

Extract from Kelly's Directory of Oxfordshire 1891

Bampton is a market town, township and parish in an agricultural district, watered by the River Isis and several tributary streams, with a station about 2 miles north of the town, on the Oxford and Fairford branch of the Great Western Railway, and is 15 miles west from Oxford, 6 north from Faringdon, 5 south west from Witney and 71 from London, in the Witney County Court district and union, Mid division of the county, hundred of Bampton, petty sessional division of Bampton East, rural deanery of Witney and archdeaconry and diocese of Oxford.

By and Order of the Council, dated December 30th 1845, Bampton was divided into three ecclesiastical parishes, viz. Bampton Proper, Bampton Aston and Bampton Lew. The town consists chiefly of three streets converging on the spacious market place, and is lighted with incandescent gas by the Bampton Gas and Water Co. who also furnish the water supply.

The church of St Mary the Virgin is a fine and spacious cruciform building of stone, chiefly of the Transition period from Early English to Decorated, the chancel and bass of the tower being of very Early Norman or possibly Saxon date. It consists of Chancel, nave of four bays, clerestoried transepts, aisles, three chapels attached to the transepts, south porch, a very handsome western porch of the date of Henry III (1216-72), and a central tower with spire containing 8 bells, a sanctus bell, or "ting-tang", and a clock.

The chancel retains sedilis and piscina of Early English date and a very singular Easter sepulchre of Perpendicular work in two stages with a canopy. There remain also some fine old carved stalls with misereres and benches carved with various heraldic devices.

The north transept has a chapel on its eastern side, within which is a fine recumbent effigy, apparently of the date of Henry IV (1309-1413), but much mutilated; a canopied niche and two smaller ones.

The very fine stone reredos is adorned with figures of our Lord and the twelve apostles under rich canopies.

The south transept has two chapels, one on either side; the easternmost is called the Hord chapel from having been the burial place of the family of that name, formerly owners of Cote House; in the transept is an interesting monument, with effigies and verses, to George Thomson 1603; at the end of this transept is a Late Norman doorway richly carved.

The Nave is separated from the aisles by arcades of massive character; the roofs are open timbered and of the same date.

The tower, supported on Transition Norman arches, has four figures of saints at the angles, in place of pinnacles, and an octagonal spire rising to a height of 170 feet from the ground.

There are brasses to Thomas Plymmswode, vicar c.1429, in surplice and almice; Robert Holcot AM "venerabilis scientificus vir", vicar 1500, in cope, and Frances (Gardner) wife of Sir Thomas Hord of Cote, 1633.

The church was restored in 1870 under the direction of Mr Ewan Christian, architect, the parish advancing £1,000 for the purpose; the chancel was completed at the expense of the Rev Dacres

Adams, a former vicar, and some friends, with assistance from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; there are 503 sittings.

In the churchyard, under the east window, is another recumbent effigy.

The register of baptisms and marriages dates from 1538; burials from 1692, and from 1783 to 1812 includes entries relating to Shifford. There are also overseers books from 1718 and from 1822. The living of Bampton (proper) is a vicarage, net income £320, including glebe, with residence, in the gift of the Dean and Chapter of Exeter, and held since 1906 by the Rev George Edward Chippendall Rodwell of Keble College Oxford.

[In 1901, the population of Bampton was 1,167.

St Mary's had a communion service each Sunday at 8am (after morning prayer), and on the 1st and 3rd Sundays morning prayer and litany or holy communion at 11am, catechising at 3pm and evensong each Sunday at 6:30pm.]