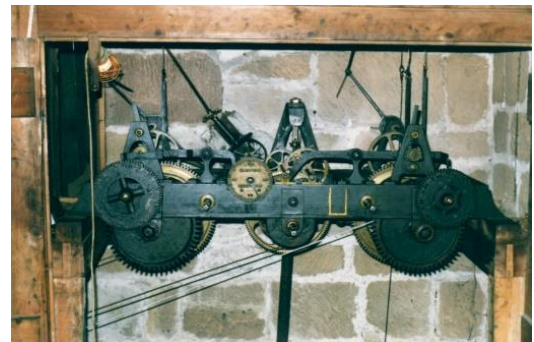


Fig. 66 Clock mechanism 1858
Photo:Chris Spiller

There were evidently earlier clocks. Pre-1868 illustrations of the church show a smaller clock in the same position. Churchwardens' accounts of 1585 show a payment 6/8d *"for keeping the clocke"* and in 1627 payments for *"taking down the Clocke"* and *"for making the Clocke."* (Quoted in MACDONALD p69)

3.7.7 Metalwork

Significant items not mentioned elsewhere include:

The wrought iron **votive candle stand** in the crypt is a "Burning Bush" design devised by Peter Paine and Elizabeth Walker and made by Michael Groom 2005.

The **handrails** on either side of the chancel step were donated by Sheila Bates in 1998 and 2010, and were designed and made by David Tucker.

The hexagonal wrought iron **candelabra** clamped to each of the nave pillars were made by Michael Groom c. 2000. They are used to enhance special services during the winter months with candlelight, particularly during Advent and at Christmas.

3.7.8 Organ

Bagshaw's *Directory of Derbyshire* 1846 records that **an organ was added to the church in 1844** at a cost of £320. Hipkins says that it was "erected in the singing gallery ... it was played by barrels; the tunes were very select and limited." Prior to the 1885 restoration when the gallery was taken down it was moved to the east end of the north aisle and can be seen there in photo thought to date from 1885 (see 3.5.4.1). It was evidently only a basic instrument as the *Parish Magazine* May 1901 tells us that "*it has long been felt that the present small and incomplete organ is unworthy..*" and went on to appeal for donations towards the £650 cost of a proposed new organ. Events moved quickly and **a new 3 manual organ by Peter Conacher** of Huddersfield was dedicated on 20th October 1901. This was situated in the Fynderne Chapel at the east end of the south aisle. In early 20th century photographs it can be seen through the eastern-most arch of the nave.

Following the 1st World War there was a desire to re-order the church and restore the north and south aisle chapels. With no obvious place to relocate the organ the answer ultimately in 1949 was to replace the Conacher organ with a **Compton Electrone pipeless organ**. The Conacher instrument was sold to St. John's Essington near Wolverhampton where it is still in use. The *Derby Diocesan Magazine* February 1950 noted that "*The Compton Electrone organ has now replaced the Conacher pipe organ at Repton freeing the Fynderne Chapel for future restoration and the opening of the second crypt entrance ... we hear very satisfactory reports of it. Its principal asset is the solution it offers to acoustics and space.*" However this satisfaction did not last long as the Compton organ became temperamental and unreliable as dampness affected its electro-mechanical components. Ultimately it became unplayable as parts wore out and could not be replaced.

By 1972 the organ could not be repaired or rebuilt and only modest funds were available to provide a replacement. The solution was to acquire the **c1874 organ by Taylor of Leicester** from the redundant Byrkley Street Methodist Church in Burton upon Trent. This was installed by Harold Cantrill of Castle Donington in the outer vestry area in the north-west corner of the church with the two manual console of the Compton organ modified and retained at the east end of the nave. Although this organ was never ideal for St. Wystan's it did serve the parish well for over twenty years.

In 1988 the Parochial Church Council decided to replace the Taylor organ. Following fund raising and exhaustive consideration of various specifications from organ builders and locations within the church, in October 1996 a contract was signed with Peter Collins of Melton Mowbray. The result was **the current 23 stop 2 manual instrument** standing against the east wall of the Fynderne Chapel, dedicated in December 1998. The oak case is inspired by the oldest known in Britain, the 16th century case at Old Radnor in Wales. The flowing and fretted pipeshades were the design of Nicholas Plumbley, and the painted and embossed case pipes were created in Peter Collins' own workshop. About half the pipework in the new organ is from the previous instrument. The organ has been voiced with the French classical tradition in mind – broad scale mutations and a Cavaille-coll scaled Basson Hautbois on the Swell. For a small organ the Great Chorus is particularly complete, extending to a 16 foot Double.

The organ has two manuals and pedals with mechanical action to the keys, electric stop and combination control by microprocessor. There are twenty three stops. For full details of the specification see the National Pipe Organ Register <http://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=D06289>



Fig. 68 Peter Collins organ

3.7.9 Registers and other records

Generally historic records are deposited in the Derbyshire County Record Office at Matlock. There is a comprehensive online catalogue: www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/record-office/derbyshire-record-office.aspx

More recent records are in the parvise room and vestry, or with parish officers. The main series of records are:

Baptism registers	1810-2007 2001-	Record Office Church
Marriages	1756-1954 1954-	Record Office Church
Burials	1629-1974 1974-	Record Office Church
Service registers	1897-1958 1958-	Record Office Church
PCC minute books	1920-1959 1959-	Record Office Church
Vestry minutes	1825-1969	Record Office
Churchwardens' accounts	1579-1874	Record Office
Parish Magazine	1889- (missing 1938-52)	Church

3.7.10 War memorials

There is a three panel wooden memorial plaque on the east wall of the porch, made by Bridgemans of Lichfield and dedicated in 1917. The central panel shows Christ on the Cross. A chronological list of the 1st World War dead begins on the left hand panel. The final inscriptions were added in August 1920. Those from the 2nd World War have been added subsequently to the right hand panel.

The desire for a more publicly visible memorial led to the commissioning of a sandstone memorial pillar on the roadside immediately west of the lych gate. This was a Repton Parish Council initiative for the Millennium, designed by Vincent Cook, carved and constructed by Philip Hamlet, and was dedicated in November 1999.



Fig. 69 War memorial in porch

3.7.11 Textiles

Hanging on the north wall are four large **patchwork banners** made up of embroidered "bricks" each with the name of a local family. This was a fund raising venture devised by Melodie Bordoli for the 2009-10 re-ordering of the west end. The central banner is headed with the wording "*St. Wystan's Heritage Brick Appeal 2009-10 - Families living in or connected with Repton and the Church.*" Apart from a record of donors to the Appeal, these represent a valuable historical listing of local families.



Fig. 70 Patchwork banner

The pews and choir stalls **tapestry kneelers**. On the south side of the nave these are blue with designs by Jeremy Bournon on the theme "*All things bright and beautiful*" from an idea by Biddy Weston and made by members of the Dorcas Group and congregation 1991-93. On the north side of nave the kneelers are red

with designs including different representations of the Cross, 1993-5. In the choir stalls these have a complex Saxon plait border design by Biddy Weston 2005.

3.7.12 Sculpture

The figure of St Wystan over the South Porch door was the gift of the Rev'd S. B. Stallard-Penoyre in 1911. The sword, which had disappeared many years before, was given in 2003 in memory of Douglas Carr by his widow Pamela.

There are various important stone items in the porch, including an Anglo-Saxon cross-shaft with delicate human figures and foliage which is said to have been brought to the church from Ingleby a few miles away to the east, beside the River Trent. On the floor nearby stands a rectangular stone, hollowed out below to form a window-head. Two larger and rather rougher window-heads lie beside a tomb fifteen yards south-west of the porch. Two tall circular columns stand by the south doorway which until 1854 columns supported the east ends of the round arches at the eastern end of the side walls of the nave (see 3.5.3.4 above).

The notable Repton Stone described in 3.4.2 above is in Derby Museum.



Fig. 71 Repton Stone
Photograph: Derby Museum

3.8 Churchyard

The churchyard extends to about two acres, bounded on the north side by a steep bank sloping down to the Old Trent, on the east by Repton School, on the south by Willington Road (B5008) and on the west by the vicarage garden.

The lych gate is a memorial to Revd Arthur Forman who died in 1905 (see 3.4.6).



Fig. 72 Dedication of lychgate Oct 1905 Source RVHG

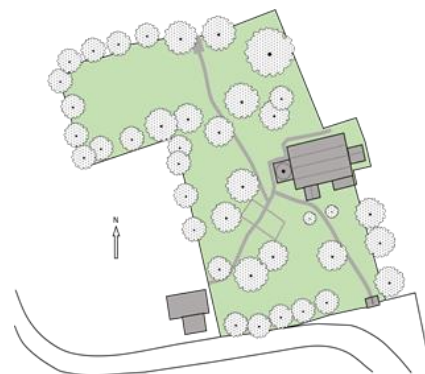


Fig. 73 Plan of churchyard
Source J Brockliss / A Austen

The churchyard was extended in 1916 to provide additional space for graves incorporating the north eastern area of the vicarage garden.

During the 1930s and 1980s work was done levelling and moving many headstones to the east and west walls to facilitate mowing and maintenance.

To the south west of the church, either side of the tarmac path to the Vicarage, there is an area laid out as a garden of rest for the burial of cremated remains. On the south side, between rose beds, there is an engraved stone plaque by Richard Kindersley 1996 with the wording *"These beds were planted in memory of Olive Barford 1901-1996."*

An area on the north side has been laid out as a Quiet Garden with planting and two wooden seats designed by Wendy Longden.

The churchyard was closed for burials by Order in Council 12th October 2011.

The Derbyshire Family History Society has compiled a listing of all the monuments in the churchyard with their inscriptions – *St. Wystan's Repton Derbyshire* (Monumental Inscriptions vol 7) 1993. A copy hangs in the porch for visitors. It includes an additional list of inscriptions 1993-2014 compiled by the Repton Village History Group.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission maintains an area in the north-west corner with sixteen graves of RAF personnel who died locally during the 2nd World War.

On the north side of the church there are several graves connected with Repton School, including Dr Pears, the great 19th century reforming headmaster 1854-74. There is a headstone commemorating C B Fry, the great all round sportsman and scholar who was a pupil at the School 1885-91. The headstone dates from 2008, replacing a simple plaque set in the ground.

There are several ancient yews and mature lime trees. These are all covered by a tree preservation order.

There are two ground level floodlight units dating from the 1960s. These are not currently operational as replacement parts and bulbs are no longer available. It is a priority to reinstate floodlighting, possibly with fittings mounted on the tower roof to illuminate the spire.

The lych gate was reroofed in 1998. The oak gates were replaced in 1999 with replicas made by John Dipple reusing the original iron fittings.

The lych gate and stone boundary walls to the east south and west are listed:

LYCHGATE AND CHURCHYARD WALL AT ST WYSTANS CHURCH

List entry Number: 1366590 Grade: II Date first listed: 24-Oct-1986

PARISH OF REPTON WILLINGTON ROAD SK 30/3127 SK 30/3126 6/87 (North Side) Lychgate and Churchyard Wall at St Wystan's Church GV II

Lychgate and walls. Medieval, C19 and c1905. Random and coursed sandstone and ashlar, lychgate with timber and plain tile roof. Lychgate of c1905 as a memorial to Rev A Forman. Chamfered stone plinth with timber superstructure. The sides are divided into two bays with plain balustrade between the principal uprights. Gabled roof with plain tiles and open timberwork gables with moulded bressumers and carved bargeboards to south. Pair of timber gates curving down to the centre. Attached ashlar walls are ramped down to square piers with gothic panels and pyramid caps. Random coursed wall with chamfered copings, enclosing south and west sides of the churchyard. Along the west side are four late C18 and early C19 memorial tablets to members of the Stevens family. Wall enclosing south east side is possibly medieval, with four buttresses to the west. Likewise the wall attached on the north side of the church enclosing a separate rectangular enclosure. Of coursed rubblestone with a stringcourse to the west and chamfered copings.



Fig. 74 Southern part of churchyard



Fig. 75 War graves

3.9 Current condition and management of the church and churchyard

The latest *Quinquennial Inspection Report August 2018* by Mark Parsons of Anthony Short & Partners confirms that the church and churchyard are well cared for and generally in good order.

Maintenance is overseen and organised by the Building & Churchyard Group of the PCC led by a former churchwarden who is also a lay member of the Diocesan Advisory Committee. There is a 10 year maintenance plan supported by an annual inspection of the building.

3.9.1 The Church

Cleaning and routine maintenance are undertaken by volunteers from the congregation and village community. Contracts are in place for maintenance of the heating boilers, fire extinguishers, pumping chamber for kitchen and toilets, tower clock, organ tuning, audio system, roof alarm, and for PAT testing of electrical equipment. The complete electrical installation was tested in January 2018 and the lightning conductor in 2016.

The ringing band deals with routine maintenance of the bells and the tower captain winds and adjusts the clock. Repton Parish Council pays for the maintenance of the clock.

Following the QI Report noted above future work identified includes:

- Repair or renewal of the flat asphalt roof to the vestry
- Repairs to the lead roof of the porch
- Repair of the crypt light fittings and renewal of the ceiling limewashing

3.9.2 The churchyard

A large team of volunteers maintains the tidy appearance of the churchyard, including mowing during the summer, tidying grave plots, and checking the security of headstones. Work done is in line with the environmental policy, agreed by the PCC in 2008 and currently being reviewed as the parish explores issues around registering as an Eco Church, and a churchyard management policy updated in 2019.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission maintains an area in the north west corner (see 3.8 above). The main area to the north with more recent grave plots where the headstones remain in place is maintained by a contractor through the summer period.

South Derbyshire District Council and Repton School contribute to the cost of maintaining the churchyard.

The PCC works with the South Derbyshire District Council's tree officer to ensure appropriate management of the ancient yews and other mature trees.

4. Assessment of significance

Having described the church building, its contents and surroundings (Section 3 above), this section highlights the significance of different elements.

4.1 Definitions and levels of significance

In order to manage change responsibly, it is necessary to define the relative significance of the various aspects of the church and churchyard within its local, regional and national context. Levels of significance are defined in Church Buildings Council guidance 2007:

- **Exceptional** – important at national to international levels.
- **Considerable** – important at regional level or sometimes higher.
- **Some** – usually of local value but possibly of regional significance for group or other value (eg a vernacular architectural feature).
- **Local** – of local value
- **Negative** or **intrusive** features, ie those which actually detract from the value of a site, for example a concrete boiler house adjacent to a medieval church.

4.2 The general significance of St. Wystan's and its surroundings

Historic churches and churchyards such as Repton are of enormous interest and research potential, not only for the historian, archaeologist, architectural historian and art historian but for everybody interested in local and national history, rich in material resources for understanding the past.

A church has stood here as a beacon of continuous Christian mission for over 1350 years, placing worship at the very centre of local life. Churches are not static or frozen in time. The fact that they have been subject to constant change throughout their history makes them all the more important and fascinating.

Antiquarians, historians and archaeologists over the last 250 years have written about the exceptional significance of Repton and its parish church. One of the earliest references, Revd D P Davies's *A new history and descriptive view of Derbyshire* 1811 says that Repton "*is celebrated by antiquaries as the principal city in the Saxon kingdom of Mercia ... beneath the chancel [of the church] is an ancient crypt discovered of late years...*". The latest (2016) Pevsner volume on Derbyshire states that the church has "*one of the most precious survivals of Anglo-Saxon architecture in England.*"

Arguably the combination of its early origins, its association with the Mercian royal family, rich archaeological remains, complete unaltered Saxon crypt, setting within an important Viking site, and remains of the neighbouring medieval Augustinian priory make St Wystan's one of the great historic parish churches of England.

4.3 Listing

The church building with its fixed contents is of **exceptional significance** due to its rich architectural history, recognised in its Grade 1 listing. Listing details from the Historic England website:

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

List entry Number: 1334560

CHURCH OF ST WYSTAN, WILLINGTON ROAD

Grade: I

Date first listed: 19-Jan-1967

PARISH OF REPTON WILLINGTON ROAD SK 30/3127 SK 30/3126 6/88 (North Side) 19.1.67
Church of St Wystan GV I

Parish church. C9,C13,C14,C15, restoration 1885-6 by Arthur Blomfield. West steeple, aisled nave and chancel. Coursed rubble sandstone and ashlar. Plain tile and lead roofs. West tower of three unequal stages, divided by moulded stringcourses. Moulded plinth. Angle buttresses. The west elevation has a doorway with moulded mid C14 arch and hoodmould. 3-light Perp window above with castellated transom. Hoodmould on headstops. Small trefoiled lancet above and mid C14 2-light bell openings with transom and ogee hoodmould. The south side has a large circular clock face and similar bell openings. The north side has a small trefoiled lancet and similar bell openings, and again similar bell openings to east. Quatrefoil frieze and castellated parapet, gargoyles and four pinnacles. Octagonal stone spire with three tiers of lucarnes. Lean-to C13 north aisle with moulded parapet. Vestry with parapet, and 3 and 4-light mullioned windows. Angle buttresses and one intermediate buttress. Fenestration from the west. Single chamfered lancet, doorway with colonnettes and moulded arch, early C14 window with Y-tracery, 3-light window of stepped lancet lights and a window with Y-tracery. C15 clerestory with seven 2-light windows of cusped four-centred arches under square heads. Battlemented parapet. North aisle east window of three stepped lancet lights. C13 and early C14 south aisle has an east window of three stepped lancets and a single lancet to the west. C15 two storey gabled porch with moulded doorway. Hoodmould continuing as a stringcourse. Crocketed and pinnaced niche above, flanked by 2-light windows of cusped ogees under a flat arch. Angle buttresses with pinnacles. To the west the staircase projection cuts the aisle window. To the east a 2-light window of cusped lights under a flat arch. To the left of the porch an early C14 window of three lancet lights. To the right of the porch is a similar 4-light window and a window with Y-tracery. To the right again a lean-to south transept chapel with plain moulded parapet, angle buttresses, a chimney in the north west angle, a priest's doorway with moulded arch and a 4-light south window under flat arch with curious cusped lozenge tracery, probably C15. Clerestory as on north side. The chancel is tall and unbuttressed, with the crypt below. The lower walls are of fine masonry, the lowest courses forming a plinth of four steps. On the south side two large blocks project, suggesting an external projection. Rectangular 3-light C16 window to the crypt. Between the lintels of these windows and the sill level of the C14 east window is a section of walling of roughly squared blocks of brown stone with massive flat quoins, unique to Repton. Above this the masonry changes to smaller whitish blocks. Chamfered stringcourse surmounted by lesenes ending in curious splayed capitals just below the eaves. C13 north lancet and a similar C20 south lancet incorporating fragments of a blocked original. 4-light east window of plain lancets. There is a second lancet to the right on the north side. Interior: The Anglo-Saxon crypt is reached by two contemporary staircases from the aisles. The crypt measures about 16ft square and about 10ft high and consists of nine almost square bays roofed with domical vaults carried on cross-ribs which spring from two pilasters on each wall and rest on four-centred columns. The columns have moulded bases, spiral fillets and grooved capitals. The pilasters are decorated with blank arches. Double cornice along the north, south and east walls. Each wall has a shallow recess, which may have housed tombs. That to the west has a cornice and above it, a partly filled-in triangular recess. The south porch has C15 plank doors with wrought iron hinges. Inner doorway with flat arch and moulded surround. C15 plank doors. Flanked by free-standing C9 circular columns with capitals like those of the crypt pilasters. These were originally at the east end of the nave arcades and were replaced in 1854. Early C14 six bay arcades, the eastern bays of 1854. Octagonal piers, moulded capitals and double chamfered arches. Moulded hoodmould. Double chamfered chancel arch, dying into the imposts. Triple chamfered tower arch with moulded capitals to the inner order. Hoodmould on head stops. Earlier roofline visible above. On the south side of the chancel is a large roughly cut piscina. At the south east angle of the nave is the upper rood doorway. Monuments: George and Ellen Waklin +1617 and +1614 (south transept) the two figures facing each other across a prayer desk, their child below. John Macauley +1840 (south transept) by Hall of Derby. Slate tablet to Thomas Whitehead +1645 (south transept) erected in 1802 and commemorating a charity he set up. By Stanley of Buxton. Plain tablet of 1779 with swags. In the south aisle, an incised alabaster slab to Gilbert Thacker +1563. In the north aisle; a tablet to

Rev Joseph James +1856, by Hall. William Bagshaw Stevens +1800 by E F Evans of Derby. Francis Thacker +1710, a heavy aedicule. Much defaced incised slab set into the floor. Thomas Fisher +1771, a large aedicule. In the last bay of the nave is a tomb chest with an alabaster effigy of a Knight, c1400. C18 communion rails, with turned balusters. Georgian style dado in the chancel of 1935. The chancel has a plaster ceiling and cornice. C19 choir stalls. Brass eagle lectern of 1877. Royal Arms over the south door dated 1772. Rich C19 octagonal font. Under the tower a painted board giving the table of tolls for Willington Bridge. Good Perp style roofs. Stained glass by Powells.

Listing NGR: SK3030027170

The lych gate and churchyard walls are also listed, Grade 2, see 3.8 above.

4.4 Other designations

The church is one of eight within the Diocese of Derby designated as a Major Parish Church by the Church Buildings Council and Historic England as having exceptional significance and issues necessitating a Conservation Management Plan, see <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/churches/major-parish-churches>

Details of the church building are listed on the Church Heritage Record database code no. 612336 <https://facultyonline.churchofengland.org>

The church and churchyard are within the Repton Conservation Area see <https://www.south-derbys.gov.uk/our-services/planning-and-building-control/planning/conservation-listed-buildings-and-heritage/conservation-areas>

Most of the **trees** in the churchyard are covered by a Tree Preservation Order (see 3.8 above), SDDC TPO 24 <https://www.south-derbys.gov.uk/our-services/planning-and-building-control/planning/trees-and-hedgerows>

The **tower clock** is recorded on the Antiquarian Horological Society's turret clock database ID 133 www.ahsoc.org

Details of the **war graves** (see 3.8) are included on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission database CEM no.05977

The **war memorial** at the lych gate (see 3.7.10) is recorded on the War Memorials Online database <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/226374>

The **organ** is on the National Pipe Organ Register (see 3.7.8).

Bells nos. 4 and 8 (see 3.7.6) are recorded on the Church Building Council's bells database as being of particular significance http://www.churchcare.co.uk/images/Churches_Guidance_Note_listed_bell_introduction.pdf

4.5 Significant features

The **crypt and chancel** of the church are of **exceptional significance** being one of the most complete examples of Anglo-Saxon architecture in England. (3.5.1, 3.6.2.7, 3.6.3.8) The crypt is believed to be of the original parish church, erected here by the Saxons in the mid 9th century, or according to some authorities in the 10th century. The masonry of the chancel above the crypt is also for the most part of Anglo-Saxon workmanship, though the roof has been lowered and windows inserted at later dates.

The **church, churchyard and surrounding area** are of **exceptional archaeological significance** for their evidence of Saxon and Viking activity. Diuma, a Scots missionary was consecrated the first bishop of Mercia in the year 656, and two years later was buried at Repton (3.4.2). There is little doubt that the first Christian church of the converted Saxons of the Midlands, was erected at Repton, which was for a long time the capital of the kingdom of Mercia in the sense of being a base for the king and the site of the royal mausoleum. In 874, the Danes advanced in large numbers to Repton, seized the town, and continued to hold this part of England for about a century. The church is an ancient site within the 'ford' settlement of Repton, with Willington being its twin on the north bank of the River Trent, where Neolithic archaeological remains have recently been unearthed.

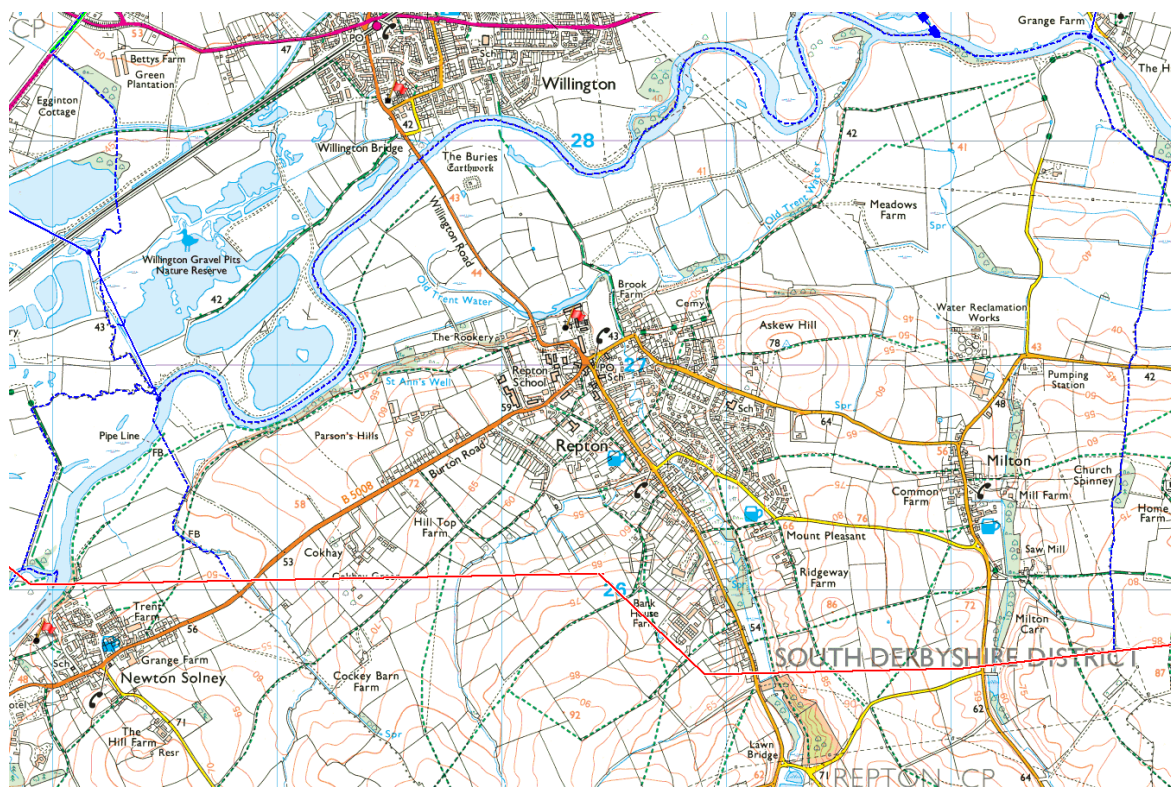


Fig. 76 Map of area

Copyright: Anthony Short and Partners LLP

At the time of the Domesday Survey, Repton is described as possessed of a church and *two* priests, an entry that points to the size and importance of the building. This is only shared by Bakewell, which was the only other church in Derbyshire at the time to have two priests.

The church is of **exceptional significance** as a **landmark** visual feature in the Repton community and Willington to the east (See 3.6.1 and the Repton Conservation Area Statement 2013 noted above 4.3)

The area contains many church sites that all hold ancient remains. St Mary's Newton Solney opposite St Mary Rolleston on Dove, St Wilfrids Egginton, St Michaels and All Angels Willington, St Andrews Twyford, All Saints Findern, St James Barrow Upon Trent, St Saviour's at Foremark a fine example of 17th century church architecture (very few set piece churches of this period) and Ingleby (no church) but records of a local ancient chapel, St James Swarkestone and St Michaels and All Angels Stanton by Bridge. The density of church sites reflects the area's importance in the early to late medieval period - a place central to the development of the Mercian Kingdom and England itself. The primary reason for this is the area's geographical centrality to England and its proximity to all of the major English Midland rivers Dove, Trent, Erewash and Derwent.

The earliest ancient Trent River fording sites are likely to have been at Twyford and Swarkestone, Repton and Willington having developed as an inland port and later becoming the site of the region's primary bridge crossing over the River Trent.

The **tower and spire** are **considerably significant** examples of church architecture from the Perpendicular period. According to Cox the tower and spire were completed in the year 1340. However Dr Taylor believes this is based on a confusion of dates with the priory church as

explained in his church guide (ST. WYSTAN'S CHURCH REPTON – A GUIDE AND HISTORY p.28). He gives a later 15th century dating. The distance from the vane to the ground is a height of 210 feet. The first stage of the tower has a finely groined roof of stone. (3.5.1, 3.5.3.1, 3.6.2.1)

The **nave** has a 15th century clerestory and oak ceiling with eight large tie-beams, open tracery and elaborately carved bosses. The nave's roof is a remarkably fine example of woodwork from the Perpendicular period and is of **considerable significance**. The bosses on the beams and at the intersection of the timbers are carved with much freedom and effect. (3.6.3.6) The nave is separated from the aisle by six pointed arches, supported on hexagon columns, which are of the Decorated period, except those nearest the end.

There are **Anglo Saxon and other historic sculptures** found within the church grounds, some of which are now in the the porch and are of **considerable significance**. The **mediaeval coffin lid** on the west side of the porch has a deeply inset foot print and is of **exceptional significance**. The **Repton Stone**, excavated by the Biddles in 1979 is of **exceptional significance** and is now in Derby Museum. (3.4.2). The article in the *Anglo Saxon England* 1985 provides a detailed description.

At the east end of the north aisle of the church there is an **alabaster tomb** of **exceptional significance** with an effigy of a knight, thought to be Robert Franceys carved with several shields, from the 1400s. This was originally in the chancel but broken up in 1792, and later rebuilt and now located beside the northern crypt steps. There is additional local significance as the alabaster is likely to have come from quarries at Chellaston nearby. (3.7.5.)

Much of the **stained glass** in the windows were by *Powell* and is of **some significance**. The firm of *James Powell and Sons*, also known as Whitefriars Glass, were English glassmakers in the 17th century and became well-known during the 19th century gothic revival period. (3.7.4)

There are important items of **communion plate** of **some significance** in the Cathedral Treasury and recorded in Jeavons: *Church plate of Derbyshire* (3.7.2).

The **organ** is an example of the work of Peter Collins, one of the leading English organ builders of the late 20th century and is of **considerable significance** given its design and late date.(3.7.8)

The **church interior** is of **considerable significance** for its height, light and space and in showing the evolution of church furnishing and liturgical arrangement over the last 200 years.

The fine ring of eight **bells** is of **considerable significance** for its examples of historic 16th-18th century bells. (3.7.6)

There are a number of **monuments** noted in the listing text 4.2 above which are of **some significance**.

The **war memorials and churchyard graves** are of **local significance**.

A **negative feature is the UPVC rainwater goods** at different points around the exterior. As noted in successive Quinquennial Inspections these should ideally be replaced with cast iron.

5.Assessment of potential and constraints on development

This section describes the current use of the church building and assesses the potential for development, bearing in mind current facilities and planned developments together with issues hindering and delaying change. This balance of potential and constraint is used to identify a realistic way forward that promotes the mission and outreach of the church community while safeguarding the historic fabric of the building and its surroundings.

5.1 Current and potential use

Current use of the church building reflects the role of the parish church as a focus for worship and also increasingly for non-traditional activities with children, concerts, and other community events.

There are two or three services on most Sundays of the year, a regular mid-week communion service and a full programme for the major festivals. Services at Christmas, Easter, Harvest Festival and Remembrance Sunday attract large congregations.

In 2018 there were four weddings, twelve funerals, and sixteen baptisms.

As St. Wystan's is one of the larger parish churches in the area it is used from time to time for South Derbyshire civic services, deanery and diocesan events.

Musicians appreciate the Peter Collins organ and good acoustic in the church. There are several concerts every year by local choirs, Foremarke Preparatory School, Repton School, South Derbyshire Music Centre and other organisations.

There is a regular monthly Messy Church session for families and children on Sunday afternoons. This consists of themed activities, a simple talk and prayers, followed by tea, and has only been possible since the 2009 alterations that provided toilets, kitchen and more flexible space. This is now followed by a Youth Alpha Course.

An event that draws large numbers of visitors from the local area is the biennial Christmas Tree Festival which takes place over a weekend in early December where church and community organisations fill the church with trees decorated on a theme.

The building is also increasingly used for church-organised social activities, including a monthly soup and cheese lunch, occasional Sunday bring & share lunches, and coffee & library sessions.

As well as these social activities the west end area of the church is used for business meetings and training events for both the parish and deanery. The vestry is used for smaller meetings.

The special historic significance of the building and its setting brings a steady stream of visitors, both individuals and organised groups. Groups include schoolchildren, U3A, archaeological and historical societies, and archaeological students. For eight weeks during the autumn of 2014 the church hosted a Staffordshire Hoard Exhibition which attracted 2000 visitors including over 500 schoolchildren in organised groups. In September 2019 the church was featured in "Hello Heritage" celebrating heritage sites and activities within South Derbyshire and North-West Leicestershire, hosting a history of Repton exhibition prepared by the Village History Group.

Interest in Viking and Saxon history means that the church receives regular requests from film and TV companies for facilities. This in turn attracts visitors.

The archaeological significance of the site means continuing activity. There is an ongoing programme of work during the summer months led by Dr. Cat Jarman of Bristol University in the churchyard and adjoining vicarage garden.

The parish is committed to developing this range of activities that takes place in and around the building, both as part of its mission and also as a service to the community. The opportunities for extending current use are explored in 5.6 below.

5.2 Facilities

Significant additions and improvements have been made to facilities within the church over the last twenty years. These have been carefully planned to appropriately balance the need for a comfortable and welcoming environment for worshippers and visitors with the need to safeguard the historic fabric.

A **new organ**, as described in 3.7.8 above, as well as enhancing worship has increased the potential for musical events and has opened opportunities for collaboration with Foremarke Hall Preparatory School and Repton School whose students use the organ.

The **re-ordering of the west end** during 2009-10 provided a small kitchen equipped with washing up facilities, cooker, and fridge able to provide light meals and drinks. There are also toilets including appropriate disability provision. At the same time pews were removed from the west end opening up a flexible social space.

New **gas heating boilers** were installed in 2009. These have appropriate timer controls and adequate heating capacity, but the cast iron radiators and large bore heating pipes dating from the 1920s do not distribute heat uniformly around the building. A report from the Diocesan Heating Advisor in 2013 suggested that substituting fan assisted convectors for some of the radiators would improve circulation. Ultimately it was decided that careful management of timing and temperature controls would give the best result. This does mean that close attention has to be paid to setting controls appropriate to the weather and different activities going in church.

A new **sound system including a hearing aid loop** was installed in 2014. This is especially valuable for events involving children and drama. It also allows recorded music to be played on appropriate occasions.

The building was rewired with **new lighting and additional power points** in 2017. Particular attention was given to ensuring adequate lighting levels for the worshipping congregation, children's activities, and musicians. The extra power points have made provision for special events such as the biennial Christmas Tree Festival easier and safer.

There is limited **audio-visual equipment**. A projector and large screen on the chancel step are used for Messy Church and some special services. This is laborious and cumbersome to set up. Provision of fixed equipment is desirable but will be challenging both in terms of practicality and obtaining permissions.

There is **seating capacity** for about 350 people, in the pews and with 50 chairs in the social space at the west end. This is a significant but realistic reduction from 600 quoted through the 19th century when the nave and aisles were crammed with pews. On a few occasions during the year, some funerals and Remembrance Sunday for example, people may have to stand. The existing pews in the nave and aisles, while a key element of the historic interior environment are uncomfortable for some and limit flexibility for events other than traditional liturgical services.

A **crèche area** for parents and very young children during services has been created by the removal of three pews from the west end of the north aisle.

There is **limited accommodation for meetings and small groups** apart from the main area of the church. The only spaces for children's groups to meet during services and for meetings at other times are the parvise room and vestry. Both of these are problematic as the vestry is small and used by clergy and others preparing and taking part in services, and access to the parvise room is up steep stairs. The west end of the church is sometimes used for meetings but it is cold in winter.

At the time of writing the **feasibility of a broadband connection** into the church is being investigated. This will facilitate administrative work being done from the vestry and the use of internet resources in presentations in church both for Messy Church and services.

5.3 Security, health & safety

The church is open to visitors during daylight hours. There are sufficient visitors and others coming in and out of the church throughout the day to provide a degree of security against theft and other issues. Valuable items used during services are stored securely in the vestry. The tower stairs, boiler room and parvise room are kept locked. Access to the kitchen, toilets and vestry is via a key pad code. The existing CCTV system inside the church was updated in 2019.

The lead roofs to the nave and aisles are covered by a security system in line with insurance requirements, and have also had Smart Water treatment.

There is lighting around the exterior of the church during the hours of darkness.

In line with Church of England requirements the Parochial Church Council has both a designated Health & Safety Officer and Safeguarding Officer who organise appropriate training, co-ordinate risk assessments, and monitor compliance.

5.4 Access

Being open during daylight hours throughout the year, the church is accessible both to people looking for quiet space for prayer and for visitors wanting to see the historic building, particularly the crypt.

There is ramped access through the porch for wheelchairs and those unable to manage steps. The churchyard paths, including the main path from the lychgate to the porch and main door are tarmac.

There is a disabled toilet.

Access to the crypt, the chancel and parvise room are all via steep steps and therefore problematic for many people. There were plans in 2006 for handrails to the crypt steps on the north side. It proved impossible to agree on appropriate fixtures with the various conservation bodies so the only work which has been done is improvement to the lighting over the crypt steps and displaying clear warning signs.

There is a designated disabled parking space by the lych gate and it is possible for small cars to drive down the main path to the porch. Otherwise parking is problematic especially on weekdays and at times when there are functions at Repton School.

5.5 Risk management

The Health & Safety Officer co-ordinates risk assessments and ensures that policies are kept up to date.

There is regular contact with the church insurers. A detailed survey by Ecclesiastical Insurance was undertaken in 2015.

The need to develop a Disaster Management Plan is recognised (see 6 below).

5.6 The way forward

Maintaining the role of St. Wystan's as a Church of England parish church as outlined in 3.2 – 3.3 above as a base of worship, mission and community outreach is felt to be the way to ensure that the historical integrity of the building is safeguarded and that it does not become a lifeless museum.

The approach the PCC and congregation have taken in recent years has been to open up the church building for community and social events. This was one of the drivers behind the reordering project of 2009-10 and has paid off with the range of activity indicated in 5.1 above. The faculty for the reordering allowed for further development, Phase 2, for a meeting room under the tower. This was not proceeded with at the time given the additional cost and complexity of the work involving moving the font and creation of a floor for the ringers above. The challenge in considering further development is to balance usability for both church and community activities against the need to safeguard and conserve the historic structure.

The congregation remains committed to working with other Christians in the village, particularly sharing with the United Reformed Church in outreach to the community.

There are strong links with local schools. There is close neighbourly liaison with Repton School. Specifically, a small group of Repton School pupils works on churchyard maintenance as part of its Community Action Programme. Repton Primary School and St. Wystan's Preparatory School hold services in St. Wystan's. In the past pupils from William Allitt Comprehensive School Swadlincote have used the church as a base for history and art projects.

There are also links with uniformed organisations who attend special services and sometimes visit the church to work on badges.

The Parish is committed to supporting the production of the *Parish Magazine*, a community magazine which is delivered monthly to all households in the Benefice.

There is ongoing potential for musical events. The building has a good acoustic and fine organ. Liaison needs to be maintained with local choirs and orchestras, and particularly with schools and music centres, to build a spread of events through the year

The church is committed to wherever possible welcoming and supporting historians and archaeologists investigating the building, recognising its duty to support scholarship, conservation of the national historic heritage, and also that awareness of this Christian heritage is a powerful aspect of its outreach and mission.

The current interest in historic heritage, and specifically recent books and TV programmes on the Viking era, helps to maintain the steady flow of visitors. Work needs to continue on provision of appropriate information and guides, including for children, both in printed form and through websites and social media.

The major festivals of the Christian year are a powerful focus both for the congregation's mission and also to draw in visitors. The carol singing event, organised in recent years that includes a procession into church via the village pubs is good example of how people can be brought into the building to celebrate festivals. Co-ordinated publicity is needed to make the most of these opportunities, within the community and local area, through diocesan channels, and exploiting the potential of social media.

Some issues with the environment within the building are identified in 5.2 above. It is difficult to heat the church efficiently. The pews, while a key aspect of the historic religious ambience of the building are inflexible, and uncomfortable for some.

The lack of car parking in the immediate area of the church is an issue for services and events that involve people from outside the village community. The church will need to work with Repton School, Repton Parish Council and highway authorities to make optimum use of space available.

If the church is going to host more activities and events more volunteers will be needed to act as welcomers, provide catering, and able to act as guides and talk on the history of the church. Village organisations, including Repton Village Society, Repton Village History Group, the Women's Institute currently all provide support which is gratefully acknowledged. It is anticipated that the newly constituted Friends of Repton Church will also attract supporters who are not otherwise involved with the church.

It is inevitable that expensive major repairs and improvements will be needed in the medium and longer term future. The PCC will continue to be pro-active in planning and budgeting to provide resources for maintenance and repair of the building, through provision of an adequate reserve in its Fabric Fund, building positive relationships with conservation and funding bodies, and working with the Friends of Repton Church to secure support from people who while not members of the parish congregation have an interest in maintenance and safeguarding of the building.

The church is highly dependent on the advice and support of its architect and the Diocesan Advisory Committee, and also benefits from the expertise of local specialist craftsmen and contractors. The PCC's Building & Churchyard Group has a crucial role to play in liaison and maintaining relationships together with overseeing routine maintenance of the building and also taking a strategic view of priorities for maintenance and improvement.

6. Management policies

This section proposes policies to be adopted by the PCC that have been identified during the process of preparing the CMP as being required for maintaining and enhancing the fabric of this major church and its site. References in brackets refer to the relevant section of the CMP above.

Policy 1 – Review and revision of the CMP. As a minimum the CMP will be revised following each Quinquennial Inspection; the revision to be undertaken by the Building & Churchyard Group for adoption by the PCC. (2.3)

Policy 2 – The church as a place of worship. To ensure that the church's primary function as a place of worship is safeguarded and given appropriate priority when issues arise concerning changes to the building, archaeological investigation, and conservation of the historic fabric. Advice and support will be sought from the Diocese, the Church Buildings Council, and other organisations including Historic England and local authorities. (3.3, 5.1)

Policy 3 – The church serving the community. To continue and develop the PCC's current practice of using the church as a base for its outreach to the community through events such as lunches, coffee mornings and activities with schools. (3.2)

Policy 4 – The parish church and the wider church. To maintain an active role in the benefice, deanery and diocese, providing hospitality and making the building available for services and events beyond the parish and to Repton United Reformed Church. (3.3, 5.1)

Policy 5 – Building maintenance strategy. The PCC to develop a sustainable strategy for the care and development of the building and site, including a strategy for funding repairs and monitoring the availability of grants. This will be based on the existing work of the Building & Churchyard Group determining priorities, the 10 year maintenance Plan, and the PCC's existing policy of maintaining a minimum balance in its Fabric Fund to cover emergencies (currently £10,000). (3.9, 5.6)

Policy 6 – The crypt. Given the exceptional importance of the crypt the PCC should consider a specific policy for its conservation and presentation to visitors. In a letter (15 Dec 2005) to the DAC Secretary, the Council for the Care of Churches commented: *"The Council was surprised that the parish does not make more of the crypt which has a somewhat barren air. The Council would encourage the parish to think about introducing sympathetic lighting, some well designed interpretative material and perhaps one or two more carefully chosen symbols of devotion."* The last point was acknowledged with the commissioning of the "Burning Bush" votive candle stand now in the crypt and the production of an explanatory leaflet specifically about the crypt. (3.6.3)

Policy 7 – Best practice. The PCC to ensure that maintenance and repair of the building is undertaken adhering to current building conservation and care best practice, using appropriate materials and techniques, and drawing on the advice and support of the DAC, the PCC's architect and other relevant professionals. (5.6)

Policy 8 – Access and welcome. The PCC to maintain its commitment to have the church open throughout daylight hours, allowing access to the local community and visitors, and making the building and its facilities available for appropriate community events such as concerts and exhibitions. Access to continue to be underpinned by ensuring that there is a welcoming environment including appropriate lighting, and for events adequate heating. Standard terms of use and financial arrangements for concerts and other events need to be kept up to date. (5.6)

Policy 9 – Information and education. The PCC (currently through its Communication Group) to ensure that information and guidance on the history and use of the building is available and kept up to date, including appropriate notices, leaflets and guides, and website information. A particular focus should be on information for children and the welcome given to school groups. The PCC is open to proposals from film and TV companies to work within and around the building. (5.6)

Policy 10 – Legislative compliance. The PCC is committed to ensuring that in relation to the building everything is compliant with current legislation especially concerning Health & Safety,

Disability, Safeguarding, and ensuring that external organisations using the building, contractors and suppliers are also compliant. It will follow the Church of England / English Heritage 2005 guidance document on human remains where works have the potential to disturb graves. (5.6)

Policy 11 - Disaster management. The PCC will develop a Disaster Management Plan particularly bearing in mind, fire, flood and vandalism issues, making use of Church Buildings Council guidance. (5.5)

Policy 12 – Support for research and scholarship. The PCC, bearing in mind the exceptional historic significance of the building and its setting, is committed to co-operating with archaeologists and historians in their investigations. It will follow up opportunities to work with external partners to enhance recording of the building and site history. It is committed to long term conservation of its archives, depositing them as appropriate in the Derbyshire Record Office. (5.5)

Policy 13 - Sustainability and the environment. The PCC will take into account in all its policies the need for environmentally and economically sustainable development and management. (3.8, 3.9)

Policy 14 - The churchyard. The PCC will review and maintain its management plan for the churchyard. The churchyard will be managed in a way that supports a diverse habitat, bearing in mind legislation relating to protected plants (eg lichens) and animal species (eg bats), and requirements associated with being in a Conservation Area and having trees protected by a Preservation Order. The plan will include provision for management of graves, the Garden of Remembrance (area for burial of cremated remains), the Quiet Garden, and maintenance of paths. (3.9.2)

Policy 15 - Community support and co-operation. To support these policies the PCC is committed to working with its neighbours (specifically Repton School), community organisations (Repton Parish Council, Repton Village Society, Repton Village History Group) and especially the recently established Friends of Repton Church (Charity no. 1162837) to enhance the building and its setting within the wider village community. (3.2, 5.1)

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