

PRESENT NO LONGER

Over the years much care and preservation have kept the Church here in its present good state. Unfortunately over the years many of its interesting pieces and ornaments have been lost by decay, or have been removed according to the dictates of taste and fashion, or have been altered in the course of repair and restoration.

Coloured frescos decorated the walls and pillars, the last to fade being a representation of a ship to the east of the Nave. Statues are recorded of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Anthony, St. Christopher, St. Nicholas and St. John. There is no evidence of a Screen but a will of 1475 notes a Rood, presumably over the Chancel Step. A choir and orchestra used a West Gallery until the last century. The old Communion plate has been lost or stolen and what is left is under two hundred years of age. The registers of baptism, marriage and burial are intact from 1558 but are by law deposited in the diocesan archives for research and safe keeping.

The PORCH is worth a pause on the way out. Two wooden plaques list the names of the men from the village who were killed in the Great Wars, among them being Field Marshal Lord Kitchener who lived within the parish boundaries at Broome Park.

THANK YOU for coming to our Parish Church. It is a living part of the Church now and we hope that you will carry away with you, not only a last glimpse of the graceful copper-sheathed spire, but also something of the atmosphere of a place saturated with past and present worship and prayer. God be with you.

WELCOME TO



THE PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

BARHAM

How old is the Church?

History suggests that there was a church in Barham in 809 A.D., but the earliest part of the present building starts in the twelfth century with the base of the Tower, and continues for the following three hundred years. The church therefore contains Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular styles of architecture.

The Church is cruciform in shape.

The NAVE, the body of Christ, is clear, light and spacious. In the tie beam roof are some of the original fourteenth century timbers, and the arcade with its three arches leading into the aisle is of the same date.

The CHANCEL and SANCTUARY, the head of Christ, have an open appearance because there is no chancel arch. In the fourteenth century east window the Christ and the Patron Saint, both as boys, with St. Mary are represented in modern stained glass. A piscina, formerly used as a basin for the ablutions of the hands and the chalice, is on the south wall. An aumbry or cupboard, used either for the reserved sacrament or for the sacred vessels and books, is just visible in the east wall. The stately English Altar is modern.

The Transepts, the arms of Christ, have each contained chapels in the past. The SOUTH TRANSEPT is now used as the Lady Chapel, "the Chapel of Our Lady". The altar was once the high altar. The walls contain various mural tablets. Hanging high on the west wall is a helmet, said to have belonged to Sir Basil Dixwell of Broome Park. The helmet probably never saw action but it was carried at his funeral in 1641.

The NORTH TRANSEPT was a chantry chapel and its blocked up east window indicates where the altar was situated. The whole space now houses a vest and the pipe organ. The floor is uneven because some years ago three brasses were found there. According to the popular medieval custom, engraved metal cut-outs were sunk into indented stone slabs and secured with rivets and pitch. In order to save them from further damage, the brasses were lifted and placed on the walls. The oldest, dated about 1370, is of a civilian but is mutilated. The other two are in good condition and dated about 1460, - a woman wearing the usual dress of a widow which was similar to the dress of a nun, and a bare-headed man in plate armour. No positive identification has been made but the figures are believed to be of John Digges and his wife Joan, of Digges Place, who were buried in the chapel.

At the end of the SOUTH AISLE one of the old family pews, virtually a small room, has been retained. Up to the last century most of the Nave was crowded with box-pews which screened the occupants from their neighbours.

Nearby is the curious South Doorway with one door inserted within a larger, in use only on special occasions.

The imposing but overwhelming memorial with several inscribed panels to the Dixwell family of the eighteenth century once stood in the South Transept.

At the WEST END is hung the lists of Rectors and Priests-in-Charge, the first known being Otho Caputh in 1280 A.D. Notice Richard Hooker (1594), the famous author of "The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity". He was Rector of Bishopsbourne and also ministered here. Recently the Rector has become the incumbent of the three separate parishes of Barham, Kingston and Bishopsbourne, and the Rectory is at Barham.

The tiles incorporated into the wall were originally in place in the Chancel about 1375. They were left by John Digge, Rector of Bishopsbourne, whose will instructed that he was to be buried in the Chancel at Barham and "my executors are to buy Flanders tiles to pave the said Chancel".

Under the Tower at the extreme West End is the Ringing Chamber. The peal consists of five bells which are rung regularly. The bells with dates and founders are as follows:

Treble	John Wilner of Borden	1633
2nd	Thomas Mears of Whitechapel	1834
3rd	Samuel Knight of Holborn	1730
4th	Samuel Knight of Holborn	1730
Tenor	Mears and Stainbank of London	1947

The fourteenth century FONT is large enough to submerge a baby, as would have been the custom of the time. The bowl is octagonal, representing the first day of the new week, the day of Christ's resurrection. The cover is Jacobean.

Barham Downs have seen much military activity, - from Saxon battles to living memory as a training ground and assembly point for embarkation. The thirteenth century window by the Font has a stained glass representation of St. George and the dragon, given by the survivors of the 23rd Signal Company as a memorial.