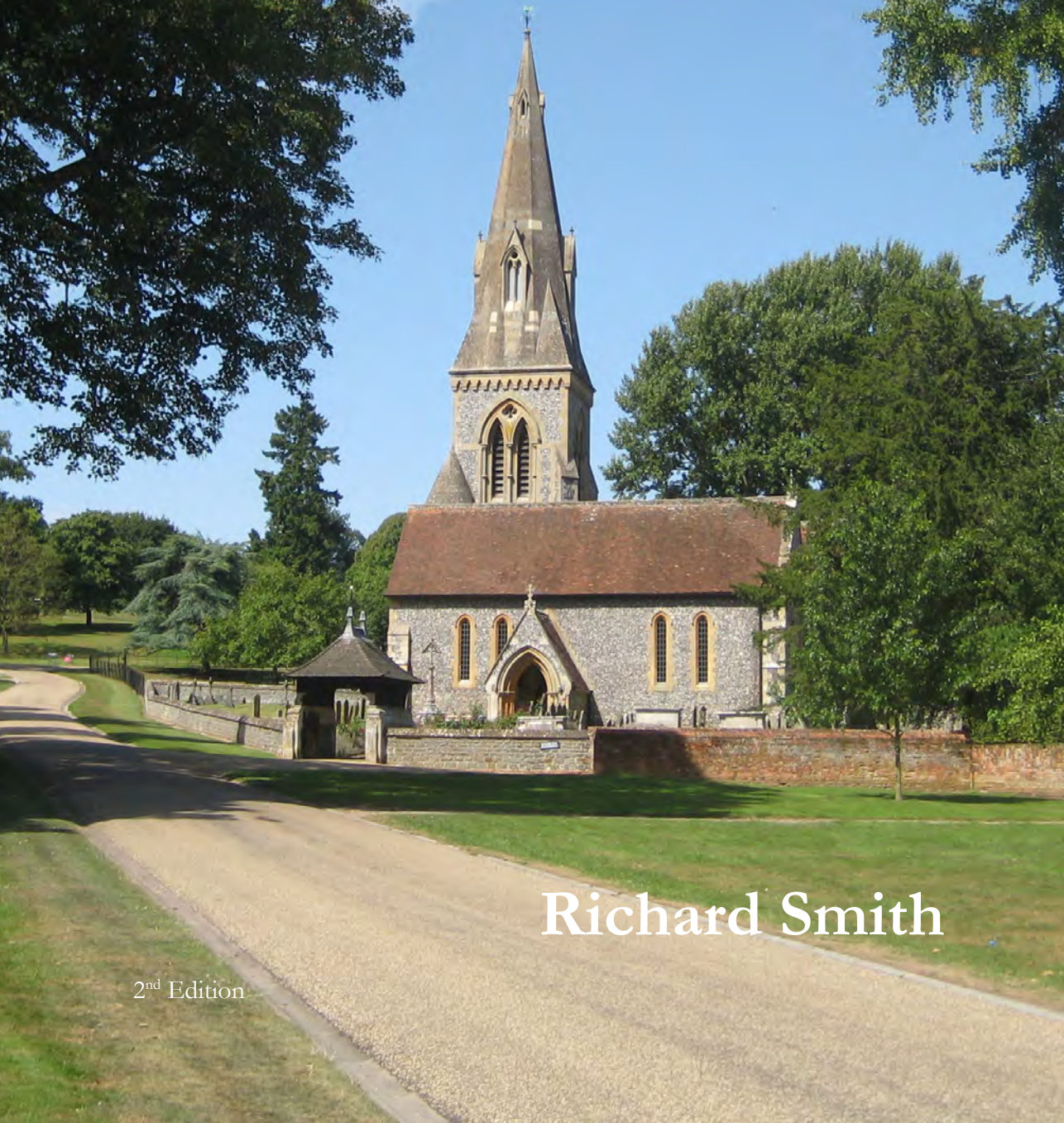


Proper To Grow Wise In

A history of the parish church
of Englefield, Berkshire



Richard Smith

2nd Edition

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A serious house on serious earth it is,
In whose blent air all our compulsions meet,
Are recognised, and robed as destinies.
And that much never can be obsolete,
Since someone will forever be surprising
A hunger in himself to be more serious,
And gravitating with it to this ground,
Which, he once heard, was proper to grow wise in,
If only that so many dead lie round.

Philip Larkin: *Churchgoing*

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A Serious House

Known as an atheist, or at least agnostic, Philip Larkin gives a somewhat mocking tone to the early verses of his poem *Churchgoing*. But for all that, he continually visits churches and although he doesn't really believe in God or religion, try as he might he can't envisage a world without them, and is even compelled to stand hatless and "*take off my cycle clips in awkward reverence*". In the final verse, reproduced on the title page, any element of disrespect is dropped and he comes to express something of the essence of the English country church.

St Mark's is such a church but serious house on serious earth though it may be, it is not forbidding or stern but a quiet place of peace, rare enough, that realises the hope in Whittier's hymn to "*take from our souls the strain and stress*". Even the casual visitor, like Larkin, may feel something of this but his "*tense, musty silence, brewed God knows how long*" comes not from the continuity of an unchanging building for it has changed many times since it was first built: in architecture, decoration and appurtenances; but from a continuity of worship (in whatever style) by generation on generation of village inhabitants for whom this was (and is) a comfortable place, as familiar as home, and just as much entwined in their lives; the scene of celebrations and family occasions: Christmas, Easter, Harvest Home, and baptism, marriage and burial, over the centuries. Even in today's mobile society it is not yet completely unknown for one to be able to stand in the churchyard and read the familiar family names, many now only faintly legible, on the ranks of headstones and see his family history laid out before him.

There may have been a private Manorial Chapel here in Saxon times but there was certainly a church in Englefield before the end of the 12th century for its patron, William Englefield, granted the advowson to Reading Abbey during the time of Abbot Joseph (1173-80), although he later rescinded the gift. This was a time referred to by Sir Roy Strong as the "Great Rebuilding" when the village emerged as the new rural social unit and lords of the manor built small churches for public worship in their communities, providing a more local focus than the Minster or Abbey in the nearest town. At this time the church was physically, as well as spiritually, at the centre of the community for the village itself was clustered close to it until it was moved at the beginning of the 19th century. The nave and chancel of St Mark's, although much changed, probably form the original structure as during the 19th century rebuilding of the chancel a Norman piscina was found in the south wall of the chancel; it is now in the Englefield chapel. Whether the dedication was always to St Mark is uncertain for it is known that a great many churches only received their current dedication in the 18th or even 19th century and early records do not mention the church by name.

The aisle was soon added, early in the 13th century, and the triple lancet window in its east wall is the only original one to remain in the building, although the stained glass is Victorian. The south (main) doorway and the north doorway, now leading into the choir vestry, are also of the thirteenth century, although heavily restored. An aisle added on the south side (God's side) at this time is perhaps a little unusual since space in that part of the churchyard tended to be maximised for burial of important people with any additions to the building on the north side (the devil's side), which also avoided the need to rebuild the porch, an important feature. While the lords of the manor had their tombs and ledger stones in the church itself, in the ground on this side of the church tended to be buried the second rank such as yeoman farmers. This tradition continued at Englefield for here, alongside the path are the tombs of the May, Draper and Welch families and prominent headstones for members of the Horn, and Povey families. The Englefield Chapel, on the north side of the sanctuary, was added in 1514.

Elias Ashmole and Englefield

It is largely thanks to Elias Ashmole, the 17th century antiquary, politician and founder of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, that we know a little about St Mark's in earlier times.

The Lysons' *Magna Britannia* says that Ashmole came to reside in Englefield in 1647. His diary certainly shows that he visited Englefield that year when he went from his house in London to Englefield and dined with Antipas Cherrington, on 12th June. Two days later, Ashmole records first meeting Gilbert Wimberley, Minister of Englefield. At this time Ashmole was paying court to Lady Mainwaring of Bradfield House, the widow of Sir Thomas Mainwaring, Recorder of Reading, and on 16th November 1649 he married her, thereby gaining an estate at Bradfield House. Later on 23rd November 1653 Ashmole recorded "*My good friend and neighbour Dr Wimberley, Minister of Englefield in Berkshire, died*". So the Lysons seem to have interpreted "neighbour" rather in the closer urban sense than the country one and out of context

Ashmole's descriptions of the many monuments in Englefield church were published in the *History and Antiquities of Berkshire* in 1723, after his death. The book was not written by him but was based on notes he deposited with the College of Heralds. These notes were made during his Visitation of Berkshire, begun on 11th March 1665 and are used here in preference to the published work.

The church as it looked around 1790 is shown in an engraving by Charles Tomkins that was included in a book of prints of scenes of Reading Abbey and the churches originally connected with it, published in 1802. The print of Englefield church shows plain, apparently rendered walls, with battlements and a small, square tower with pointed wooden roof.



The Englefield Chapel with its modern flint walls and original-style square-headed windows

The windows visible are square-headed and similar to those still to be seen in the Englefield chapel, although these are modern replacements. The church is similar in appearance to other local unrestored churches at Sulhamstead Abbots, Tidmarsh and Padworth. Padworth has the same square-headed, three-light windows (though without the trefoil over) but these are known to have been replaced in the sixteenth century, around the time that the Englefield Chapel was built. So it is possible that even the Tomkins drawing shows at least a partly 16th century facade rather than the original one. Some work had certainly been done before the major restoration for when the church was described by W Fletcher in *A Tour Round Reading* published in 1841 it was already said to be “*partly in the early English style of architecture, but much modernised*”. Otherwise the description is exactly as Tomkins’s drawing.



The church in about 1790 as drawn by Tomkins

Two sketches in the archives at Lambeth Palace (unfortunately too faded to reproduce) by an anonymous artist but evidently made in the early 19th century show the same building but one of them shows the triple lancet east window in the aisle and a similar three-light window with arched header in the east wall of the chancel. While the former was preserved during the rebuilding, the window in the chancel was replaced by a new one.

Charles Keyser

Charles Edward Keyser (1847-1929) was born in London and after Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge became a stockbroker in the City of London and accumulated great wealth.

He wrote and lectured on church architecture and was appointed a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1879 as a consequence. He also became president of the British Archaeological Society.

In 1893 he purchased Aldermaston Court and sat on the County Council and as a JP. He was also Deputy Lieutenant and High Sheriff of Berkshire at various times so would have been well known to Richard and James Herbert Benyon.

In 1911 he gave a lecture to the Berkshire Archaeological Society on the churches at Aldermaston, Padworth, Englefield and Tidmarsh and a paper was published in the Society's journal. The part on Englefield was reproduced in the parish magazine the following year.

In his paper Keyser drew heavily on Ashmole's work but also made some unreferenced comments that have been repeated in subsequent accounts, including the *Victoria County History* published in 1924. As some of his claims can now be seen to be inaccurate, caution is required.

Half a Millennium of Change

The seemingly ageless peace in the church today belies the fact that, like any other church of similar age, this one has seen some 500 years of sometimes tumultuous and destructive change and those changes must have been reflected in the architecture, decoration and ornaments of the church and also in the character of worship there. Although we know a good deal about the changes that took place over the last 150 years or so, for the remainder of the church's history we can but guess on the basis of the religious developments that form an inescapable part of English history.

For its first 300 years or so there may indeed have been a sense of constancy and permanence in the church but that would all be changed by the Reformation. At the start of the 16th century this was, of course, a Roman Catholic church with all the usual trappings of rood screen, censers, pyx, statues and rich decoration. At the high altar the priest in full vestments would have celebrated the Mass with his back to the congregation.

The changes brought about by Henry VIII might not have had much effect on this situation for they were more concerned with governance than liturgy or the manner of worship; indeed Pope Leo X awarded Henry the title "Defender of the Faith" for his rebuke to Luther, in support of the seven sacraments. Since the earliest times the church in England had been distinctly different from the continental model and this difference had been emphasised in 1215 when Magna Carta rejected foreign, and particularly Papal, interference in English affairs. Henry's matrimonial difficulties finally brought matters to a head, again underlining the typically English desire to be left alone to get on with things without being dictated to by foreign powers, rather than any fundamental disagreement over religious doctrine.

The first real changes came in 1547 on the death of Henry and the accession of the nine-year-old Edward VI with the Duke of Somerset as Protector. There followed removal of vestments and altar dressings, the destruction of images, the banning of processions, candles and incense. After the fall of Somerset, the Duke of Northumberland with the support of Edward, now 14, introduced an even more rigid form of Protestantism, including an order to replace the altar with a communion table set up in the chancel.

When Edward died in 1553 and Mary became queen all these changes were sharply put into reverse and Catholicism returned with a bloody vengeance, including the restoration of the high altar, images, vestments and the full panoply of the Roman Mass. However after only another six years Mary died and the Protestant Elizabeth came to the throne, restoring some order after the chaos of Edward and Mary.

The country church in Elizabeth's time might have been the same externally but inside there would be an absence of images, the plain whitewashed walls decorated only with biblical texts. The font would be in its usual place and if there was still a screen separating nave from chancel it would be smaller and over it the Royal Arms replaced the rood. The Holy Table stood in the chancel, usually against the east wall, covered with a linen cloth and with the Ten Commandments suspended above. It would be brought forward into the body of the chancel for celebration of Communion but in the more Puritan parishes it remained there the whole time with seats round it where Communion was taken sitting down. A new feature was the pulpit, in the body of the nave, from which the minister conducted the service more or less amongst the congregation rather than in isolation in the sanctuary.

Under James, now James I of England as well as James VI of Scotland, and Charles I who followed, the pendulum began to swing back; the altar was again raised up and railed-in in the sanctuary, and all the appurtenances of the sacrament were restored in accordance with the Ornaments Rubric in the Book of Common Prayer imposed by Charles. This did not last, for the Scottish Calvinists and Presbyterians who had come south with James made common cause with the English Puritans, which led ultimately to the Civil War, regicide and the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. As early as 1643 Parliament demanded the destruction of candles and plate on communion tables and two years later vestments, screens, fonts and altars were added to the list of things to be destroyed.

After the Restoration in 1660 the tide turned again and altar rails enclosing raised altars covered with a rich cloth and on which stood candlesticks and plate all made a return. The reredos with its Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer and Creed became increasingly elaborate in decoration and painted altarpieces appeared. The Royal Arms, signifying the supremacy of the state, remained prominent over the chancel arch.

There then followed another period of relative continuity through the so-called "long eighteenth century", a period beginning before the end of the 17th century and continuing until well into the 19th, by the end of which huge numbers of churches were in a terrible state of disrepair and the Church of England itself was suffering a crisis brought on by the growing freedom for Dissenters and the emancipation of Roman Catholics.

Then, with the Victorian age, came a further upheaval and while this did not have the profound effect on people's lives that the Reformation and Counter-Reformation had, it was hugely significant for church architecture and furnishing. The Ecclesiological Society, founded originally in 1839 as the Cambridge Camden

Society, in its journal *The Ecclesiologist* declared that Gothic architecture, particularly the mid-14th century Decorated style, was the only true Christian style and rich landowners all over the country put these ideas into practice with new or completely rebuilt churches furnished and decorated according to the Ecclesiological Society's principles. At the same time the associated Oxford Movement, also known as Tractarianism after a series of essays called *Tracts for the Times* published between 1833 and 1841, was instrumental in introducing liturgical changes aimed at reinstating a more Roman style of worship based on that which prevailed in 1549, before the purges of Edward VI and Northumberland took effect.

The Victorian Reconstruction

Richard Fellowes Benyon, who inherited Englefield in 1854, was clearly one of those landowners influenced by the Ecclesiologists and in *Country Life* in 1981 Gervase Jackson-Stops called the nave and chancel of St Mark's "*a perfect illustration of a Victorian squire's Tractarian sympathies*". An earlier view, from F G Brabant in 1911, was that it was "*...another melancholy illustration of the mischief often done by well-meaning and liberal lords of the manor*" and he said that "*What should have been the finest church in the neighbourhood has been transformed into a tasteless modern building*". This is perhaps putting it a bit strongly for, as we know, there were many other local churches similar in appearance to St Mark's before its reconstruction and nothing that we can see to mark it down as a particularly fine example of anything. Like many others it was probably in a poor state of repair. Nowadays we tend to place a greater value on Victorian Gothic and at least we have the opportunity to view both styles in the locality.

Only a year after Benyon inherited, the Reading Mercury of 26th May 1855 reported the erection of a new church at Englefield on the site of the old one then, it said, already in the process of removal. What emerged was the building we see today - straight from the Ecclesiological design book and apparently from the 14th century, but in reality even now only a little over 160 years old. Further work continued throughout the remainder of Richard Benyon's life that saw the interior of the church increasingly transformed. The rebuilding went on until 1857 or 58 and during that time services were held in the Long Gallery at Englefield House, which Mr Benyon had fitted-out for the purpose.

The work has always been credited to George Gilbert Scott, but Englefield is not mentioned in Scott's own autobiography *Personal and Professional Recollections*, though he dwells at some length on his work at nearby St Andrew's, Bradfield, in 1848. Nor do any of the catalogues of Scott's work include it. The Journal of the Royal Institution of British Architects published in 1958 a supposedly complete list of Scott's buildings which does not include St Mark's but notes the exclusion from the list of a further 21 buildings "*that were mere consultations*".

The earliest attribution seems to be that in the Dutton Allen Directory of Berkshire in 1863, "*under the direction of Mr Scott*". In the Reading Mercury of 25 June 1866 a column, "Rides and Rambles Round Reading" by "Viator" also mentions the restoration "*...a few years since...under the able direction of Scott*". These sources deserve credence as they are more or less contemporary with the work, however, a number of stories concerning Englefield seem to have arisen, or at least been published more widely, during the 19th century without any evidence cited and later sources

are no more dependable for most simply repeat (sometimes almost verbatim) the unattributed comments in the earlier works.. In this case a report of the Newbury Field Club visit in September 1873 uses exactly the same form of words as do nearly all later accounts, including those by Keyser (1911), Jackson-Stops (1981) and Murray's Handbook for Travellers in Berks, Bucks and Oxfordshire in 1882. The Victoria County History (1924), usually meticulous in its references has none for its attribution to Scott, though Pevsner (1966) is usually regarded as authoritative.

The 1850s and 60 were a very busy time for Scott, as recollected by Sir Thomas Jackson, a pupil from 1858 to 61: *"He was up to the eyes in engagements and it was hard to get him to look at our work. I have seen three or four men with drawings awaiting correction or approval grouped around his door. The door flew open and out he came. 'No time today!'; the cab was at the door and he was whirled away to some cathedral where he would spend a couple of hours and then fly off to some other great work at the other end of the kingdom"*.

Nor is Scott the only candidate for in a copy of Keyser's book found in the vestry are two loose sheets of paper, one of which, dated May 1966, has the address "The Lambdens" making them probably the work of Vice Admiral Richard Benyon (Shelley) who inherited the estate in 1959. On them are some notes referring to Keyser's text. Regarding the rebuilding, there is a comment *"Restoration in 1857 by P C Hardwick. Further restoration in 1874 by Sir George Gilbert Scott and this includes the tower and spire"*. A reference is made to "Martindale and Lister" apparently as the source of this information but no trace of anything by these authors can be found. The 1949 edition of Murray's Berkshire Guide, written by Betjeman and Piper, also attributes the work to Hardwick and Scott with the same dates, though is not specific about the tower and spire.

Philip Charles Hardwick (1822-1892) was an architect who trained under Edward Blore, seemingly about the time that Blore and Armstrong were working for Richard Benyon's brother. The Dictionary of National Biography refers to him as *"in the second rank of the Gothic Revival"*. Like Scott, Hardwick submitted a design for the Albert Memorial and although Scott's was chosen by the committee the Queen is said to have preferred Hardwick's. Betjeman and Piper in 1949, and Pevsner a decade or so later, say that the Rectory, built 1870, is by Hardwick who also built Aldermaston Court in 1848-51 after fire destroyed the original house. The house was then bought by Charles Keyser in 1893. Pevsner credits Hardwick with the building of a new Rectory at Englefield in 1870 and Betjeman and Piper attribute the new school to him in 1863.

The architect employed by Richard Benyon to work on Englefield House at that time was Richard Armstrong who also acted as Clerk of the Works for Edward

Blore between 1839 and 1843 during the building of Haveringland Hall in Norfolk for Edward Fellowes, Richard Benyon's brother about same the time that Hardwick was in training. Armstrong had a son, also Richard, who was apprenticed to his father in 1860. Scott certainly knew the Armstrongs, for when Richard Armstrong junior applied for Fellowship of the Royal Institution of British Architects in 1876 Scott was one of his supporters. Scott, Armstrong and Hardwick were all, in varying degrees, noted exponents of the Gothic Revival and all three played some part in the rebuilding of the estate. The *Dictionary of Scottish Architects* in a section on Richard Armstrong, says that "*For the restoration of Englefield Church, George Gilbert Scott was brought in...*".

As so many things said about Englefield or the church can easily be proved to be wrong, or at least not necessarily right, a certain amount of scepticism is not unwarranted in the absence of any hard primary evidence. For example, a date of 1874 for the building of the tower and spire, by Scott or another, is obviously wrong, for the Newbury Field Club report in 1873 says they were added "*a few years ago*", consistent with the normally given date of 1868.

However, there is a letter sent by Scott from his Spring Gardens office to Richard Benyon, dated 26th September 1855. In the letter Scott defends his decision to repair the Englefield Chapel and keep it in the style of the time it was first built (1514) rather than to rebuild it in an earlier style to be consistent with the rest of the church. This would seem to settle the matter and confirm that Scott certainly did drawings for both the building and its fittings. The records of the Cambridge firm of ecclesiastical woodworkers Rattee and Kett also show that they delivered a new oak reredos to Englefield for GG Scott in 1858.

Probably the day to day supervision of the work was by Armstrong and two other churches in villages nearby that form part of the wider Englefield estate were also rebuilt shortly after Englefield, at Richard Fellowes Benyon's expense with the architecture attributed to Armstrong: St Peter's at Ufton Nervet (1862) and St Mary's at Stratfield Mortimer (1869). Both are very similar in style to Englefield and stated in the Historic England listing to be by Armstrong but the Berkshire Chronicle of 4th September 1869 in recording the completion of St Mary's church and the presentation of a testimonial to William Rhind, Clerk of Works for the Englefield Estate who kept comprehensive and meticulous records, says that "*the architectural designs of the church were entrusted to and successfully carried out by him*". The gate screen and lodges at the end of the private drive to Englefield House, built in 1862, are in similar style and materials to the Rectory and school (both supposedly by Hardwick) are attributed by Historic England to Armstrong.

It is unlikely that the church was completely demolished as the newspaper reported, but the simple rendered finish on the outside was replaced by knapped flint and the square-headed windows became pointed Gothic lances. The inner part of the wall may have remained for there are a number of pre-1855 memorial tablets on the east and south walls of the aisle and the doorways all retain their original arches, although the niches containing the two recumbent figures in the south wall were replaced. With these constraints the insertion of the new windows in the south elevation involved a certain amount of accommodation on the inside to preserve the external symmetry. The western one abuts the porch a little too closely due to the off-centre placing of the door and from the inside the buttressing of the doorway intrudes into the window opening. The eastern window appears well-placed from the outside but from the inside it will be seen that it has had to be fitted around the monument to Mary Benyon.

In 1868 the tower was rebuilt and the tall, pointed spire added, very probably by Armstrong for it is identical to the ones at Ufton and Mortimer that he was building around the same time. A priest's vestry was accommodated at its base. The last addition was in 1907 when a choir vestry was added alongside the one for the priest, on the very spot where on the night of Tuesday 19th March in that year the weathercock from the spire had landed after being blown down by a gale.

From the outside it is hard to believe that the Victorian transformation, with its spire, knapped flint walls, lancet windows and new porch, is the same church as that depicted by Tomkins.

The Consecration Cross

On the south-west corner buttress of the church (to the left of the main door) is a cross of a form often called a "Maltese cross" carved into the stonework. This cross is not strictly a Maltese cross but a form of "Greek cross" called a "*cross pattée*", a symbol associated with the Knights Templar although that is of no relevance here.

This appears to be one of the set of consecration crosses that were placed on church walls in the Middle Ages as visible evidence of the dedication of a newly-funded church to the exclusive service of God, symbolising the victory of Christ and providing a defence against demoniacal powers. It must have been cut out from the original church wall and placed here by George Gilbert Scott



when the church was rebuilt in 1855, though it is actually placed too low down as it would originally have been about eight feet above the ground to protect it from defilement. Consecration crosses were enclosed in an incised circle that isn't present here but the rounded corners of the stone suggest that the circle may have been lost in the removal from the old wall.

The full set of consecration crosses numbered 24: 12 around the outside walls and three on each of the inside walls. These were either carved in stone or cast in metal and all were painted red. At the consecration the Bishop would anoint each cross with Chrism, saying the words, "*Santificetur hoc templum*" (blessed be this church). Each of the interior crosses was provided with a candle bracket, the twelve crosses with illuminated candles symbolising the world's enlightenment through the twelve apostles.

Inside the Church

Like the exterior, the interior as we see it today is not as it would have originally been. Were there, prior to 1855, the common 18th century furnishings of box pews, high-backed seats, three-decker pulpit and gallery? We cannot say, for unlike the exterior, there is no pictorial evidence of how it was before the 20th century and written evidence only from the middle of the 19th. In fact, by then it had probably already been through several evolutions.

If the outside of the church today is more decorated than the original, the inside is almost certainly less so; less so now, in fact, than it was 100 years ago. Originally the church would presumably have been quite richly decorated, with religious images and artefacts and there is an original moulded image bracket on the east wall of the aisle above the squint. As well as the high altar there may have been other subsidiary altars or shrines belonging to fraternities and perhaps the original chantry, all with their burning candles. Of the subsequent changes wrought by the Reformation and the reigns of King Edward VI, Queens Mary and Elizabeth, King Charles I, the Commonwealth and the Restoration we know nothing but can assume there would have been repeated changes in both the style of worship and the space in which it was conducted.

The rubric in the Book of Common Prayer reminds us that *“The Table at the Communion-time ...shall stand in the Body of the Church or the Chancel... and the Priest standing at the north side of the table...”*

so we may assume that at some time, perhaps even right up until the 1850s rebuild, the chancel and sanctuary were a single open space with a level floor and the Table positioned as directed. Certainly the choir stalls, altar rails and an altar were all new in 1857 and the sanctuary floor was obviously raised before the rails were installed.

Whatever the state of the interior at the beginning of the 19th century we know that, other than some tombs and monuments, little or nothing of the present interior dates from before 1855. The restoration that took place

Carpentry work carried out in the church 1855-1857

Church roof	£277 8s 9d
Chancel roof	£172 12s 11d
Chapel roof	£113 7s 6d
Tower and spire	£387 2s 1d
Porch	£30 12s 0d
Seats	£354 14s 0d
Chancel stalls	£74 15s 0d
Altar rail	£12 10s 0d
Altar table	£18 0s 0d
Pulpit	£70 0s 0d
Churchyard gates	£23 17s 0d

then saw not only the exterior transformed but also all the interior furnishings renewed. The tiled floor throughout the church probably dates from about this time or slightly later as the tiles are fitted round the pews and chancel stalls and do not run underneath. All of the timber work was carried out by the Estate carpenters and paid for, as was the exterior restoration, by Mr Benyon. Book desks for the choir boys seated in the front row of the chancel stalls were added in November 1891 but these have now disappeared, like the choir boys. The interior as it was in the period between the two World Wars is shown below.



The interior of the church in the 1920s. The memorial to the dead of the Great War, erected in 1920, and without its WW2 addition is present but the lighting is gas, replaced by electricity in 1937, and the Girl Guide colour presented in 1932 is missing.

Decoration in the church

The interior of the church is now probably as plain as it has ever been, and certainly more so than at the beginning of the 20th century for there are records to show that from about 1885 when the reredos was installed a certain amount of decorative effect was introduced, all of which has now gone.

In October 1892 a banner of the Good Shepherd was dedicated, having been presented to the church by Mrs Butler of Lambdens House (widow of the Rector of Tidmarsh and a relation of the Benyons). It was made by Mrs Baker of Wigmore Street, London “...and is quite perfect in its harmony of colour: the face which is painted is all that could be desired.” This banner is no longer displayed but it can be seen just behind the lectern in the *Country Life* photograph accompanying the article in

1981 reproduced below, with another behind the pulpit. Whether the picture is contemporaneous with the article is unknown but it is clearly post-1949 for the war memorial has the WW2 addition and probably post-1953 for the coloured dado has gone. This is odd because neither banner can be seen in any of the other earlier photographs.



The nave and chancel as pictured in *Country Life* in 1981. All painted decoration has gone but the banner of the Good Shepherd is behind the lectern with another behind the pulpit. This is odd because none of the photographs from the years between 1892 and this one shows the banner.

In January 1893, 14 pictures of the Stations of the Cross were given to the church by an unknown donor. They included some scenes not mentioned in the Bible, such as Christ's meeting with His Mother, His falling three times under the Cross and the legend of St Veronica. Some of these can be seen in various of the photographs reproduced here.

Later in 1893 the walls were decorated under the direction of Mr E S Harris, architect, of Stony Stratford. The Rector commented that *"Scarcely anything which has been done to the church through Mr Benyon's kindness during the last few years has been so evident and manifest an improvement, giving such a home-like feeling of warmth and colouring as these wall-decorations. The wealth of invention in Mr Harris's facile pencil is remarkable, no pattern repeats itself, each seems singularly adapted for the place which it occupies."* The lower part of the nave wall below a plaster dado rail was painted a much darker colour. In 1953 repairs to the dado rail and also cleaning and decorating of the walls was required and there is no longer any painted decoration, although the light coloured paint has failed entirely to cover all evidence of the dark colour below the dado.

Some further evidence of a more colourful interior can be found in the traces of a Pentecostal red colour on the half-round string-course under the east window of the aisle and by the south door.

The Chancel

The chancel was completely rebuilt in 1855 on the same footprint as the original, with the 16th century arcade between it and the Englefield Chapel retained. Under the western arch of this arcade is a portion of the old rood screen of mid-15th century date, with a door allowing entry to the chapel from the chancel. The eastern arch is occupied by an early 16th century canopied tomb, originally decorated with inlaid brass. Elias Ashmole says the tomb is that of Sir Thomas Englefield, Speaker of the House of Commons, who died in 1514 and his wife Margery Danvers.



Sir Thomas Englefield's tomb
(Keyser)

This tomb is of unpolished grey Purbeck marble and is probably somewhat earlier than the Englefield Chapel. The two sides exposed in the chancel are decorated with panelled compartments in each of which is a carved quatrefoil that formerly enclosed a shield though the shields have now gone.

The canopy is supported on two pillars at the west end and by a flat slab at the east. On this slab matrices are cut for engraved brass plates but these plates were no longer there by the 1840s; perhaps they were removed as part of the desecration of the church by the Roundheads. Ashmole saw them, though it is not clear when:

his Visitation of Berkshire was in 1665, after the Restoration, so if they were still there then the Roundheads are not to blame.

He may have seen them during an earlier visit, for his diary records his meeting the Rector at dinner in Englefield in 1647. He described the brasses as the figure of a knight in armour, over which is a surcoat of his arms, with his sons behind him and opposite his wife also kneeling with her daughters behind her.

From the mouths of the man and woman are scrolls bearing words. From the mouth of the man comes:

“O good Jesus, thou know’st and can’st and willest good to our souls, we neither know nor can.”

and from the woman:

“Thou according to thy goodness ineffable with us dealest, according to what thou knowest is agreeable to thyself and to us profitable.”

Beneath the figures was an inscription plate, only part of which remained even when Ashmole visited:

*“Here lyes Sure Thomas Englefilde...
Margery his Wyffe, the whyche Sure...
The third Day of April the Yere of our...
V^C & XIII on whos soules Jhu have...”*

Above the figures is space for a plate which may have borne a representation of the Holy Trinity.

The back of the tomb, seen from the Englefield Chapel, is completely plain and flat except for some oak screen work, suggesting that the tomb was erected in the lifetime of Sir Thomas against the then north wall of the chancel and when the Chapel was built in the year of his death the screen work was added to ornament the plain back thus revealed. Ashmole says that this side was decorated with paintings of the arms of Englefield and Danvers and Englefield and Fortescue, though these had disappeared by early in the 18th century.



The plain back of the tomb with its wooden screenwork

It is probable that as well as being the tomb of Sir Thomas this was also intended to do duty as an Easter sepulchre, indeed that may have been its original purpose, and for that reason the brass effigies were placed on the vertical slab and not on the top of the tomb itself.

The floor of the sanctuary was probably raised in the Victorian rebuilding as there is now a difference in level compared to the Englefield Chapel and we know that the altar rails were installed at that time along with a new altar and the choir stalls.

The records of the Cambridge ecclesiastical woodworkers Rattee and Kett show that they supplied a new oak reredos to Englefield for GG Scott in 1858. In 1881 the reredos (presumably the same one) was reported to have been enriched with colour and gold and either at the same time or shortly after a superaltar or retablo was added. This has subsequently been removed although the brackets for it remain. It was certainly still present in 1894 for the photograph on page 20 that cannot have been taken before then, and probably dates from 1919, shows it in place with the cross and candlesticks on it. This shelf is covered with a rich cloth that reaches down behind the altar and is mostly hidden by it.

The Berkshire Chronicle reported that the reredos was dedicated on Easter Day 1885 to the memory of Charles Henry Travers who was Rector for four years and died on 20th December 1884. The pictures of the Good Shepherd and the Gospel writers by Joseph Bouvier (in oil paint on zinc to resist the damp) are a marked departure from the 18th century preferred design, which would have displayed the words of the Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. The two wooden tablets on the north wall of the nave between the two vestry doors have carved on their reverse, part of the Commandments so may have been re-purposed from such a reredos. The probability is that Bouvier's panels were added to the Rattee and Kett reredos of 1858 rather than it being a completely new one. The newspaper report of the time remarks on the two "*adoring angels*" on either side of the chancel window (also seen in the photograph on page 20) so it seems that these were also painted at the same time.

In 1891 part of the floor of the sanctuary was raised in two further 6-inch steps and this necessitated the raising of the central portion of the reredos by 12 inches, which may explain why the top of it obscures the lower part of the stained-glass window today. The new steps were paved with mosaic from Minton of London and another new altar (the one in use today) replaced the one installed in 1857. The design of the mosaic and the presence of the retablo suggests that the new altar may have originally been installed further back than it is at present and that the priest stood in front of the altar. The super-frontal cloth for this new altar was

designed by Mr Harris and made by Mrs Baker in 1892. A further new frontal cloth was presented by Mrs Skipwith in 1920.

While the new altar was being installed the 1857 one (right) was placed “*under the triptych*” in the aisle, where it remains today, with “*its own proper covering and ornaments*” and services were held in the aisle. The triptych is no longer there but can be seen in the photograph on page 28. This altar is much lower than the current one so that when placed in front of the reredos it would have left the shelf with its hanging more plainly visible so it is probable that the reredos and this altar were originally designed as a set. With its “proper covering” removed this altar is seen to have a panelled front with a painted decoration somewhat similar to that on the reredos.



The 1857 altar now in the aisle

At the same time as the second new altar, a wooden screen, made by a Mr Wheeler of Reading, with a pair of iron gates was also put across the entrance to the chancel, where the rood screen would have been in earlier times. This meant that the choir stalls had to be moved six inches eastwards and the stone mouldings cut away to accommodate the screen.

The justification for this screen (at least as expressed in the faculty application) was not the desire to return to earlier practices but that the ornaments of the chancel, the organ, and the tombs and memorials in the Englefield Chapel needed protection as the church was open all day and every day (and still is). Both screen and altar were dedicated on Sunday 9th August 1891.

It was proposed to remove the screen in 1952 but this was not finally accomplished until 1987.

The Nave

Like the chancel, the nave was restored between 1855 and 1857 with lancet windows replacing the old square-headed ones. The new Gothic style chancel arch is not quite central to the nave though it is not known whether this is a consequence of the rebuilding or if it was always so. Whichever is the case, it would certainly have left no room for the Royal Arms, prominently displayed in most churches from

late in the reign of Henry VIII. These were mostly removed from their place over the chancel arch during mid-Victorian restorations and other local churches still have displaced copies on display, but none are to be found at Englefield. Even if any were still in existence in 1884 they may well not have survived the incumbency of the Reverend Arthur Heigham, a noted opponent of Erastianism. In about 1867 when Rector at Newport Pagnell he removed the Royal Arms from above the chancel arch because they signified the primacy of state over church but he was forced to replace them after a public outcry of disapproval.



The east end of the nave and the chancel some time after 1894. This shows on the retable the candlesticks and flower vases engraved presented in that year. On the east wall are elaborately painted angels. The light fitting appears to be of the incandescent gas mantle type installed in 1913 and replaced by electricity in 1937. This may well be the funeral of Dame Edith Benyon in 1919.

As noted on page 16 and seen in the photograph opposite, the walls of the nave formerly were painted a dark colour below a plaster dado and had a painted frieze but none of this exists today. The Victorian glazing in the two north windows of the nave was replaced in 1967 by stained glass executed by Mr Farrer Ball to the memory of Sir Henry and Lady Benyon.



The eastern end of the nave showing the pulpit, lectern and the monument to Richard Benyon de Beauvoir. Some of the painted wall decoration can be seen and also the painted dado, above which is a picture - probably one of the 14 Stations of the Cross from 1893. The north chancel window has patterned glass that is no longer present and it is known that this window needed repair in 1936. The flag must be the Colour of the Englefield Girl Guides which a brass plate tells us was dedicated on 22 May 1932. This may therefore be the funeral of James Herbert Benyon in 1935.

The head of the doorway in the north wall that now leads to the choir vestry is early 13th century so there was obviously an original door here, perhaps a so-called “devil’s door” that was traditionally placed on the north side of the church and left open during important ceremonies like baptism to permit him to leave. The rest of the doorway, though, is modern and the door itself probably dates from 1909 when the choir vestry was added. The one previously here and dating from the 1855 restoration was probably re-used as the outer door of the new vestry

The whole roof of the church was replaced in stages between 1855 and 1856 though some of the original timbers were reused. The new roof of the nave was plastered in between the rafters and in August 1896 some of this plaster fell but fortunately the church was unoccupied at the time. All of the plaster was then removed and while this was being done morning and evening services were held in the Long

Gallery and Holy Communion in the chancel. The Rector noted that the removal of the plaster and its replacement by boards had a beneficial effect on the acoustics. At the same time four new ventilators were installed in the roof to improve the purity of the air in the church. The option of making the chancel windows to open for this purpose was rejected as adequate ventilation could be provided by opening the door and windows in the Englefield Chapel, and as the Rector comments “... *our Church heating apparatus is very defective, and caution is necessary in increasing the number of draughts, or the Church would be even colder than it is.*”



The nave and chancel in 2012

The Englefield Chapel

The Englefield Chapel dates from 1514 for when Ashmole described the church the north window in the chapel had an inscription in black letters “*This chapel was buildd in the year of our Lord MCVCXIII*”. On the east window at that time was a shield of arms, being those of Englefield quartered with Russal and alongside it a double-headed eagle, the Englefield crest. Charles Keyser in 1911 describes the chapel as having one window in the east wall and one in the north wall, although

Ashmole in 1666 talks about a “north east window” and there are two windows in the north wall today.

In a letter to Richard Fellowes Benyon in 1855, Sir George Gilbert Scott defends the decision to leave the Chapel in the style in which it was originally built, saying “*it would be like falsifying history to change the style to that of the church to which it was added*” and “*I thought it would be a pity to destroy the authenticity of a monument, locally historical, unless its taste was so outrageous as to demand it.*”. Consequently that it would be best to “*repair rather than rebuild it, and in putting a good face on the exterior to preserve the style at least which after all is in the style of many of the finest remains we have (though this is certainly not one of them).*”. The irony was apparently not intended.

Amongst the many memorials in the Chapel the principal one is the large coloured alabaster one on the north wall, shown on the right. This monument, as seen today, presents something of an enigma. Ashmole describes it in 1665 as a “*faire Monument, having thereon the Portraitures of a Knight in Armour, and his Lady, both kneeling at a deske; behind him, kneeles foure Sons, and behind her one daughter*”. On the side of the desk are the arms of Englefield and Browne empaled and this is an exact description of the lower central part only of the present monument.



Separately on the north wall, Ashmole describes a brass plate with engraved on it a portrait of a man in armour with his wife lying by him. At the top of the plate are the Englefield arms and crest and this describes the top half of the monument as it now appears rather than any inscribed brass plate.

At the bottom of this brass plate Ashmole also mentions an inscription to John Englefield (died 1567) and his wife Margaret Fitton by whom he had one child, Francis. The inscription goes on to say that Francis married Jane Browne who had four sons and one daughter by him and that the monument was erected by Margaret in 1605. On the floor under this brass Ashmole describes a white marble plaque set in a black grave stone inscribed to John Englefield and Margaret his wife who died in 1612. This stone still exists but the brasses have gone.

Separately Ashmole also describes a brass plate fixed to a marble stone under the monument identifying the last resting place of Sir Francis Englefield (died 1631), who married Jane Browne by whom he had 10 children.

As can be seen, the monument on the wall today has the original two kneeling figures described by Ashmole as Francis and Jane with five children but above them are now, apparently, the two recumbent figures of John and Margaret and the arms described as being on a separate brass plate. There is also now a black marble plaque at the bottom of the monument carrying the same inscription to John Englefield and Margaret that Ashmole says was on that brass plate. A book of 1730 describes these monuments in exactly the same way as Ashmole does, so it looks as if the monument was reworked (or constructed afresh) to be a composite of the two separate memorials at some time after that and the brass plates were then removed.

Even more confusingly, Ashmole's account of the inscription to Sir Francis Englefield on the brass plate fixed to the marble stone (no longer there) says that Sir Francis and Jane Browne had ten children, not five. This discrepancy may be accounted for by the fact that the brass to John Englefield dates from 1605 at which time Francis and Jane did have five children but by the time Francis died in 1631, five more had been born. When the two memorials were combined the inscription was just copied across. What this doesn't account for, though, is, if the alabaster monument was (presumably) not erected until 1631 after Francis died, why does it show only five children?

Perhaps the composite may have been created when the church was restored in the 1850s. In his letter to Richard Benyon about the Englefield Chapel Gilbert Scott writes of a "*design for the monument*" which could refer to the one for Richard Benyon de Beauvoir in the nave which is by unknown hand, but may refer to this composite. Both are in very similar stone so perhaps both are contemporary and by Scott who in this case just combined the monument and the brass without reference to the later details on the ledger stone, which may not have been still there in 1855.

Ashmole also described a blue marble stone on the floor inscribed in Latin to the memory of William Englefield, fourth son of Sir Francis, who died in 1662 aged 53 and this is still in place. A marble and alabaster tablet on the west wall today carries an inscription to Anthony Englefield, fifth son of Sir Francis Englefield, who died in 1667 aged 61. If these dates and ages for Anthony and William are correct it appears that the fifth son was born three years before the fourth. On the plate mounted on the gravestone that Ashmole describes as being of Sir Francis, Anthony comes immediately before William in the list of children so was presumably the elder of the two.

No longer present is a monument to Sir Thomas Englefield, the Justice of the Common Pleas and son of the Sir Thomas whose tomb is in the chancel. According to Ashmole this consisted of a number of brass plates on the wall to the right of the east window depicting the figure of a judge in his robes, kneeling at a faldstool with three sons behind him. Opposite him was his wife (with a surcoat of her arms over her habit) also kneeling with nine daughters behind her.

From the judge's mouth came the words:

"Bless O my soul the Lord, and all which is within me be to his holy name. Bless O my soul the Lord, and do not forget all his kindness."

From the lady's mouth came:

"O blessed happy and glorious Trinity, Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit. To thee Praise, to thee Glory, to thee Thanksgiving."

The epitaph beneath (with part missing when Ashmole saw it) read:

*"Here lyeth
Sir Thomas Englefyld Kt.,
Son and Heir to
Sir Thomas Englefyld, Kt.,
hereby lying;
and one of the King's Justices
of the Comyn Place;
and Dame Elizabeth his Wyffe; the
whyche Sir Thomas decessyd
the XXVIII Day of September,
in the yeare of our Lord God
MCCCCXXXVII
on whose soule
and all Crysten soules
Jhesu have mercy`
Amen."*

Dame Elizabeth, Sir Thomas's wife, was Elizabeth Throckmorton of Coughton Court in Warwickshire and their son was Sir Francis Englefield, who fled to France and then Spain in 1559 after the accession of Queen Elizabeth I. He was outlawed for treason in 1584 on account of his involvement in the Throckmorton Plot to kill Queen Elizabeth organised by his cousin Sir Francis Throckmorton, Dame Elizabeth's nephew.

The east wall is now occupied by three black and white tablets: one to the memory of the Reverend Thomas Knapp who was Rector of Englefield for nearly 47 years until his death in 1817, another to his wife Ann and a third to two of their daughters, Ann and Charlotte. Another tablet on this wall is to Milburg Alpress.

On the opposite wall is a monument erected by Thomas Knapp and his brother William to their father (also Thomas) who died in 1791 and his wife Amey, who died in 1793. Also on the west wall is a plaque to Joshua Loring who lived in Englefield for only six years until his death in 1789.

In the southeast corner is the Norman pillar piscina found in the south wall of the chancel and against the west wall is an old wooden chest, probably the one acquired after the ordinance issued in 1538 by Thomas Cromwell that required the parish to maintain a register of baptisms, marriages and burials, which was to be kept in a locked chest. This chest has the normal three locks, the keys to which were held by the Rector and the two churchwardens so that the chest could only be opened in the presence of all three, but, less usually, also has a separate small compartment at one end with only a single lock.



The parish chest and Norman piscina in the Englefield Chapel.

The organ was originally installed in the Englefield Chapel with the pipes on the chancel wall above it and access to the keyboard from the chancel via the door in the screen under the arcade. This was presumably a convenient arrangement at the time as it meant that the organ did not encroach on the chancel as it did in many other churches. But with the space almost entirely taken up by the organ and its mechanism it did mean that the Englefield Chapel was rendered unusable for any other purpose except storage.

The Aisle

The aisle is said to be only slightly later than the nave and chancel, probably dating from about 1200 when the Norman style was giving way to Early English. Between the aisle and the nave is an arcade of four arches, though only three of them are contemporary with the aisle; the fourth (the westernmost one) dates from the time of the Victorian restoration. Aisles, as noted earlier, were most often built first on the north side of the nave but a reason for departure from this custom at Englefield may be found in the lie of the ground, which rises quite steeply on the north side. Also, from nowhere in the aisle can the high altar be seen which might suggest that it was always intended as a chantry chapel with its own altar and priest and that could have been sufficient reason for building it on God's side of the nave.

Pevsner comments in *The Buildings of England*: "...it is altogether uncertain whether the south aisle went as far west as is supposed" and looking more closely it does indeed appear possible that the aisle may have extended no further than the south door, and the original 3-arch arcade is then symmetrical. The west door (now hidden on the inside behind the organ mechanism and the structure supporting the organ pipes since their removal from the Englefield Chapel) dates from the 13th century though, meaning that the building always extended as far as it does now. The door is very small, however, and could certainly never have been intended as a normal entrance. There are certainly signs that there was some structure across the aisle just to the west of the main door (where the camera is in the picture on page 31) so perhaps the enclosed portion formed the original vestry, which was incorporated into the aisle during the Victorian restoration when the fourth arch was constructed and a new vestry built under the tower. In the 21st century five rows of seats dating from 1857 have been removed to give more space around the font and allow for a more general use of this area.



The narrow west door from the outside. It is now covered on the inside

The east window is a notably fine example from the 13th century, though the stained glass in it with its depictions of the twelve Apostles (Matthias replacing Judas) and St Paul dates from about 1850 and is by John Hardman of Birmingham. Ashmole describes the glass in this window as having two shields of arms on it. The south and west windows certainly date from the Victorian restoration in their entirety and we can see on the inside how these had to be fitted around the monument to Mary



The east window of the aisle with the triptych and altar below. Also seen is more of the painted wall decoration and two more pictures of the Stations of the Cross. (Keyser)

therefore is further evidence that the aisle might originally have been the chapel of the Englefield chantry of St Mary, known to be in existence before 1386, or that it at least contained a dedicated altar.

Under the window in Keyser's picture (above) are the altar (which remains today) and triptych referred to by the Rector in 1891, giving an interesting connection to the probable early use of the aisle as the chantry chapel.

The main entrance to the church is by the south doorway into the aisle and the header is original, though the rest is heavily restored. The current porch must be at least the third to have been built at Englefield for Tomkins shows an earlier one and there would have been another, leading directly into the nave, before the aisle was built. The porch was an important place in the Middle Ages, for both secular and religious purposes. Here oaths were sworn, bargains struck and disputes settled but here too were performed marriage ceremonies (for the lower orders) and the initial part of the baptism rite.

Benyon and the doorway. These south windows formerly had three shields of arms on them, one the arms of the Englefields. Plain glass was installed in 1967.

Close to the northern side of the east window is a 13th century corbel or bracket, possibly intended to carry a devotional statue, and next to it is a hagioscope or squint, assumed to have been blocked when the chancel was rebuilt in 1857. Traditionally the purpose of the squint was to enable a chantry priest at a subsidiary chantry altar to follow the actions of the principal celebrant at the main altar. This suggests that there was originally an altar in the aisle, as there is today, this one being the one displaced from the sanctuary in 1891. The presence of the squint



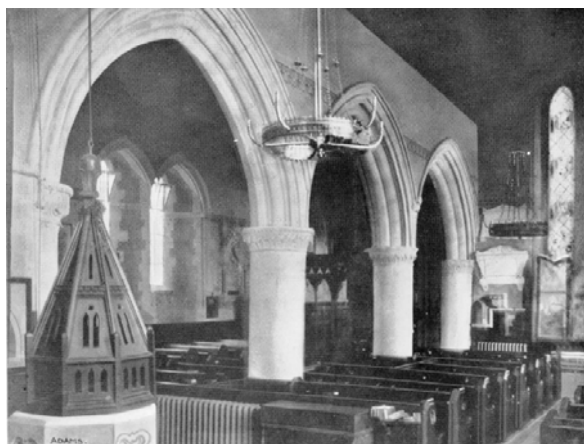
The font is always a prominent feature at the west end of a church close to the entrance, though if the aisle did indeed not extend as far back as it does today the font at Englefield must have formerly have been in a different place. Indeed it must have been originally in the chancel anyway, since the aisle is a later addition. The one *in situ* today is the original one and strikingly similar to the one in St Mary's at Sulhamstead Abbots, though that has simple rounded arches and the one at Englefield has rudimentary trefoil arches that perhaps hint at a later stage in the transition from

the Romanesque style to Early English Gothic, making it contemporary with the original building. It has only recently displaced a Victorian font, the base of which matches that of the pulpit and both are said to have been designed by Gilbert Scott. The original font was found in 1906 (*"lying about in a shed on the estate"*, according to Keyser) and when the new choir vestry was built a year later it formed the central pillar of a table in it, having a solid oak top and base. Keyser photographed it in this location in 1911 (left) but without the top.



The Victorian font

The Lysons' *Magna Britannia*, published in 1813 before the Victorian restoration of the church, describes the 13th century font so we must assume that the original one was not removed earlier following parliament's order in 1645 compelling the destruction of such *"popish ornaments"*.



The arcade looking from the aisle towards the nave showing the wooden font cover. (Keyser)

The assumption has always been that the later font and pulpit were part of the 1855 restoration, as we know the woodwork of the pulpit certainly was. However, the Reverend Granville Gore Skipwith writing about the installation of the old font in the new choir vestry in 1907 says that it was *"removed some thirteen years ago to make place for the present font"*. If true that would make the substitution of the font about 1893, some 45 years after the

major restoration finished and during the incumbency of Arthur Heigham. Heigham never mentions such an event in his parish magazine, though, and he was such an assiduous chronicler that we cannot believe he would have failed to record it if it did indeed happen during his time.

The reinstatement of the old font was first proposed in 1952 and it stood for a time, on its wooden base, in the aisle near the Victorian one but it was not until 60 years later that permission was obtained to make the substitution on the grounds that the plinth was a hazard for the priest when baptising a child. The new stone plinth presents no such hazard. The Victorian font, which originally had a wooden cover, remains in the background today.

In the south wall are two modern arched niches, each containing an early effigy. These are now somewhat obscured by the Victorian seating but Tomkins drew the effigies in their old setting at the same time as he drew the outside of the church and before the new seats were installed.



The effigies as drawn by Tomkins

Fletcher in *A Tour Round Reading* supposed that the male one was meant “to represent Alwin, a Crusader, who, according to domesday-book, was lord of the manor in the 11th century, and is not unlikely to have been the founder of the Church”. This proposition is hugely confused and unlikely to say the least as Alwin Horne was lord of the manor before the Norman Conquest so could neither have been the founder of the church nor a Crusader. *The Victoria County History*, Keyser and the Lysons are all more circumspect and describe the eastern one as being simply of a cross-legged knight in full armour, with his feet against a lion (Fletcher says a dog). Ashmole describes him as having a “loose Coate girt close to him” on which are the arms of Englefield. He is said to be in the act of drawing his sword, the lower part, which seems to have rested on a small dragon, but is broken away. Actually, from the position of his right hand he seems more likely to be sheathing the sword, perhaps a metaphor for death. It is supposed from marks on the effigy that there was formerly a shield attached and Ashmole notes “his shield is tore away”.

He has the left leg crossed over the right, sometimes taken to mean the person portrayed took part in the crusades, though that theory is now largely disregarded. There is no record of who this represents, but the date appears to be late in the 13th or early in the 14th century, so we may therefore assume that he was the chief representative of the Englefield family at that period, none of whom is known to have participated in the Crusades. The only known soldier of around this period was John Englefield who went to Spain with John of Gaunt in 1386 and in 1393 expressed a wish to be buried in the Chapel of St Mary at Englefield, though this is much too late for an attribution of late 13th or early 14th century. The Englefield of that time was Sir Roger Englefield, one of the knights of the shire in the parliaments of 1307 and 1312, who died about 1317 and who this is now thought to be. This date is probably too late for him to have been the builder of the aisle although his presence here may indicate that he was the founder of the Chantry housed in it. This effigy is composed of a hard free-stone, which was the material generally used at that time, and was probably coloured though no traces remain.

The effigy under the second arch is a of a lady and carved from oak. She is also lying on her back, with her head resting on a pillow and has a curious head-dress fitting close to the head, and the wimple, the sign of widowhood, under the chin. There was colouring on this effigy too, though not now discernible. This effigy is also considered to represent a lady of the Englefield family dating from about the year 1340, now thought to be Joan Englefield, widow of Sir Roger, who died in that year.



The aisle today with its original 13th century window and arcade

The Church Plate

By far the greater part of the existing plate dates from the mid to late 19th century and, in particular, around the time of the erection of the new altar in 1891. This is probably a consequence of the move to a Higher Church form of worship consistent with the views of the Oxford Movement, of which Englefield was clearly a part.

An inventory of about 1895 lists: a silver chalice with cover dated 1577; a jewelled silver altar cross; 4 silver vases and a pair of silver altar lights; a pair of 3-branch silver vesper lights; a silver alms dish; a silver chalice and paten; a silver paten and alms dish, the latter marked 1892; 2 silver mounted cruets on a silver stand; a pewter tankard dated 1679; a small silver private chalice and paten of 1872; 2 small silver patens of 1893 and 1895; a small silver wafer box; and a small silver bread box. A number of the smaller pieces were given by the Rev Arthur Heigham and bear his initials.

Two silver flower vases are inscribed *"To the glory of God and in remembrance of Sept 27 1894"* and these are known to have been presented by Miss Edith Benyon just prior to her marriage to Mr Alfred Hoare on the date given. The jewelled silver altar cross is engraved *"To the glory of God for use in St Mark's church Englefield a thank offering given by one on Lady Day 1892 in remembrance of her marriage day"*. This may well have been given by Miss Julia Benyon, sister of Edith, who was married to Mr Anthony Wingfield on 9 February 1888. The silver vesper lights were given by her mother in 1895.

The 1577 chalice obviously somehow survived the 1643 Puritan ordinance ordering the destruction of all plate on communion tables. This chalice is still sometimes used today.

The pewter tankard listed in the inventory was inscribed *"1679 R H & W K Churchwardens of Englefield"*. These initials are those of Robert Horne and William Kent, elected as Churchwardens in 1678, who are said to have donated the church plate jointly. This plate was presumably to replace that lost or confiscated during the Puritan period and, if the tankard is a sample, was possibly all of base metal, hence the later replacement by silver items.

The tankard is also listed in the *Victoria County History of Berkshire* published in 1924, but it is no longer to be found. In September 1894 the Rector notes: *"A pair of Silver Candlesticks have taken the place of the brass ones on our High Altar, they bear the inscription - 'In memory of M.A.E.H.' Sufficient identification for the present, but the words may possibly puzzle future generations in Englefield long after the remembrance of the present Rector and*

inhabitants has passed away.” He elaborates no further but we know that his mother was Mary Anne Elizabeth Heigham and that she had died on 16 September 1892. These candlesticks are also still in use today, as is the jewelled cross mentioned in the inventory above.

Of the displaced brass candlesticks there is no trace but a plain brass cross graces the side altar in the aisle and there is also still a brass offertory dish and a ewer, used to fill the front.

Memorials

The church contains a good number of monuments and memorials, both ledger stones and wall tablets, and some of these have already been described. None, other than a few brass plates commemorating deceased Rectors and two simple modern tablets to Richard and Eve Benyon in the Englefield Chapel, dates from after the rebuilding of 1855-7 and the one to Richard Benyon de Beauvoir is presumably contemporary with it. The majority of monuments are to members of the Englefield and Benyon families but there are a few to other people, including some that have little or no apparent connection with the village.

There are also several missing monuments: ones that were described by Ashmole but are no longer to be found. One possible reason for this is that the lancet windows that replaced the old square-headed ones during the rebuilding take up much more interior wall space so perhaps the lost monuments were in the space required for the larger windows. As well as the memorial to Sir Thomas Englefield described earlier, Ashmole lists the following gravestones that are no longer extant, possibly covered by the Victorian seating:

- A man in civilian costume with inscription to Philip Englefield, Lord of the Manor, who died in 1439.
- One of a civilian in a gown with inscription to John Englefield, son and heir of Robert Englefield, who died in 1464.
- A lady with only the first part of an inscription and the date 1530.
- A lady kneeling with four daughters and an inscription to Susan, wife of Humphrey Burdett and daughter of Thomas Englefield, who died in 1569.
- A black marble stone near the entrance to the chancel engraved to Grace the wife of Humphrey Drake, who died in 1658.
- A blue marble in the middle of the chancel with an inscription to Martha, wife of Gilbert Wimberley, who died in 1645.
- A gravestone near the south side of the chancel inscribed to John Howesman, "*Parson of Englefield*", who died in 1588.
- A gravestone near the entrance to the chapel inscribed to Mary Walton, wife of Henry Walton, who "*died in childbed*" in 1636.

Richard Fellowes Benyon has a prominent grave in the churchyard just outside the east end of the chancel but the man who was responsible for the erection of the fine monument to his uncle just behind the pulpit has no such honour within the church. He was a notable philanthropist and in addition to the provision of a new village school, a bathing pool for the boys and the Workmen's Club he was responsible for many acts of kindness to the estate tenants including the distribution of food and, in the days long before the NHS, the provision of a village nurse. Miss Winchcomb also remembered that when her mother (widow of James Winchcomb who died in the measles epidemic) needed to make visits as an out-patient to the Royal Berkshire hospital Richard Benyon drove her there himself in a dog cart.

As he was also responsible for the rebuilding of St Mark's church (and those at Ufton and Mortimer, all at his own expense), perhaps for his epitaph we may borrow that of Sir Christopher Wren in St Paul's Cathedral: *si monumentum requiris, circumspice* (if you seek his memorial, look around you).

Among those memorials still remaining are the following.

John Paulet, 5th Marquess of Winchester



One account says that Paulet acquired the manor of Englefield through his second wife, Honora de Burgh, granddaughter of Sir Francis Walsingham and that Walsingham had been granted the manor by Queen Elizabeth after Sir Francis Englefield, the last of the family, and the last Roman Catholic, to own the estate fled abroad and was convicted of treason in 1584 for plotting the return of a Catholic monarch to the English throne. This can be traced to the Lysons, who stated as much in their *Magna Britannia* of 1813 but who, all the hard evidence suggests, had fallen for the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy. No such Crown grant has been found and there is a documented (if complicated) alternative line of descent from other Crown grantees.

What is clear is that from 1635 the manor was in Paulet's hands, as was Basing House which he defended heroically but unsuccessfully against the Parliamentary forces in 1645. Paulet was imprisoned in the Tower and his lands, including Englefield, were sequestered.

Englefield was bought in 1649 by Sir Thomas Jervoise but at some time in the 1650s Paulet returned there and, since Basing House was now a ruin, remained until his death in 1675.

His ledger stone is at the east end of the south aisle, together with those of his second wife, son John and daughter, also Honora. On the north wall of the nave is also this monument erected by his third wife, Isabella, daughter of Viscount Stafford. Unusually the monument does not bear the name of the man it commemorates but carries his arms, impaled with those of his third wife, and surmounted by a marquess's coronet and supported by a unicorn and a swan. Underneath is the motto: "*Donec pax reddit terris*".

In recognition of his stout defence of Basing the monument carries an inscription by the Poet Laureate John Dryden:

*He who in impious times untainted stood,
And 'midst Rebellion durst be just and good;
Whose Armes asserted, and whose sufferings more
Confirm'd the cause for which he fought before,
Rests here, rewarded by an Heavenly Prince
For what his earthly could not recompence.
Pray (Reader) that such times no more appeare,
Or, if they happen, learn true Honour here.
Ark of thy Age's faith and Loyalty,
Which (to preserve them) Heav'n confined in thee.
Few subjects could a King like them deserve,
And fewer such a King so well could serve.
Blest King, blest Subject, whose exalted state
By sufferings rose, and gave the law to fate.
Such Soules are rare, but mighty patterns given
To Earth, were meant for ornaments to Heaven.*

Paulet was estranged from Charles, his eldest son by his first marriage, so on his death the estate passed to Francis the younger son by his second wife Honora de Burgh, the elder, John, having died in 1660, the same year as Honora.

Francis Paulet is said to have married secretly a kitchen maid, Anne Breamore. The secret was revealed one day when a servant whose duty it was to serve the meat at dinner found it poorly carved. On asking whom he should say was responsible he was told, "*You can tell them that Lady Francis Powlett carved the meat*". Lord Francis's opinion of his wife's character is shown by the Arms adopted after their marriage: on his side is the Powlett crest and hers is simply pure gold.

Powlett Wrighte

Francis Wrighte, son of Francis and Anne, succeeded in 1696 but he did not marry and on his death in 1712 the estate passed to his sister Anne and her husband, the Reverend Nathan Wrighte, whose father (also Nathan) had been the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England. They had two sons, Paulet (or Powlett) and Nathan. Powlett inherited in 1729 and married Mary Tyssen. They had one son, also Powlett, to whom this monument on the east wall of the aisle was raised.



The famous map of the Englefield estate by Josiah Ballard shows it as it was in Powlett's time and he also carried out some changes to Englefield House. In 1771 he was one of those responsible for the building of the Tidmarsh turnpike that enabled him to close the road across the Park in front of Englefield House and it appears that he may also have begun the creation of Cranemoor Lake from an old fishery.

He married in 1777 but died childless only two years later while taking the waters at Bristol, as the monument tells us.

Mary Tyssen - the Benyon Connection



The story of the Englefield inheritance and its passing to the Benyon family is continued in the monument (by Thomas Carter after the style of Bernini) to Mary Benyon. Placed in the south-east corner of the aisle very close to that of her first son, this monument was clearly in place before the restoration of the church and we can see how the new window had to be fitted around it.

Mary Tyssen was the daughter of Francis and Rachel Tyssen of Hackney and after her first husband, Powlett Wrighte, died Mary married Richard Benyon of Gidea Hall in Essex. Richard Benyon was an orphan who joined the East

India Company in 1710 aged only twelve. He was very successful in the Company and eventually became Governor of Fort St George (later Madras and now known as Chennai), eventually returning to England with a fortune of £75,000 (equivalent to £9 million today) and a ship-load of diamonds, silver and ivory-inlaid furniture. Mary was his third wife, his first having died in India and the second in England.

Mary and Richard Benyon had a son, also Richard, and together with her first son Powlett, only one when his father died and just six when his mother remarried, lived at Gidea and Englefield.

When Powlett Wrighte died childless in 1779 the estate passed to his uncle Nathan Wrighte and on his death ten years later to Powlett's half-brother Richard Benyon. Nathan Wrighte, together with his brother and sister, is commemorated by this monument on the south wall of the aisle.

The second Richard Benyon married Hannah Hulse of Breamore in Hampshire and they had three sons: Richard, Edward and Charles and a daughter Emma. The family still lived mostly at Gidea and it was only after the sale of Gidea in 1802 following the death of Richard Benyon in 1796 that Englefield became the principal family seat.



Richard Benyon de Beauvoir

The third Richard Benyon, commemorated by a monument next to the pulpit showing the three Marys at the sepulchre, was the eldest son of Richard and Hannah Benyon and was the first Benyon to make Englefield his main residence. He took the name de Beauvoir in 1822 when he inherited the de Beauvoir estates in Downham, Essex and Hackney in Middlesex through his grandmother Mary Tyssen.

Benyon de Beauvoir married Elizabeth Sykes, daughter of Sir Francis Sykes of Basildon Park who, like Benyon's grandfather, had had a distinguished career in India.

Richard Benyon continued the work on Cranemoor Lake started by Powlett Wrighte and it reached its fullest extent during his time, certainly by 1844. He also continued the process of diverting roads away from Englefield when he caused

the road up Blyth's Hill to be extended beyond its junction with Beenham Lane down to the Bourne Bridge. In the other direction he built a new road from Parker's Corner to the Bath Road. He also closed Powlett Wrighte's Tidmarsh turnpike after building a new, straight road from the Bath Road to Hogmoor Bridge. The intention was to be able to close the road to Bradfield that ran along the back of Englefield House under the Long Gallery but this ambition was not realised until the year after his death when the New Road was opened from Chalkpit to Bradfield by his successor.

He was also responsible for the removal of the houses from around the church and Appleton's Corner and some of the current ones were built by him, including most of those between the timber yard and the new Tidmarsh Road, known as the "new village", on a realigned village street.



Unlike the monument to his grandmother, Richard Benyon de Beauvoir's memorial is not attributed to any particular hand but the date, the Gothic styling, and particularly the black columns markedly similar to the font and pulpit suggest Scott and this may be the monument that he referred to in his letter to Richard Fellowes Benyon.

Edward Benyon and Charles Benyon

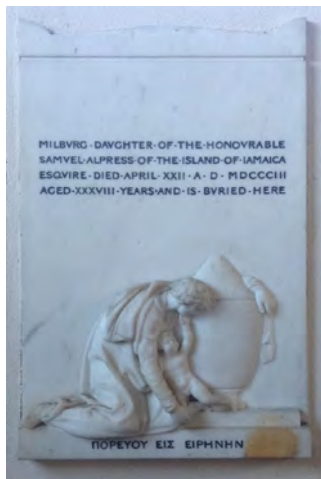
Edward and Charles Benyon were the sons of the second Richard Benyon of Gidea Hall and his wife Hannah, and younger brothers of Richard Benyon de Beauvoir. They probably came to Englefield only occasionally for their father stayed mostly on his estate at Gidea and it was only when their elder brother inherited that Englefield became the family's principal seat. Their monuments are sited fairly high on the east wall of the aisle in the space between the window and the arcade.

Edward Benyon was the second son, born 9 May 1779 and died 25 January 1806 at Nimes in France aged 26. It is not clear why an Englishman was in France at the height of the Napoleonic War and only a few months after the Battle of Trafalgar, although at this time Napoleon's land campaign was concentrated against the Austrians with the battles at Ulm and Austerlitz that drove Austria to make peace with France.

Charles Benyon was the youngest son, born ten years after Edward, on 5 June 1789, and became a naval officer. He was a Lieutenant in HMS AJAX, a 74-gun third-rate ship of the line. Despite the modern connotations of the term, third-rate ships represented the optimum compromise between firepower and ship handling. This AJAX had only been launched the previous year after her immediate predecessor, a veteran of Trafalgar, was burnt by accident. A successor of the same name was to become famous for her part in the sinking of the German cruiser Graf Spee at the Battle of the River Plate in 1939. On 11 September 1810 AJAX discovered a French ship off the island of Elba in the Mediterranean and in an attempt to board her Lt Benyon was killed.



Milburg Alpress



A monument with seemingly no connection to Englefield is that of Milburg (more usually given as Milborough) Alpress on the east wall of the Englefield Chapel, although there is an explanation.

Milburg was the daughter of Samuel Alpress, a successful planter in Jamaica. Samuel was admitted at the Inner Temple in 1755 and went up to Jesus College, Cambridge the following year. While there he apparently ran up debts and was not an able student. He was also said to have started a riot in Ely and it appears that he was sent down without graduating and returned to Jamaica where he married Margaret

Eleanor Aikenhead in 1761. Later he became the Assembly Member for Vere and a member of the Royal Council of the island.

Milburg was born at Kingston in 1765 and married Maj Gen Richard Crewe of Crewe Hall in Cheshire, brother of John, 1st Baron Crewe. They had four children: Emma, Richard (1786), Col John Frederick (1788) and the Reverend Willoughby (1792).

The Englefield connection is explained by the fact that Milburg became the mistress of Sir Henry Englefield. Sir Henry, 7th Baronet, then lived at 5 Tilney

Street in Mayfair, having moved from the family home at White Knights, Sonning, supposedly because of the anti-Catholic prejudices of the neighbouring gentry. The relationship began in about 1794 and in 1800 the Consistory Court of London granted Gen Crewe a divorce *a mensa et thoro*, literally “from bed and board” (effectively a legal separation rather than a full divorce). Gen Crewe also sued Sir Henry for trespass, assault and criminal conversation in the Court of Common Pleas and was awarded £3,000 damages.

Divorce not being so easy then as it is now, the only way of obtaining a full dissolution to enable remarriage was through a Private Act of Parliament for a divorce *a vincula matrimonii* (from the bond of marriage). The following year Gen Crewe petitioned the House of Lords for such a dissolution of the marriage for that reason, Milburg’s adultery with Sir Henry being cited.

A son, Henry, was born illegitimately to Sir Henry and Milburg within a year of the divorce and Milburg died shortly afterwards in 1803. She was buried at Englefield and Sir Henry erected this monument showing a kneeling and somewhat distraught lady and, in the words of Pevsner, “...a sturdy little boy”, perhaps intended to represent Milburg and the young Henry. Sir Henry died in 1822 and was also buried at Englefield with his ancestors and his mistress. Although he was the chief beneficiary of Sir Henry’s will and inherited the family trust, the illegitimate son of Sir Henry and Milburg could not succeed to the title and it became extinct.

James May



James May was a gentleman farmer at Englefield in succession to his father, also James. James May senior was born at Long Sutton in Hampshire but came later to Englefield where as well as being a tenant farmer, he was also a miller at Burghfield Mill. He married Ann Lucy Prince from the village and they had nine children, all born in Englefield.

The younger James was born in 1760 and married Isabella Catherina Lovegrove by licence in St Giles, Reading on 7th April 1790. Isabella was born in 1769 at Benson where her father Robert was tenant of a substantial farm at Crowmarsh with 656 acres and an annual rent of £420. She brought with her a dowry consisting

of some 52 acres of land at Long Wittenham mortgaged to her by a family member for £1,000. Unusually, the income was to go to her and not to her husband.

James May lived at Park Farm, just behind the church, now Wimbleton's, although his will mentions "...the several farms in my occupation". James and Isabella had three sons and a daughter, all born in Englefield. The eldest was James, born in 1790 who died in Englefield in 1840. In 1809, after his father's death in 1805, at a time when the parish was undergoing the final stages of enclosure, young James had a claim by right of common made to the Commissioners on his behalf by his mother (he not yet being of age) in respect of two houses, gardens, orchards and three already enclosed fields.

Isabella May died on 2 March 1835 and is buried in the May family vault beneath a chest tomb in St Mark's churchyard.

Keane Fitzgerald



The memorial tablet to Keane Fitzgerald is something of a mystery for, unlike Joshua Loring who had at least a fleeting residence in the village, no connection between Fitzgerald and Englefield can be discovered.

As the tablet in the aisle to the east of the south door reminds us, Keane Fitzgerald was born in 1748 in London. His father, also Keane Fitzgerald, was a Fellow of the Royal Society like Sir Henry Englefield, a contemporary of his son, and like him

published many papers on scientific subjects. The younger Fitzgerald went up to Queen's College, Oxford in 1765 at the age of 16 and graduated with a BA four years later. He was called to the Bar at the Inner Temple in 1773 and in 1778 was Clerk of Warrants in the Court of Common Pleas and Register of Deeds. He became a Bencher of the Inner Temple in 1803.

Also commemorated on the tablet are his wife, Mary Le Keux, and her father Peter. Peter Le Keux was a celebrated silk weaver of Huguenot descent who had 250 looms working in Spitalfields. Keane Fitzgerald and Mary were married on 29th October 1788 at St George's, Hanover Square.

Fitzgerald had his estate at Underhill Hall at Barnet in Hertfordshire and a house in Dover Street, London. He must have been a rich man because in his will he left

a large number of bequests, each of several thousand pounds and including a total of £8,000 to Queen's College to provide grants for a number of undergraduates each year.

Keane Fitzgerald died at Underhill on 14th October 1765, his wife having died there three years earlier.

Joshua Loring



Commemorated by a plaque on the west wall of the Englefield Chapel, Joshua Loring was born on 1st November 1744 in Roxbury, Massachusetts, a descendent of Deacon Thomas Loring who emigrated from Devon in 1634. Loring's Meadow in the village presumably has some connection with the family, perhaps his time in Englefield was spent in the house that later became a Rectory adjacent to the meadow.

Joshua's father, also Joshua, joined the Royal Navy in 1745 after commanding a Boston privateer vessel, when he was captured by the French and released in a prisoner exchange on account of respect for his gallant resistance to superior force. Joshua Loring snr went on to become a Commodore in the Royal Navy, commanding operations against the French on the Great Lakes until a cannon shot tore the calf of his right leg on 23rd August 1760. He then established a large estate at Jamaica Plain near Boston in Massachusetts. The family occupied a prominent and esteemed place in local society until in August 1774 Joshua accepted General Thomas Gage's appointment to the Governor's Council by writ of mandamus - contrary to established tradition that Council members were elected by representatives of the people. From that time on never a good word was said about the family, and great many that were bad.

When the Revolutionary War started Joshua was forced to take sides and chose that of the King. Most accounts state that Loring fled to relative safety in Boston either on the morning of the Battle of Lexington (19th April 1775) or the day after but a deposition made by his widow in support of a claim for financial compensation says that he left his home as early as 31st August 1774 and never returned. In any case the departure was hasty. Loring left everything behind: his house with all its

furnishings and fittings and his estate with the crops standing and livestock running free.

The family remained in Boston for 18 months, leaving with Sir William Howe's fleet for Halifax on 17th March 1776. They travelled on to England with Howe in 1778, having been named in the Massachusetts Banishment Act of 1776 and exiled on pain of death. Their property was confiscated by the state and sold at auction. Joshua Loring senior died in at Highgate in London on 5th October 1781.

Joshua the younger was also forced to flee Jamaica Plain and served as an Ensign and later Lieutenant with the 15th Regiment of Foot in the British Army during the 1760s and then in 1768 became High Sheriff of Suffolk County, Massachusetts and subsequently Mayor of Hingham. In June 1775 he was appointed "sole vendue-master and auctioneer" by General Gage. Joshua Loring junior went to Halifax with the Army in 1776 and in 1777, as the memorial states, was appointed Commissary General of Prisoners - an appointment it is said owed much to an affair that his wife Elizabeth (née Lloyd) was having with the British Commander in Boston, General Howe. Popular history has it that the loss of the American Colonies resulted from this dalliance so much did it distract Howe from his duties.

As Commissary General, Joshua Loring jnr is said to have been brutal towards the men in his charge and was accused of being responsible for the death of thousands of American prisoners from starvation and disease while they were held in ships moored in New York Harbour. Other testimony, however, describes him to have been "*diligent and attentive to his duty*" and "*of exceeding good character*". Although his wife left for England in 1778 with her parents in law and her two children, Joshua continued in his post until the end of the war in 1783 when he left America to settle at Englefield.

Although he was broken in health and spirit and short of money, Joshua and Elizabeth had three more children while in Englefield. Joshua died at the age of only 45 on 18th September 1789 and his widow, with five children to support, was forced to appeal to the British government for financial compensation. Her petition was granted and she received a pension until her death at her house in Reading on 2nd October 1835, aged 83.

Three children were born in America but a daughter, Elizabeth, born in 1771 died there in 1775. John Wentworth Loring CB was born on 13th Oct 1775 and served with the Royal Navy in the Napoleonic Wars, rising to the rank of Admiral and becoming Lieutenant-Governor of the Royal Naval College in 1819. He died at Ryde in 1870. Another son, Joshua, was also born in America. William Loring served in the Horse Artillery and took part in the retreat from Corunna with Sir

John Moore, from which he never recovered, dying in Madeira in 1812. Henry Lloyd Loring, born 1784, became the first Archdeacon of Calcutta and died there from cholera on 4 September 1822. The youngest child, Robert Roberts Loring, was baptised at Englefield just a week after the death of his father and later gained a commission in the 49th Foot (later to become the 1st Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment) in 1804. He joined the Regiment in Quebec the following July and married Mary Ann Campbell from Toronto in 1814. He remained in Canada, becoming a distinguished Staff Officer in a succession of posts, returning to England only for about a year in 1827/28 during which time he married his second wife, Ann Smith from Yorkshire, Mary Ann having died in 1822. He died at his residence, called “Englefield”, in Toronto on 1st April 1848.

The truth about Joshua Loring’s conduct, and that of his wife, is uncertain. Accounts from the time are divided along partisan lines and sources are not particularly reliable. Certainly in the case of Elizabeth’s relationship with Howe there is far more evidence against any impropriety than for it. There was a great deal of animosity in America towards the family dating from the time of Joshua Loring senior’s appointment by Gage and accounts have been much embroidered over the intervening years by those with a particular interest. The obituary of his son Henry says that Joshua discharged his office “*with humanity and disinterestedness*”.

The Lych Gate and Churchyard Cross

The Lych Gate



The earliest lych gates date back to medieval times and it was at the lych gate that the coffin was rested to await the priest before beginning the procession into the church for the funeral service. In some older gates the lych stone, or coffin stone, still exists although most were removed in the eighteenth century as a hindrance to worshippers making their way into church.

The lych gate at Englefield, despite being of the design common four or five hundred years ago is much more recent; as the Tomkins engraving shows there was only a simple field gate at the beginning of the nineteenth

century. It was erected in 1894 (although Betjeman and Piper in the 1949 edition of Murray's Berkshire call it "Edwardian") and designed by Edward Swinfen Harris, who early the previous year had decorated the interior walls of the church and designed a new super-frontal for the altar. The great majority of Harris's work was in north Buckinghamshire and it may be that the commissions at Englefield came because he was personally known to the Rector, the Rev Arthur Heigham, who had previously had the living at nearby Newport Pagnell. In 1896 he added a new vestry to St Mary's, Mortimer for Mr Benyon.

There is an item of £23 17s 0d for "churchyard gates" in the accounts for the rebuilding in 1855 so these may be the same gates in a new surround or yet another pair

The inscription "*Let it be your care to go down humbly to your grave*" on the lintel over the gate provides a reminder of the original function of a lych gate in words taken from the service of dedication on Sunday 4th November 1894.

The Churchyard Cross

The churchyard cross was dedicated at the same time as the lych gate to "*commemorate the outbreak of illness last year which caused the school to be closed for 3 months, to commemorate the memory of some called to rest, as well as our thankfulness to God for many merciful recoveries and*

spared lives.” The illness was measles, followed by scarlet fever, which broke out amongst the village children in October 1893, ironically coinciding with a series of six lectures on “sick nursing” arranged by Mrs Benyon. The final lecture was on children’s diseases, including measles, and the number of people attending was reduced from the usual 50 to about 30 owing to the start of the epidemic.

With 36 children absent and four others evidently sickening, the school was closed on 12th October, initially for 10 days in the hope that this would prevent any further spread of the disease. However, when the children returned on October 23rd it was found that seven fresh cases had occurred during the two previous days so the closure was extended until October 26th, at which point the school was closed by order of the sanitary authority. The school remained closed for a total of three months and did not reopen until the start of the new term on 3rd January.

Four of the schoolchildren died from the disease: Margaret and William Eyles from number 3 in the Street and Jesse and Cecil Povey from Malthouse Farm. James Winchcomb from the Lodge Gates, father of Bertha and gardener to the Hon Lodovick Bligh MFH who was at that time renting the Rectory, also died, said by his daughter to be from the same cause.

The inscription on the cross also mentions an outbreak of disease in 1890. This was influenza, which ran through the village in the winter of that year. Although no deaths are known to have been attributed to the disease many were laid low by it, including Mr and Mrs Benyon.

Special collections were taken at both services in church on Sunday 4th March 1894 (Mothering Sunday) and these raised a total of £131 10s 2½d - equivalent to more than £13,000 today based on changes in the Retail Prices Index but a staggering £95,000 based on relative average wages. After paying £110 for the cross and £16 14s 2d to Mr Harris for the design, the balance of £4 16s 1d was handed to Mr Benyon who used it in part payment for a new oak gate for the west entrance to the churchyard, also designed by Mr Harris; the remaining cost he met himself.



Churchgoing

While the church at Englefield was presumably intended to serve the lord of the manor and the immediate village it has always drawn its congregation from a wider area. Historically, the nearby hamlet of North Street and the neighbouring village of Theale were in Tilehurst parish and the parish church was some considerable distance away up a long, steep hill. There was no church in Theale until 1832, although there may have been a chapel of St John the Baptist in the 13th century and there was a chapel of ease from 1799. Englefield, therefore, was more convenient for people from a much wider area. The favoured location continues to draw a large “gathered congregation”.

We assume that the style of worship at Englefield followed the various changing dictates of those in authority, along with the decorations and accoutrements in the church. Though there was obviously some delay, for an inventory from the last year of the reign of Edward VI (1553) shows that the Protestant revolution seems to have failed to reach Englefield by the time things went into reverse during the Marian interlude.

“One chalice of sylver and gylte and one pyx of sylver, ij copes one of purple velvett and one of grene damaske, 5 payer of vestmentes viz. one of Russett velvett, one of purple sylke, one of blewe velvett, one blacke vestment, A frount And Table for the highe Altar of Russet velvet and whyghte tynsell saten, one clothe for the Sacrament of purple sylke. An olde canapie of clothe of golde and crimsen velvett, iij cussbens viz. one of clothe of sylvr and velvet, one of Russet velvet and one of reel velvet, one surplesse, iij Alter clothes, iij towelles and ij shetes, one corporasse kercheffe, and iij corporass cases viz. one of clothe of Golde and crimsen saten, one of clothe of sylver and crymsen saten and one of Russet velvet, iiij litle candylstyckes of brase, ij crosses of brase and ij lampes of brase, iij belles comenlye cawled the great belles, A sanctus bell, A hyche bell, And A sacrynge bell, one holy water pote of brase, A payre of sensors, and A ship of brase” (the last to hold the incense).

We must assume that the edicts of the Puritans were at least eventually obeyed at some stage during that “long eighteenth century” and that this accounts for the absence of any early plate except a single chalice from the time of Elizabeth I. That being so, the second half of the nineteenth century clearly saw dramatic changes not only in the church architecture and furnishings but probably also in religious practice.

The Oxford Movement (of which Englefield was clearly a part) represented a return to the days before the Puritans and the reintroduction of more Anglo-Catholic practices, including the presence of the cross and candlesticks on the

altar. In Englefield this probably reached its height during the ministries of A.L.C. Heigham, with the reintroduction of the chancel screen, the raising of the altar with its embroidered superfrontal and more decoration throughout the church, and his successor Granville Gore Skipwith.

The Act of Uniformity Amendment Act of 1872 had allowed Holy Communion to be separated from Morning Prayer and a general pattern of Sunday services afterwards, at Englefield as elsewhere, was for Holy Communion at eight or half past (often only once a month), Morning Prayer at eleven and Evensong at seven. In the 1900s there was a celebration of choral Eucharist on the first Sunday in the month which was evidently the full service of Morning Prayer followed by Eucharist, for in 1906 the Rector shortened the service by the omission of the sermon to make it easier for those with duties at home to attend. Starting at 11.00 he hoped this measure would allow people to be out of church by about 12.30. On Saint's Days and other Red Letter Days there was usually Holy Communion and Morning Prayer and in Holy Week 1906, for example, there was Morning Prayer, Holy Communion and Evensong every day from Monday to Thursday and on Easter Day two services of Holy Communion at 7.30 and 8.30, followed by Morning Prayer and Choral Eucharist at 11, then a Children's Service and Baptisms at 2.30 and Evensong at 6pm.

The attendance of wives and mothers at the morning Service was a subject raised by the Rector in 1892 when children's cookery lessons were provided. His view was that attendance by the children at Sunday school was not as important as that of their mothers at church and that many of the children were quite able to stay at home on Sunday morning to prepare the dinner. He suggested that mothers and children might take it in turns to go to church and commended some fathers who were *"neither unwilling nor ashamed to stay at home in the morning (not idly and for no purpose) but to see to the dinner themselves and so set the wife free to go to church."*

Heigham's successor, Granville Gore Skipwith, continued the move back from the earlier plain and simple approach for in March 1907 after there had been some discussions in the newspapers he explained the Ornaments Rubric and its implications in terms of the ornaments of the church and of the ministers, including the requirement for Eucharistic Vestments such as the alb, chasuble, cope and surplice. The Ornaments Rubric had been included in the Book of Common Prayer since 1559 but these orders were disregarded during the period between 1649 and 1660, continuing, as the Rector notes, *"...even to our own times"*. While accepting that sudden changes are never good for a church or its congregation he hoped *"...by degrees to free myself from the charge of being disloyal to our Prayer Book"*. He

also commended the practices of bowing and making the sign of the cross at the appropriate times

The period from 1890 to the First World War was probably the closest St Mark's came to getting back to pre-Reformation practice and certainly in more recent time there has been a notable relaxation.

Accommodation in the church

In April 1892 the Rector addressed a common question of the time: that of appropriated seats in the church. Although by this time new rows of seats had replaced any old family box pews there may have been it was still usual for whole rows of seats in the best part of a church to be reserved by families. These were often not fully used while the unappropriated seats at the back of the church were well filled and some people had to stand. The appropriation of seats was not formally ended but Mr Benyon gave up three seats on his long bench and others were encouraged to follow this example. The desired effect was apparently achieved for in May the Rector comments: "*The congregation on Sunday evening April 10th numbered exactly 200 and there was plenty of room at the back for more persons had they been present...*". The Rector hoped this would lead to a improvement in attendance at church adding that "*...there is plenty of room for improvement in this respect*". Generally across the country, whatever the case before, the ending of appropriation of seats usually led to a sort of social stratification with the squire at the front, behind him the local yeoman farmers, and the labourers at the back.

In 1911 the then Rector again made clear that all seats in church, except those for the churchwardens, were free and unappropriated and that no one had any right to any particular seat. Nevertheless he felt it right that regular worshippers should, by courtesy, be allowed to occupy the same seats Sunday after Sunday. Accordingly arrangements were made for strangers and occasional attenders to be shown by the sidesmen to seats not likely to be occupied by regular worshippers. At the start of the five-minute bell it was to be reckoned that those not in their usual places were likely to be absent and their seats liable to be taken by others.

At least by the end of the 19th century the church was heated, although it was a simple convection system relying on hot air from the furnace in the cellar rising through grilles in the floor and not very effective. A grille can still be seen under the centre of the reredos behind the altar. In 1908 Mr Benyon paid for a new hot water system to be installed using the radiators still in use today, although the hot water is now provided by more modern means.

The church was first lit by gas in the 1880s, the gas being made at the Timber Yard and piped to the church and Englefield House. At this time the illumination was by simple gas flares that gave poor light but a good deal of heat, the latter probably a blessing in the winter but oppressive at Evensong in the summer. In 1913 the system was changed to one using incandescent mantles, improving the amount of light and reducing the heat. Electricity was installed in 1936/7.

Conduct in church

The Rector, in 1892, felt that one of the Churchwardens should sit further down the church than hitherto and be ready to “*execute the duties of his office whenever occasion requires*”. Although both churchwardens now sit again near the front this wish was evidently carried out for a time because in the *Country Life* picture referred to earlier a churchwarden’s wand can be seen in the second row of seats to the west of the choir vestry door, probably that occupied by Frederick Lamperd and his family when he was People’s Warden. The churchwarden’s duties included not only seating parishioners and strangers if necessary, but also to maintain order and “*occasionally to leave the church during service and see that no loiterers are outside*”. In October 1895 the Churchwardens were indeed required to act to end the nuisance of boys loitering at Appleton’s Corner and playing about near the church before and after Service, and in some cases during it.

Perhaps the boys who were causing a disturbance outside the church were the same ones who in August that year had been admonished in the parish magazine for their conduct in church during services: “*The careless bad behaviour of some lads in our Church during service is nothing short of a shame and a scandal, we are not again alluding to the mischievous destruction of books and hassocks, but we allude to the whispering, giggling, irreverent want of kneeling, and entire carelessness which marks the conduct of some, to the annoyance of those who wish to worship, and to their own grievous injury*”.

Not that their elders always gave a good example for in June 1907 the Rector commented “*We were sorry to see (or rather hear) that stampede from Church during the singing of the offertory hymn*”. He reproduced an extract from *The Congregation in Church* on non-communicating attendance making quite clear his opinion that making a pause in the service or otherwise sanctioning the departure of some of the congregation before taking Communion was a scandal “*for which no words of condemnation can be too strong*”.

Sunday school

In his 1907 condemnation of non-communicating attendance the Rector makes it plain that all baptised children should be taken to church as soon as they are able to

sit still, though this was in addition to attendance at the Sunday school, which at that time met in the afternoon. The superintendent was usually the headteacher of the village school assisted by others. These included Mrs Roake, the wife of the Clerk of the Works, Mr Coombes, the Head Gardener and his daughter Lizzie, and Miss Edith Buckland, daughter of the Head Keeper. In February 1905 the services of one or two others were requested as the numbers attending were too large for the *“small band of teachers”*. The earliest children could be admitted to the Sunday school was four years of age.

In the 1890s Sunday school was held in the morning and the children were also expected to attend Evening Service. There were prizes for those with the best attendance. In 1893 some 69 children were on the register. A boy's football club, a cricket club and special classes at the annual produce show were open only to those who attended Sunday school or the Rector's Bible class. A Boot Club was started in 1904. There were also Christmas parties provided by Mrs Benyon.

In the 1900s Sunday school was moved back to the afternoon, with a special children's service lasting half an hour once a month. A children's toy service was also held during Advent when the children each brought a parcel containing a toy or a garment as a present to a child in a poorer district. At a given point in the service each child brought the gift to the Rector and received a blessing in exchange. In 1905, sixty-seven presents were sent to St George's, Reading.

In the 1950s there was no formal Sunday school, instead the children were all seated together at the back of the nave under the supervision of Mrs Claydon the infant teacher. In those days the eleven o'clock service was always Morning Prayer and the children were allowed to leave just before the sermon. Christmas parties were given in the Rectory. In the next decade Sunday school began again and was held in the vestry.

The offertory

For a country parish Englefield seems to be a generous one, with the collection for the churchyard cross in 1894 representing a phenomenal contribution. In 1678, when Robert Horne and William Kent were churchwardens, the congregation contributed £3 18s 10d (a sum equivalent to over £8,000 today in terms of average earnings) to the gilding of the new St Paul's Cathedral.

From July 1904, shortly before the end of Henry Savill Young's ministry, the weekly offertory amounts began to be published in the parish magazine and from 1905 after the Rev G G Skipwith became the Rector each week's offertory was recorded as going to a different specific purpose, rather than just going into a general fund. The figures vary widely from week to week, though whether this was the result of the

different value parishioners placed on the various causes or just the number in the congregation we cannot tell. In the first few weeks of G G Skipwith's incumbency (including his induction on Friday 25th November 1904) the amounts were:

		£	s	d
Nov 25	Choir Fund	1	11	3
Nov 30 (Festival of St Andrew)	SPG	1	1	0
Dec 4	Church Expenses		8	10
Dec 11	Parish Magazine	1	8	3
Dec 18	Sunday School		15	7
Dec 21 (Festival of St Thomas)	Choir Fund		2	6
Dec 25	Diocesan Church Building Society	8	3	7 ½

This pattern seems to have been fairly typical with something around £8 at the great festivals of Easter and Christmas and anything between two and thirty shillings or so on the other weeks. The figures for June 1910 seem to have been notably low:

		£	s	d
June 5 (Trinity 2)	Church Expenses		16	9 ¼
June 11 (St Barnabas)	Altar Fund		2	6
June 12 (Trinity 3)	Sunday School		4	8
June 19 (Trinity 4)	General Expenses		8	6 ½
June 24 (Nativity of St John the Baptist)	Altar Fund		2	0
June 26 (Trinity 5)	Altar Fund		4	7

Perhaps this was something to do with the time of year, as expressed by John Meade Falkner in his 1910 poem *After Trinity*:

*We have done with dogma and divinity,
Easter and Whitsun past,
The long, long Sundays after Trinity,
Are with us at last;
The passionless Sundays after Trinity,
Neither feast-day nor fast.*

*Christmas comes with plenty,
Lent spreads out its pall,
But these are five and twenty,
The longest Sundays of all;
The placid Sundays after Trinity,
Wheat-harvest, fruit-harvest, Fall.*

In any event, the weekly figures were not published from then on.

An early motoring tragedy

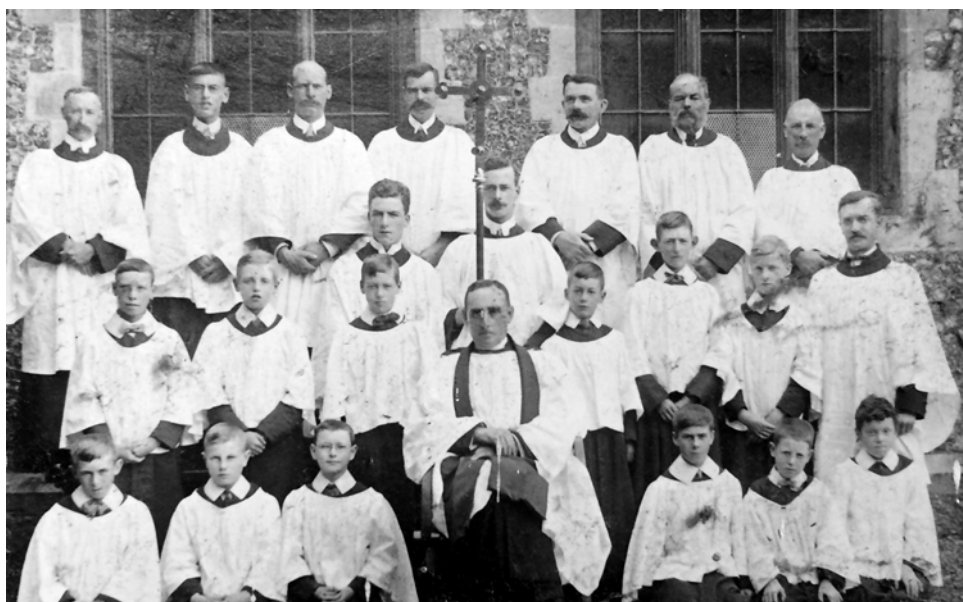
Englefield was the scene of a very early motoring tragedy when on Sunday 20th September 1914, while riding her bicycle to Evensong, Miss Fanny Deacon, aged 61, was run into by a motor car and died almost immediately as a result. She and her elder sister Bessie were spinsters from North Street, and she was a regular member of the congregation at St Mark's. The funeral, however, took place at Theale, in which parish North Street then was.

Bells and Music

Music was not a feature of the ordinary parish church after the Reformation and singing was confined to chanting the Psalms but by 1800 hymns had made their appearance and in the next century, particularly under the influence of the Oxford Movement, the fully-robed choir seated in stalls in the chancel appeared in parish churches.

The choir

Certainly from the time of the rebuilding in 1855 the choir was a prominent feature in St Mark's and at this time appears to have contained girls as well as men and boys, for Miss Winchcomb said her mother, born 1856, was a member and sang with the choir at the annual choir festival in St Mary's Reading, first held in 1862. The girls wore red cloaks and straw hats presented by Miss Frances Benyon. A photograph of the choir was taken in 1901 at the west end of the church but the one below must be later, probably about 1910, and is obviously taken at the back of the Englefield Chapel.



The church choir, probably about 1910. The Rector is Granville Gore Skipwith and the schoolmaster, organist and choirmaster, Mr Golding, is at the extreme right of the middle row. Others identified are Alfred Lamperd (back row, left of the cross) and Oliver Hopley (back row, right of the cross). Third from right in the centre row is Albert Freemantle.

In 1889 Mr Benyon gave cash prizes to the boys who had the best record of attendance at practice and services in the preceding year and at Christmas that year two visitors to Englefield House, Mr and Mrs Whateley, also gave each boy half a crown in recognition of their singing of the carols. In 1893 Miss Benyon gave each boy an “Easter-egg” of 2/6d. In 1889 Mr Davis, the organist from St Giles’ Reading, was engaged to give some extra tuition, apparently with immediate and beneficial effects. This meant an extra practice session each week between January and May in addition to the usual two evenings.

In 1938 it was decided to pay the boys 2/6d per quarter for full attendance and pro-rata for less. The following year the quarterly payment was reduced to two shillings and girls were re-introduced into the choir. Payment was not offered after the War. There was an annual outing for the choir in the summer and Christmas parties provided by the Rector and Mrs Benyon.

Boys left the choir when their voices started to break but many returned once things had settled down. Some boys did not join the choir but did not let this hamper their vocal efforts in church for in June 1905 the Rector pointed out that the object of the choir was to lead the singing, requesting the younger members of the congregation to remember this and appealing to their better feelings to “*try and render all music in as reverent a manner as possible*”. In 1892 there was apparently a shortage of men and the choir was filled up with boys “*without quite sufficient care as to the character of those we have admitted*”. Those boys whose “*...conduct, and steadiness, and behaviour, and reverence, we are not so well able to trust as we could wish...*” were not allowed to go on the annual choir outing.

The organ

With choirs also came the organ, usually situated on the north or south side of the chancel. In many churches the space this took up caused great inconvenience but in Englefield the organ was put into the Englefield Chapel behind the portion of the old rood screen with the pipes on the wall above. In January 1895 the Rector refers to “*...our Jubilee’ organ...*” and the Reading Mercury of 12th November 1887 (the year of Queen Victoria’s golden jubilee) reports the erection of “*A very fine-toned organ, the gift of Mr Benyon [which] will be performed on for the first time on Sunday the 20th...*”. Miss Winchcomb says that when her mother was in the choir in the 1860s they were accompanied by a harmonium. The organ was subsequently enlarged by Mr T T Ginn from London who regularly came to tune it, and in fact died suddenly one night at the Clubhouse while on such a visit.

The harmonium was used in 1891 while the chancel was screened-off for the alterations and the choir occupied the front row of seats in the nave. By 1907 the organ was in need of repair, twice failing during the course of a Service with all attempts to correct things by the organist and blower being ineffective and the singing necessarily continuing unaccompanied. The organ was repaired in 1910 by Mr Trunks of Clapham at the cost of £55, borne by Mr Benyon. While this was being done the harmonium was again used to accompany the singing.

During his tenure as Schoolmaster (1890-1903) Mr A E Robinson was both organist and choirmaster and both these roles were taken on by his successor, Mr Golding. Arthur Claydon, the son of James Claydon the caretaker at the Workmen's Club and sub-postmaster until 1930, played the organ from 1938 until 1968.



Arthur Claydon seated at the organ

By the time of the Second World War the organ was again needing repairs and the harmonium was brought back into service instead. After the War the repairs were made and an electric blower was installed, relieving one of the boys of an onerous task, failure in which was all too obvious.



The organ installed in the Englefield Chapel behind the old rood screen (Keyser)

A new organ keyboard was installed at the back of the nave in 1985 with the original mechanism and pipes placed alongside, against the west wall of the aisle.

Bells

Englefield has a set of eight bells, six of which form the original set cast by Thomas Swayn in 1774 and presumably re-hung after the tower and spire were rebuilt in 1868. The two additional bells were added in 2002 at the instigation of Sir William and Lady Benyon. Over the years many men from the village became ringers and the parish magazine notes that on the evening of Wednesday 17th June 1891, William Vince, Thomas Cox, James Abery, Thomas Harris, Edward Horne and John Abery rang for the first time 720 Grandsire Minors, the full number of changes that can be rung on six bells. In June 1897 Ernest Bruce, William Lucas, Charles Giles, Alfred E Reeves, Frederick Richardson and William Horne rang, in 2 hours and 45 minutes, 5040 changes comprising 720 College single and two each of 720 Oxford Bob, Canterbury Pleasure and Plain Bob minor. Later, on 18th September 1898, a peal of minor, 5040 changes was again rung over 2 hours and 40 minutes and is commemorated on a peal board in the tower. The ringers were: William Vince, James Abery, William Horne, Henry Tucker, Alfred E Reeves and Charles Giles who was also the conductor. Oddly this finds no mention in the parish magazine despite the then Rector being a member of the most celebrated change ringing society in the City of London. A similar board alongside commemorates an identical feat exactly 100 years later.

In 1893 some unusual noise was heard in the belfry when the leather that prevents undue noise due to the suspension of the iron clapper from an iron ring wore out and needed to be replaced. In 1910 the bells were silenced for a few weeks due to the unsafe condition of the tenor bell. Mr Webb, of the firm of Webb and Bennett, advised that all the bells should be quarter-turned and new wheels, etc, supplied to them all, a matter of considerable expense. The Squire, however, gave his consent to the work being carried out at his expense. At the Millennium the bells were again turned and re-hung, with a steel framework replacing the original timbers.

The bells were rung regularly for Sunday and other services, as today, with special *in memoriam* muffled peals being rung at certain funerals such as that of William Horne, himself a bell-ringer. They were also rung on many other special occasions, including Queen Victoria's 81st birthday and to celebrate the end of the First World War.

Rectors

The parish was originally under the diocese of Salisbury but was transferred to Oxford in 1836. The original patron, William Englefield, granted the advowson (the right to present a nominee to the living) to Reading Abbey. He subsequently quarrelled with the Abbey over the gift and finally regained the right of presentation which then remained in the hands of the lord of the manor except for the difficult period in the 16th and 17th centuries when the ownership was in dispute.

It is important to distinguish between the terms Rector, Vicar, Parson and Curate all of which have specific meanings but often get confused and used indiscriminately. The Rector was originally the person who received all the tithes and offerings from the parish and in return was responsible for the chancel and the rectory and for providing service books and vestments.

Prior to the Act of Supremacy in 1534 and the subsequent dissolution of the monasteries a benefice was usually owned by a monastery or collegiate foundation (in this case Reading Abbey) but after the Dissolution the patron of the church was usually the landowner (and not ordained - therefore called a Lay Rector) who had the right of presentation, that is the right to propose (subject to approval by the Bishop) someone to be responsible for spiritual care in return for tithes and the glebe land but without the other commitments. This person also became known as the Rector. Some Rectors collected a number of livings as well as other appointments so appointed someone else to act in each parish (where they may have appeared only infrequently themselves) on their behalf in return for a proportion of the tithes. This person was called a Vicar because he acted vicariously for the Rector. Parson originally meant the same as Rector but came to be applied more generally to include Vicar as well. A Curate (one having as a calling the “cure of souls”) was originally an ordained person in full charge of a parish but receiving a stipend (salary) rather than tithes but later came to mean an assistant to the Vicar or Rector.

In 1909 a list of Rectors was put up on the west wall of the church and this was later updated and moved to the north wall over the door to the choir vestry. This list was compiled from parish records and was somewhat at odds with diocesan and other records for the 17th and 18th centuries. The explanation may well be found in this practice of taking multiple livings and in the confusion between the terms Rector, Vicar and Curate. The actual Rector might hardly ever have been seen in the parish, if at all, and all parish records would have carried the name of his deputy. In 2019 the board was rewritten based on further research and the names are now as in the panel on the next page.

Rectors of Englefield

-	Thomas Latham	1855	Francis Eyre
1542	Clement Burdett	1869	Arthur Clutterbuck
1560	John Howsman	1881	Charles Travers
1588	William Thompson	1884	Arthur Heigham
1596	William Bayly	1896	Henry Savill Young
1600	William Cherrington	1904	Granville Gore Skipwith
1630	Robert Cottesford	1921	Arthur Whitfield
1635	Gilbert Wimberley	1939	David McCready
1656	Humphrey Drake snr	1947	George Ashburner
1694	Humphrey Drake jnr	1963	Godfrey Bower
1708	Samuel Norris	1968	David Cound
1711	Matthew Tate	1976	in Joint Benefice
1759	James Nind	2018	Nicholas Wynne-Jones
1770	Thomas Knapp	2022	Julia Myles
1817	Edward Berens		

The first name to appear in parish records is that of Clement Burdett, whose brother Humphrey married Sir Francis Englefield's sister Susan, although diocesan records mention Thomas Latham who died in 1542, the year of Burdett's appointment. Burdett was presumably the last Roman Catholic Rector and one of those who tried the Newbury Martyrs in St Nicholas's church Newbury on 15th July 1556. Julius Palmer (the headmaster of Reading School), Thomas Askew and John Gwin were indicted for "*denying the Pope's supremacy*". Another of their judges was John Winchcomb, son of Jack o' Newbury, a supposed ancestor of Miss Winchcomb. Burdett called Palmer "*as forward an heretic as I have ever talked to*" and despite Winchcomb's compassionate attitude the three men refused to recant and were found guilty. They were burnt at the stake in the old sandpits on the Enbourne Road. Burdett was also Rector of South Morton and Nicholas Janson is recorded as Curate of Englefield (and Bradfield) at this time. Burdett was deprived of the living of Englefield in 1560, presumably as a consequence of the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558 and the passing of the Act of Uniformity in 1559.

John Howesman succeeded Burdett in 1560 and William Thompson (or Tompson) became Rector on his death in 1588. Thompson died in 1596 and was succeeded by

William Bayley, whose name was omitted from the original list in the church. When Bayley died or gave up the living is not known but William Cherrington (also given as Sherington in some places) was appointed in 1600. In 1610 Elijah Cherrington, the son of William, drowned in the river at Marlow and the body was not found for six weeks. Following Cherrington the original list had John Loveday (no date) but when Cherrington died in 1630 he was succeeded in the same year by Robert Cottesford (or Cattesford). Loveday is known to have been serving as a Curate in 1598 and was Vicar of Bucklebury in 1606.

Cottesford resigned the living in 1635 and was succeeded by Gilbert Wimberley who was not mentioned on the original board in the church. Wimberley certainly was Rector of Englefield from 1635 until his death in 1653, as attested by many sources, and is named as "*Parson of Englefield*" in the Archdeacon's visitation records of 1639 and 1642. His first wife Martha Welby who died in 1635 is buried in the chancel at Englefield with a memorial slab described by Elias Ashmole in 1665. On 12th June 1647 Ashmole noted in his diary that he "*went from St James's to Englefield to table with Antipass Chervington*" and two days later "*first became acquainted with Dr Wimberley, Minister of Englefield*". Wimberley was Chaplain to Charles I and as a result he was imprisoned in the Tower. In his diary for 23rd October 1653 Ashmole records "*My good friend and neighbour Dr Wimberley, minister of Englefield in Berkshire, died*". In 1638 Marmaduke Goode is also recorded as subscribing to the 39 Articles at Englefield and he died in 1678 as Rector of Ufton.

After Wimberley died in 1653 there is no record of an appointment as Rector until Humphrey Drake in 1664. This is not surprising as this was the height of the Puritan Commonwealth and there are few records for this period. It was often impossible to find a suitable candidate for presentation anyway. Drake was recorded as Parson of Englefield in the Visitation record of 1662 and was also present in 1656 according to the parish records. When he died in 1694 he was succeeded by his son Humphrey junior. Humphrey junior died in 1708 and Samuel Norris was appointed to the living in that year. On his death in 1711, Matthew Tate was appointed and is also given as the incumbent in *The Antiquities of Berkshire*, the 1725 record of Ashmole's visitation in 1666. Neither of these names appeared on the first church board, which listed Francis Drake from 1708 and James Smith from 1741. Humphrey junior and his wife Elizabeth had a son, baptised Francis at Englefield in 1698, and another Francis Drake with parents of the same names was baptised at Aldermaston four years earlier, but in either case 1708 is an impossible date for an appointment and there is no diocesan record of such. Norris was also Rector of Tilehurst from 1681 to 1743 and Tate was Vicar of Burnham from 1707 until his death in 1759. In 1713 we find Edward Jones as Curate of Englefield, in 1714 Michael Kirby and in 1716 Charles Hawtrey so these men obviously officiated

during that period. Francis Drake was married at Englefield in 1737 and buried there in 1741 with the burial record styling him "*Curate of this parish*" so he, and later Smith, obviously also officiated in Englefield in turn until the arrival of a full-time Rector in James Nind.

Thomas Knapp who followed in 1770 must have been of some consequence, locally at least, for he, his father, his wife and two daughters are all commemorated by plaques in the Englefield Chapel. There was a house near Hogmoor known as "Knapps" with which they may have had some connection. He was succeeded by Edward Berens at his death in 1817. Berens was also Vicar of Shrivenham from 1804 and was resident there in 1851. He was by 1829 also a Rural Dean and in 1832 was appointed Archdeacon of Berkshire. Thomas Hulse (Richard Benyon de Beauvoir's cousin) was licensed as Stipendiary Curate at Englefield in 1821 despite also being Rector of North Ockendon at the same time and then appointed Rector of Wickford in 1827. Francis Eyre appears to have officiated in Englefield from as early as 1825 for at the time of his resignation in 1869 it was recorded: "*Ill-health and other circumstances have rendered it necessary in the opinion of our late worthy rector that he should resign the post which he has occupied with so much fidelity some thirty years here*". The 1844 register of rents and tithes shows Edward Berens as the owner of the "Parsonage House" and Francis Eyre as the occupier so it is clear that while Berens held the living as Rector, Eyre was at this time carrying out the parish duties. When Berens resigned in 1855 Eyre was appointed to the living on a stipend of £100 per year and the *Morning Advertiser* for 14th May 1855 reports that the Bishop of Oxford had appointed F J Eyre, Curate of Englefield, to the Rectory vice the Venerable Archdeacon Edward Berens. Francis Eyre married Ann Louisa Haygarth in 1838 and they had four children, three of whom died in their early 20s and are commemorated on a brass plate under the west window of the nave in the church. The eldest, Sophia Frances, died at the age of 92 in 1931. The appointment of Francis Eyre as Rector coincides with Richard Fellows Benyon inheriting the estate and the start of the major rebuilding of the church at his expense so perhaps they were both adherents to the doctrine of the Oxford Movement and worked together on the project.

Francis Eyre was Rector until 1868 and was not listed in the 1870 edition of Crockford but in 1861 the inhabitant of the Rectory was John Innes, "*Curate of Englefield*", and Francis Eyre was living at Tunbridge Wells in Kent, though still styled as "*Rector of Englefield*". In 1871 he was still at Tunbridge Wells then described as "*Clergyman Without Cure*" and he died there in 1878, though he is buried at Englefield. Seemingly, Eyre employed Innes to carry out his duties, in the same way that Berens had employed him, in the final years of his tenure as Rector.

Arthur Clutterbuck was the brother of Elizabeth Clutterbuck who married Richard Benyon, some 20 years older than her, in 1858. Their father was Robert Clutterbuck, a Hertfordshire landowner who died at 17 Grosvenor Square (the Benyon's London house at the time) in 1879. Arthur Clutterbuck was born in 1842 and studied at Harrow, Exeter College Oxford and Wells Theological College. In 1861 he was a 19-year-old scholar resident at Englefield House and he was ordained in 1866. He spent two years as Curate at Great Yarmouth and two years more at St Giles's Reading before coming to Englefield. After leaving Englefield he became Vicar of Wooley in Yorkshire and then in 1886 Rector at Hinxworth in Hertfordshire where the family estates were. He remained there until his death in 1907.

Charles Travers who followed Arthur Clutterbuck was Rector for only four years but the reredos was dedicated to his memory. He was the son of Captain Thomas Otho Travers of the East India Company, perhaps known to the Benyons through their activities in the sub-continent. His short tenure was owing to his premature death after succumbing to pleurisy, said to have been initiated when after returning home from Reading with his clothes soaked by a storm on the way, he immediately went out again without changing to visit some sick parishioners. The reredos was dedicated on Easter Day 1885 after the addition of the painted panels.

Arthur Heigham who followed Charles Travers was the originator of the parish magazine, from which a good deal of information in this book has come. He also oversaw some further significant changes to the interior of the church.

George Ashburner announced at the annual parish meeting in March 1960 that he intended to retire at the end of July but died only a few days after making the announcement. At the meeting in 1962 Lady (Violet) Benyon commented on the difficulty in finding a suitable candidate and thanked Canon Thornton for standing-in. Godfrey Bower, a former Naval Chaplain, was by that time covering the duty after Canon Thornton retired and signs the meeting minutes as "Rector" although he was not officially appointed until the following year.

David Cound was Rector from 1968 until 1976 when the parish was merged into a joint benefice with Holy Trinity, Theale and from then the Rector of the joint benefice was the incumbent at Theale although the title was changed to Priest in Charge, rather than Rector, in 2001. Englefield was served by a non-stipendiary Resident Priest who attended to pastoral duties and ran the parish on a day to day basis with St Mark's House being provided by the Englefield Estate. David Cound continued in that role until 1981 when he was succeeded by Ashley Longbotham until 1987 and then Maurice Wood, formerly Bishop of Norwich who as Chaplain to the Royal Marines had landed on the beaches early on D-Day. After that came Tom Ekin in 1994 with Brian Spence in 2005 and then Nicholas Wynne-Jones in 2013.

The relationship with Theale became increasingly fractious, with the smaller (and much older) church at Englefield paying a disproportionate share of the joint benefice costs while becoming increasingly dictated to. The parish voted to petition to end the relationship and this was finally granted in 2018 with Resident Priest, Nicholas Wynne-Jones, inducted as Rector of Englefield on 26th November that year.

ALC Heigham

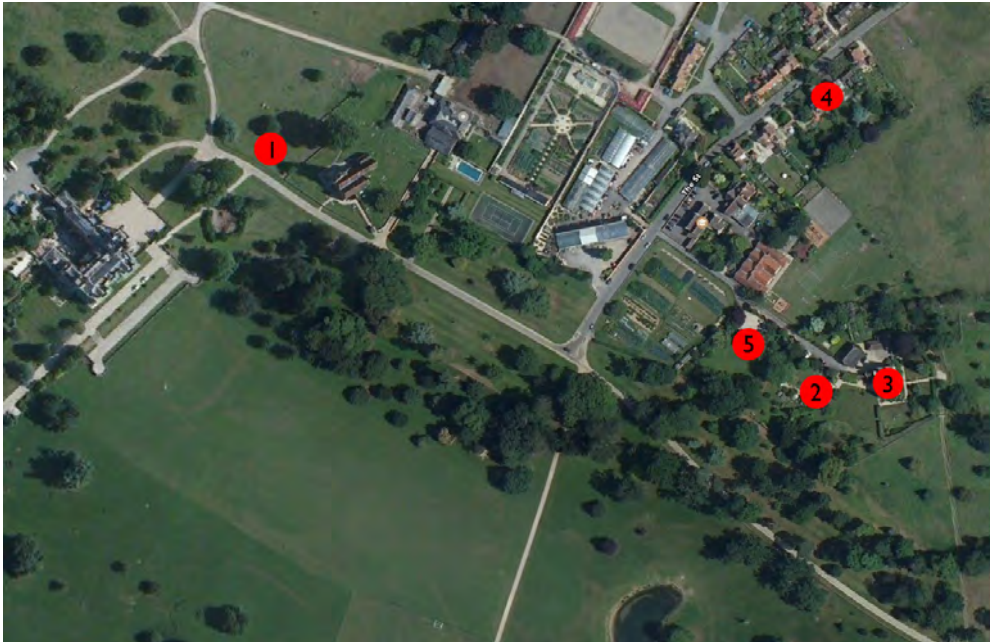
Arthur Linzee Chatterton Heigham was born on 23rd March 1838 at Houghton Hall in Suffolk, the son of Capt George Thomas Heigham (4th Dragoon Guards) and Mary Anne Elizabeth Heigham. He was privately educated and went up to Magdalene College, Cambridge in 1856 where he was President of the Boat Club in 1858/9. He was awarded a BA in 1860 and an MA in 1872. In 1861 he attended Cuddesdon Theological College in Oxfordshire and was ordained as a Deacon at Oxford. He served as Canon at St Giles, Reading from 1861 to 1863 and was ordained as a priest in 1862.

He was also curate at Englefield for six years in the early 1860s and obviously retained a strong connection with the village for he was in regular attendance at harvest home celebrations in the 1870s and often proposed the vote of thanks to Mr and Mrs Benyon. After his curacy at Englefield he was subsequently Vicar of Totternhoe 1864-6; Vicar of Newport Pagnell 1866-75; Chaplain of All Saints School, Bloxham 1878-81 and again 1883-1885 when he was also Vice-Principal; Rector of Horringer and Ickworth 1881-83. He was well-liked at Bloxham where he was credited with instilling a system of discipline and order kindly administered and with an air about him that created an atmosphere of courtesy and gentleness. When he died the school magazine remembered him as someone who *“derided the namby-pamby, Kensington-art craze, through which the middle classes were then passing. He could not bear sham, or cant, or humbug. His contempt for ‘crocodile tears’ was often expressed, more by a peculiar emphasis of the words themselves than by any long tirade; but there was never any misunderstanding about it. He liked boys to be boys, and though he had a dignified presence, and one would never think of taking a liberty with him, yet we all knew that he thoroughly understood the natural boy”*.

He left Englefield in September 1896 and became Assistant Chaplain of St Paul’s, Cannes, France until 1898. This seems to have been his last appointment and in 1901 he lived in Torquay. After that he lived with his sister Mary Anne Eliza Heigham at her home Heather Mount, West End, Southampton where he died on 26th February 1914.

The Rectory

The present Rectory (St Mark's House, numbered 5 on the image below), built in 1963, is known to be at least the fourth in the village and there may have been others. It stands in the old walled kitchen garden of its immediate predecessor (3), now a private house.



The sites of known Rectories in the village

This predecessor, which Pevsner says is by P C Hardwick, was built in 1870, a year after Arthur Clutterbuck came to the parish, and in June that year during the construction one of the workmen, Mr Scott, was seriously injured when a block of stone fell from the top of the building onto his head. The Rector took him to Dr Cox at Theale and then to the Royal Berkshire hospital. It was reported that *"Under good treatment he should be fit to resume work in a few months time"*. An annual rent of 13/4d was apparently payable by the Rector to a Mrs Charlotte Starky of Battle House, Bromham, Wiltshire, though it is not clear why as the land on which the building stands is clearly shown as owned by the Rector on the tithe map of 1844. Prior to 1829 it was owned by Richard Benyon and was part of the land that he exchanged with the Rector in the 1829 Enclosure Act. Whatever right existed was inherited in 1896 by Charlotte Starkey's daughter, Constance Willmott, who gifted it to the benefice in 1908.

The land on which the Victorian Rectory was built was exchanged under the enclosure award for a piece of land opposite the east front of Englefield House and immediately behind the church "*being the site of the Rectory house*" (number 1) then in the ownership of Edward Berens, the Rector. The Tomkins engraving of about 1790 shows a building immediately behind the church so this must have been that Rectory, and probably the one said to have been let during the 1700s at a rent of £35 a year. The map of 1829 shows no building on the site so the exchange was probably made some years earlier and the house demolished. A house already stood on the new land acquired by Berens, about where Rectory Cottage now is (2), so this will have been the Rectory occupied by the Rev Francis Eyre in 1844.

A new Parsonage was built in the 1880s (now 8 and 9 in The Street, number 4 on the image) and the Rector, the Reverend Arthur Heigham, a bachelor, moved into it early in 1891. The Victorian Rectory then was rented-out as a family home to Mr L E Bligh for a few years.

In 1896 Mr Heigham's successor, the Reverend H Savill-Young, moved into the Parsonage for the first few weeks but then settled back into the Rectory. The last Rector to live in the Victorian Rectory was the Reverend George Ashburner, the incumbent from 1947 until 1960, and his successor Godfrey Bower was the first occupant of the current Rectory (St Marks' House). The Victorian Rectory was then let to Major Black and his family and remains a private dwelling today.



The Victorian Rectory built in 1870

The Chantry

It is popularly, but probably erroneously, supposed that the existence of Chantry Lane in the village points to the existence of a religious house there in early times. The immediate source of this was probably Mr Keyser who in his paper of 1911 said “...and it is recorded that at this early period an oratory or chantry was in existence in the parish” referring to the reign of King Egbert in 803. Where this is recorded he does not say but a book on the Baronetage published in 1720 mentions a terrier of lands, also unreferenced, from that time concerning a “*Cantaria de Englefield*”.

It seems to have been Keyser who equated “*cantaria*”, “chantry” and “oratory”. “*Cantaria*” had several different but related meanings. In one meaning it simply referred to any divine service outside the normal liturgical round, perhaps one celebrated in a private manorial chapel. It might also have referred to the building in which such a service took place, though, and a terrier, a designation of a particular piece of land, might suggest the presence of such a chapel on that land. An oratory, the only term still generally in use in 1911, was simply a chapel or other building, not a parish church, established for prayer and the celebration of Mass. Such oratories might have been for private use only or open to others. This term is often used to describe very small buildings from the first millennium, particularly associated with the distinctly British form of Christianity that evolved between the 5th and 10th centuries. The Domesday survey makes no mention of a church or chapel in Englefield, but this is not conclusive as it often omits churches unless there is glebe land attached so there may have been a private chapel.

In respect of the chapel building, “oratory” and “*cantaria*” do share a meaning but the Middle English term “*chaunterie*”, which evolved to “chantry” is thought to have been adopted from the Anglo-Norman “*chanceries*”. It might though, at the time of its adoption may also have been assumed to be a vernacular form of the medieval Latin *cantaria*, as seen in 803. However, while “chantry” was sometimes still used in the 14th century to mean any service in a private chapel, it had, certainly by the beginning of that century, taken on a special meaning: being specifically a Mass or series of Masses for the benefit of a specified soul in purgatory after death. This followed the expression of the doctrine of Purgatory by St Thomas Aquinas (1224-74), as documented by Pope Innocent in 1254 and the Second Council of Lyons twenty years later.

The chantry altar could be established within an existing church, sometimes in a special enclosed area but not necessarily, or in a separate building attached to the church. Separate chantry chapels, which term is not fully synonymous with an oratory, also came into being at this time and were even included in the plans for new cathedrals in the fourteenth century, as well as in monasteries, hospitals and

schools following the Black Death. The chantry priest whose sole duty was to sing the Masses for the donor would also usually assist the parish priest at normal services. The presence of the squint in the aisle of St Mark's perhaps indicates that the aisle was originally at least the site of the chantry altar. The Englefield Chapel is of far too late a date to have been connected with any chantry.

Sir Robert de Fayreford is mentioned in 1280-1 as chaplain of the chapel of Englefield, though that may simply refer to the early church itself. On the other hand we know that there was a chantry by 1386 because in April that year John Englefield made a formal quitclaim of the manor, advowson and chantry of Englefield to William Fauconer prior to leaving for Spain in the army of John of Gaunt and in September 1393 included in his will a stipulation that he be buried in the chapel of St Mary at Englefield if he died in England. This might suggest a separate chantry chapel or perhaps the church itself was originally dedicated to St Mary. From these dates it does become a possibility that, if the effigies in the aisle are indeed those of Sir Roger Englefield and his wife, it was he who endowed the original chantry.

The chantry was dissolved by Sir Thomas Englefield (the son of the Sir Thomas whose tomb stands between the Englefield Chapel and the chancel) in 1535/36. In *The History and Antiquities of Reading* published in 1802, Charles Coates notes the existence of "*one chantry, called Englefield chantry, founder unknown, dissolved by one of the same family in the 27th year of the reign of King Henry VIII*".

Another meaning of "chantry" is the monetary endowment to pay for the chantry priest and shortly after the dissolution of the original chantry, in about 1543, the wife of Sir Thomas Englefield established a new one by leaving the sum of £6 13s 6d in her will for a priest to sing Masses for her soul for twenty years. All chantries were compulsorily dissolved, however, only four years later in 1547 when King Edward VI came to the throne. The incumbent at that time was Nicholas Hyonson.

One means of endowing chantries was by the rent or tithes from land and Professor John Field in his *History of English Field Names* mentions Chantry Field at Englefield as the land supporting the Chantry of St Mary in the parish church. This field, alongside the old road to Tidmarsh at the back of the timber yard, is named on several maps including the enclosure map of 1829 and was in 1779 part of Chantry Farm, owned by William Toovey and Richard Carter. The farmhouse (Cranemoor House) was on the edge of the lake near Parker's Corner but the yard was on the site of the later timber yard, with the bulk of the land a little distance to the south of it and reached via what is now called Chantry Lane. It is this that is probably the origin of the name of the lane, rather than any association with a Saxon chapel.

In 1667-8 a portion of the Chantry House lands was purchased by an unknown donor for £48, part of a total of £100 belonging to the poor of the parish. This land was settled by deed of 20th February 1668 for the use of the poor. In 1731 this was converted to the Englefield Apprentice Fund to provide funds for apprentices' tools and by the later enclosure award 5½ acres of land in 'Theale Meadow (then part of the parish of Englefield) was allotted in exchange for it. The Trustees also held £650 in consols and the income in 1894/5 from both these sources was £24 17s 4d; there was also a deposit of £100 in the Reading Savings Bank which earned interest of £2 10s 3d. In that year £65 had been spent apprenticing three boys. In 1924 the rent from the land was £7 10s a year and the Savings Bank deposit had risen to £150 owing to accumulation of income. The Fund continues in existence and is today also available to make grants to young people from the parish when changing schools or moving into academic or vocational further education.

Parish Administration

The original parishes were derived from the ancient feudal manors and often, though not necessarily, shared the same boundaries. In Saxon times the common affairs of the settlement (the tun) were carried out in the moot but after the Conquest the manor became the main unit of justice and administration under the Lord of the Manor and the Manor Court. From the time of the Reformation the church replaced the manorial court as the local administrative unit and all the public administration of the village was carried out at Vestry meetings, so called because at least nominally they took place in the vestry of the church, chaired by the Rector. The Vestry combined the roles of the modern Parochial Church Council and Civil Parish Council and Vestries were originally all Open Vestries where all parish ratepayers could participate. As populations grew, this became unwieldy so Select Vestries were introduced where only a selected number of parishioners could take part.

The Vestry meetings took place on or around the four Quarter Days: Lady Day, 25th March; Midsummer Day, 24th June; Michaelmas, 29th September and Christmas Day. Lady Day (Feast of the Annunciation) also marks the spring equinox and was until 1751 the first day of the legal new year. That was changed to 1st January the following year, so 1751 only had 282 days. HM Treasury didn't want to lose money so they kept the tax year start as 25th March. When the Gregorian calendar succeeded the Julian one in September 1752, 11 days were removed which meant that 25th March became 5th April. This meant another short year, 354 days this time although the Treasury still charged for a full 365. In 1800 the Treasury moved the start of the tax year on one more day to avoid another loss of a whole day's tax revenue because 1800 would have been a leap year under the Julian calendar but wasn't under the Gregorian one. This is still commemorated in the fact that the tax year runs from 6th April, ie 25th March plus the eleven days that were "lost" in the change from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar plus one day for 1800, the leap year that wasn't.

The Lady Day Vestry meeting appointed not only the churchwardens and sidesmen for the coming year but also overseers of the poor, highway surveyors, parish constables and the parish nurse. It also set a rate to be paid under the 1601 Act for the Relief of the Poor, levied on the notional rental value of land and buildings, in order to provide the necessary funds. In Englefield the Vestry also distributed clothing and food to the poor, set up the fire brigade and ran the school, though the fire engine, fire station and school building were all provided by Mr Benyon at his own expense. In the later years of the 19th century Mr Benyon also paid for the parish nurse so this was not a charge on the ratepayers. Through the Vestry, all

matters relating to the upkeep of the parish and its inhabitants were dealt with in the parish by the parishioners themselves.

The waning influence of the established church and the fracturing of religious membership towards the end of the 18th century meant that by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 the parish lost the statutory duty for relief of the poor that it had held since 1601. Centralisation began to occur when the Poor Law Unions of parishes were formed and rather than the poor being looked after in their own homes by their neighbours they were housed all together (and with husbands, wives and children all separated from each other) in a single, central workhouse that served the needs of several parishes. The Bradfield Union was formed in 1834 with the workhouse erected the following year (later Waylands Hospital, now a housing development) in Union Road. The Union covered some 29 parishes from Goring and Ashampstead in the north to Padworth and Grazely in the south, containing in 1841 some 15,000 people of whom 150 were housed in the Bradfield Workhouse and a further 55 in a Poor-house at Tilehurst. Despite that, ten years later Charles Horne was listed in the census as *"Farm Labourer now in receipt of Parish Relief"* while living in a house (since demolished) opposite the Timber Yard with his wife, 27-year-old daughter (the infant school mistress), 10-year-old son and two lodgers.

The custom in Englefield, at least towards the end of the 19th century, seems to have been that the Lady Day Vestry meeting dealt with the secular business concerning the Overseers of the Poor and the Highways, while the church business, including the elections of Churchwardens and Sidesmen and the presentation of the Churchwarden's accounts, was transacted at an Easter Monday Vestry. In years where Easter coincided with Lady Day, or very nearly did so (as in 1891), only one combined meeting seems to have been held. The Lady Day meeting, held in the vestry, generally seems to have been short and only sparsely attended but the Easter Monday meeting was longer and usually better attended so convened in the vestry but was traditionally held by adjournment in Englefield House. That was unsurprising given the amount of space in the vestry of that time before the adjacent choir vestry was built.

Other matters also seem to have been settled by custom at that time, with the Clerk of Works invariably appointed the Overseer of the Poor and the farm bailiff at Chalkpit Surveyor of Highways. At the Easter Monday meeting when the Churchwardens were appointed (equally by custom, it seems, Mr Benyon was always the Rector's Warden and the Clerk of Works was the People's Warden), the accounts were presented and a voluntary rate was set. In 1892 this was 2d in the £

and it is notable that in 1890, over 50 years after the Vestry's official responsibility for the poor was removed, some £25-0s-5½d had been collected for the sick and poor of which only £16-10s-4d was given out despite this apparently being a time of much illness in the village. The reason for this, as explained by the Rector, was that "*so much brandy, wine and nourishing food of all kinds has been given from Englefield House...*". Eight trained nurses were also retained to attend to sick persons in the village during the course of the year.

County councils were introduced in 1889 by the minority Conservative government of Lord Salisbury, at the insistence of the Liberal Party on whose support Salisbury relied for a majority. Interestingly, the present Richard Benyon who was a member of the Conservative-led but similarly Liberal-dependent government of 2010-15 is the great-great-grandson of that same Lord Salisbury.

The county councils inherited the powers of the old courts of quarter sessions and did not, initially, much affect the running of the parishes but the Local Government Act of 1894 set up the system of civil, as distinct from ecclesiastical, parishes, and an additional layer of local administration was created: the Rural District Council, between the parish and the county. This split church and state, with the Parochial Church Council from then on being responsible for church matters with all other functions of the Vestry meeting being transferred to the new Parish Council.

As the two separate parochial bodies evolved over time their boundaries even ceased to be identical and the 1911 census found that already 58% of civil and ecclesiastical parishes in England and Wales were not identical in this regard. Englefield civil parish, for example, excludes that part of the ecclesiastical parish south of the Bath Road but includes North Street and Mayridge Farm. This causes some difficulties today in the administration of ancient charities that are based on the old ecclesiastical parish and thereby might include some beneficiaries from other modern civil parishes while excluding some from what appears to be the relevant parish.

The rural district and county councils gradually assumed more and more of the powers previously held by the civil parishes and later some of the separate ecclesiastical parishes were also combined into joint benefices by the Church of England. By this transfer of power away from the lowest level, villages lost their independence and the ability to manage their own affairs and came to be controlled by outsiders, often with no connection to or affinity with the parish and with their own political agenda.

The Englefield Vestry continued to discharge its secular duties up to the end and at a meeting on 25th January 1894 there was unanimous consent to an application by the Tilehurst, Pangbourne and District Water Company Ltd for a Provisional Order to construct and maintain waterworks and supply water in part of the parish of Englefield. The company also undertook to apply for a further Order to supply the whole parish with water within 21 years. There was no Lady Day Vestry that year because Easter Day was also on March 25th but at a meeting the next day only the usual church business was dealt with. If the Vestry was responsible for setting up the Fire Brigade in June 1894 that must have been its swansong.

In Englefield the composition of the first parish council was arrived at by arrangement without a poll. In advance of the official nomination date a special parish meeting was held on Wednesday 28th November 1894 to consider the question of candidates and after the names of Mr Benyon and George Roake (the new Clerk of Works) had been approved it was suggested that the necessary number of five councillors should be made up by a representative from each of the three large centres of labour in the village: the gardens, the timber yard and Chalkpit Farm. Accordingly, Daniel Harris (timber yard), Thomas Dixon (gardens) and Henry Horne (Chalkpit Farm) were nominated. At the official nomination meeting held on Tuesday 4th December 1894 with the Rector in the chair and 27 of the 54 parochial electors present no other nominations were made and so these five were duly declared as the first parish councillors for the new civil parish of Englefield. The first meeting of the new Parish Council was held in Englefield House on 17th December

The Englefield Parish Magazine

The parish magazine was begun at the start of 1886 by the then Rector, Arthur Heigham. The magazine appeared every month under his name, even when he was away from the parish on holiday in resorts around the country and even as far away as Bad Homburg in Germany. This was no mean feat given that his copy had to be written out and sent to the printer for setting in metal type and printing. The diminishing number of people with experience of producing publications in the days before computers, email, laser printers and photocopiers will appreciate what a task this must have been. The magazine almost always ran to four octavo pages (roughly A5), sometimes only three but occasionally six.

In the time of Heigham's successor, Henry Savill Young, the magazine continued in production in the same format, though never carried his name and was sometimes notably thinner in content. When he moved on, the next incumbent, Granville Gore Skipwith, maintained the same format for a year then in 1905 changed it to a quarto size with a cover page showing a photograph of the church.

While the magazines do provide a valuable historical record of events in the village that would otherwise go unrecorded, it is a source of frustration to historians that the editor sometimes resorts to a degree of circumlocution and fails to provide essential details such as names. ALC Heigham was guilty of this in 1894 in connection with the new altar candlesticks and Henry Savill Young does the same thing in 1903 by referring to "*...the loss of one who was in her days of health a regular communicant and attendant on the services of our Church*". We now know that this was Letitia Mary Palmer the wife of William Palmer, the bailiff at Chalkpit Farm.

From its inception the magazine was priced at one penny a month and was still at this price in 1919, despite by then costing sevenpence a copy to print and the annual cost of production having risen from £18 to £33. In January that year various options were considered: to cease publication, to raise the price to threepence or to keep the price at one penny and invite subscribers who could afford to do so to make an extra contribution. In the event the last of these was chosen and several people did send in "*generous additions*". However, as in previous years a number of subscriptions remained unpaid resulting in a dead loss overall of £11 on the year. At the end of the year, the printers' wages having risen by seven shillings and sixpence a week, it was reluctantly decided that publication would have to cease.

The subject of the parish magazine was discussed occasionally by the Parochial Church Council and in 1939 a proposal to share a single publication with Ufton, Sulhamstead and Padworth was being considered. The war intervened, however,

and that subject was dropped in 1940 (unfortunately for historians who have very little information about the village in World War 2 compared with that provided by the parish magazines of 1914-19). With more modern technology available, the magazine made a return in 1964 as one or two leaves in A5 format and continues to this day, though now a more robust publication.

Copies of the magazines have been preserved in bound volumes and these have provided a great deal of information about Englefield that would have otherwise been unobtainable. Copies of the great majority of magazines produced between 1889 and 1904 were also kept by a former resident of the village.

Three Weddings...

Taking on the theme of continuity from the opening chapter here are three successive generations all married at St Mark's.



Jack Smith and Emily Cook
23 September 1942



Richard Smith and Susan Black 29 July 1972



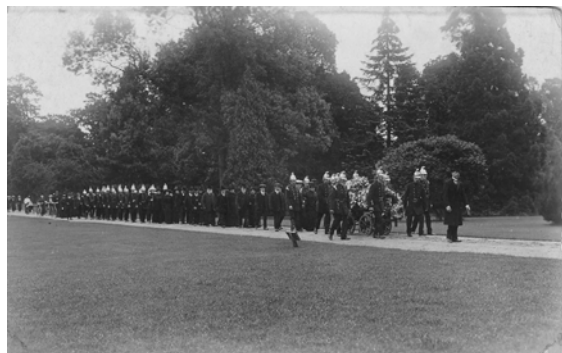
Helen Smith and Juan Camuñas-Lopez
8 September 2012
(Bruce)

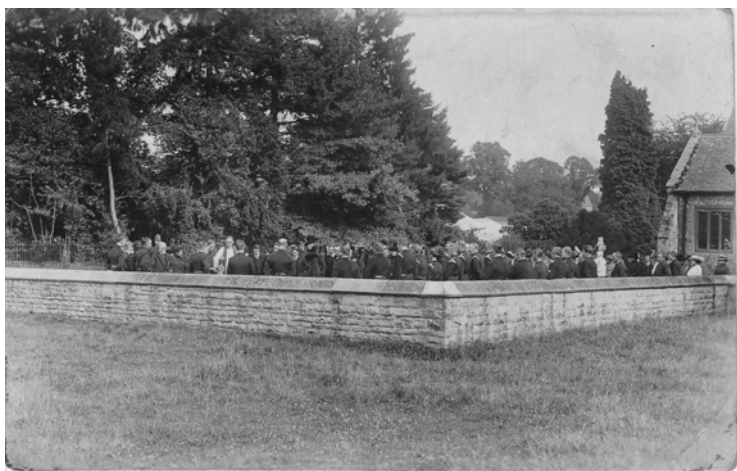
...and a Funeral

William Cox was born in the village in 1850 and worked at the Timber Yard. He married Mary Ann Henwood in 1876 and they had seven children. Mary Ann died in 1909 and William continued to live at number 19 in the Street with daughter Emily and sons Gilbert and William George until his death, after a short but severe illness, on 17th July 1914. He was for many years coachman to the Clerk of the Works and driver of the village fire engine. His funeral was attended by 42 firemen in full uniform, comprising contingents from Newbury, Pangbourne, Mortimer and a full muster of the Englefield Fire Brigade under their Captain Mr H Stanley Davis. The coffin was carried by his fireman colleagues as seen in these pictures.



In the parish magazine, the Rector wrote: *"He will be much missed especially at the Harvest Home where his congenial smile, as he returned time after time to take up his prize-money, proved most infectious - while his sturdy figure was always conspicuous at the end of the rope in the tug-of-war"*.





Proper To Grow Wise In

A History of the Parish Church of Englefield, Berkshire

This is a history of an English parish church, or at least as much of it as is known or can be guessed, but it is also a celebration of continuity. For continuity there is despite the many and sometimes cataclysmic changes that St Mark's has seen in its 800 years, including the complete visual transformation seen below. Originating as a church built by the lord of the manor for himself and the local community it is still just that, in one of the few remaining intact and functioning estate villages in the country. This is a quiet and comfortable place, appreciated by casual visitors as much as by those who have themselves known it for a lifetime, and whose ancestors knew it in its former incarnation.



St Mark's in as it was in 1790 and as it is today

Richard Smith was born in Englefield and baptised and married in St Mark's church, as were many generations of his ancestors at least back to the 1500s. He now lives in a village nearby, also part of the Englefield estate, but is still in regular attendance at St Mark's.