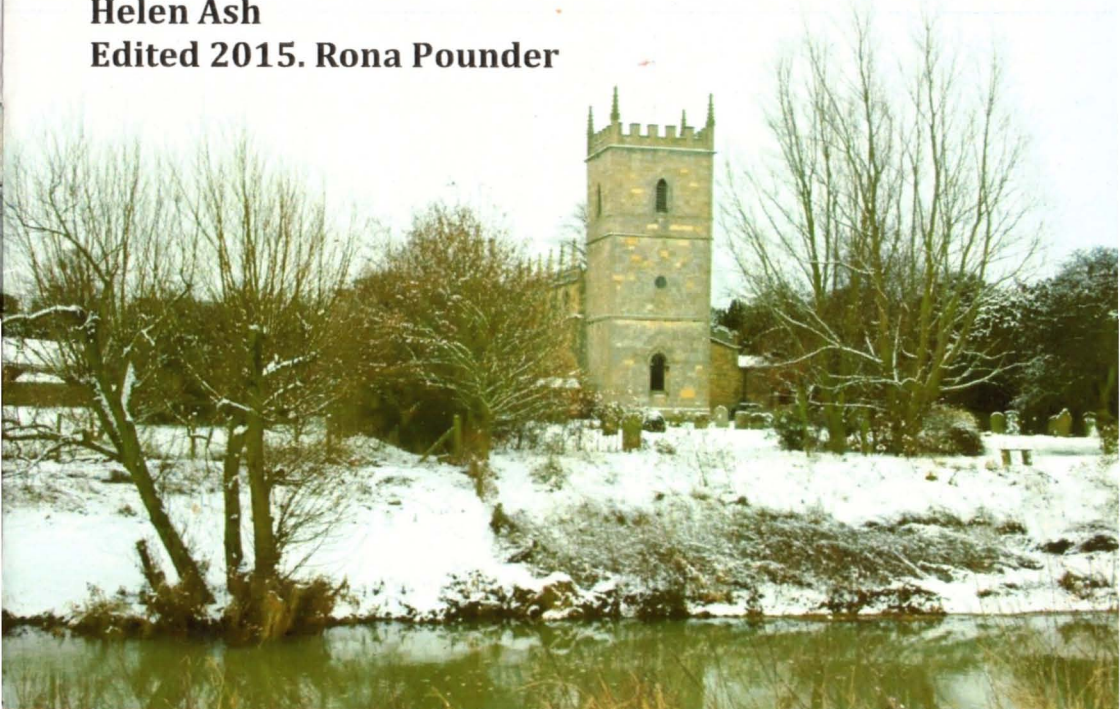


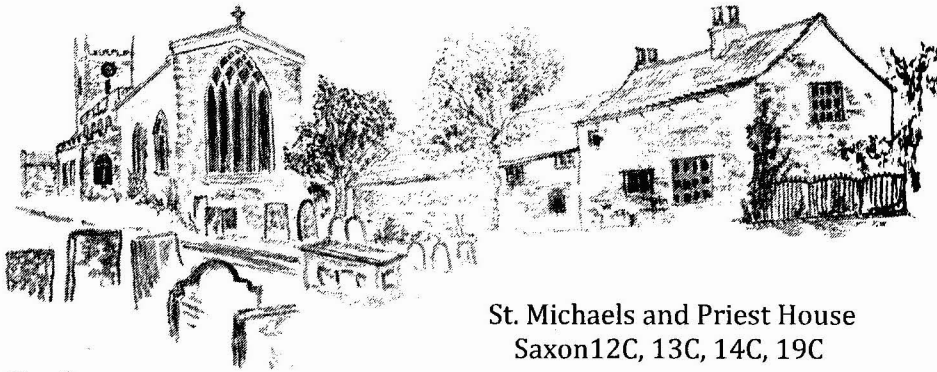
# THE BASSINGHAM STORY

**Bill and Connie Wilson**

**Helen Ash**

**Edited 2015. Rona Pounder**





St. Michaels and Priest House  
Saxon12C, 13C, 14C, 19C

## Preface.

This abbreviated History of Bassingham is based on:-

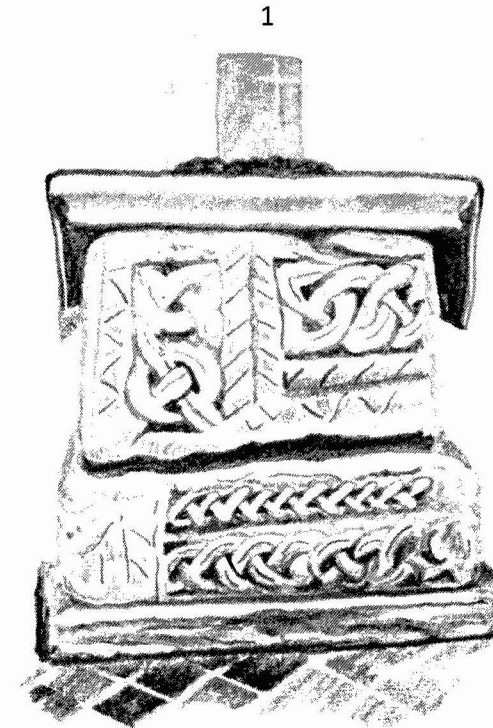
1. The History of Bassingham by Bill & Connie Wilson and Helen Ash 2004 but put in chronological order. ISBN: 1 903263 52 2 available from Lincoln Libraries. It is not copyright.
2. The History of St Michaels Church by Bill & Connie Wilson 2004
3. The Methodist story at Bassingham by Bill & Connie Wilson 2004.

Bill Wilson was head of the Local History Department of Nottingham University and wrote histories of North Hykeham, Haddington, Aubourn, Thorpe on the Hill and then Bassingham. He then went to live in Spain and Connie died soon afterwards.

I am indebted to Helen Ash for her help and great knowledge of the village, to Paul Hubbard for his excellent drawings and preparing the manuscript for publishing, to George Marsh for the field map in the centre of the book and help with the Enclosure of 1642 which ended feudalism and allowed a more efficient form of farming and to David Kirkham for all his help with computer problems.

Nicholas Pevnsner in his book on Historical buildings listed

1. The Church of St Michael Grade 2
2. Church Cottage adjoining the Church Yard Grade 2
3. The Grange 30-32 High Street which Arthur Mee said was the most beautiful house in the village.
4. The Old Manor House three doors along from the churchyard.  
Many buildings have since been added by North Kesteven District Council.



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## RECTORS OF ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH BASSINGHAM

- 1209-1218 Roger de Bassingham appointed by his brother the Lord of the Manor who built the second church.
- 1209-1218 William de Monasteries clerk.
- 1298 Oct 1 Hugh de Memthorp.
- 1303 June 12 Nicholas de Gategonge clerk.
- 1329 Nov 5 Stephen de Stokes.
- 1352 April 12 John de Farndon appointed by Edward III also James Staunton appointed by the Pope.
- 1384 March 22 Thomas de Hasthorp.
- 1394 July 10 William de Torkeseye.
- 1397 Sept 10 John Adam.
- 1435 March 6 John Bolton.
- 1451 Dec 9 John Kyme.

### 16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

- 1509 June 5 Richard Fisher chaplain Henry VIII
- 1539 Nov 27 John Pryn.
- 1565 First record of a church warden.
- 1572 First church register.
- 1581 Dec 29 Henry Vaux died 1591 John Barnes died 1612.

### 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

- 1612 Dec 20 John Marshall.
- 1617 Oct 8 Joseph Phiper Covenanter 1627 Advowsen to Corpus Christi Oxford and still today.
- 1644 George Stratford ejected as Royalist.
- 1646 July Christopher Reed intruded by parliament.
- 1654 Enclosure award and Bull charity.
- 1661 March 15 James Metford at Restoration died of plague 1719.
- 1668 Alms box.
- 1670 First Charitable gift by William Thorold.

## 18<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

- 1720 June 15 Thomas Porter 1719 A book a commentary by a Jesuit priest on the NT in Lincoln Archives.
- 1725 Nov 17 Elias Bishop.
- 1745 May 21 Thomas Morton D.D set up a Charity School in the church.
- 1750 A gallery erected at the back of the church.
- 1751 A book of common prayer in the black rubric.
- 1761 Oct 13 John Warneford B. D.
- 1774 March 26 Richard Skinner B. D. 1721 the Tower was repaired.
- 1796 May 3 William Newnham.

### 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

- 1832 May 15 John W. King B. D In 1860 the church was largely rebuilt He resigned in 1874 when his horse won the Derby.
- 1875 May 4 Henry Calverly M. A.
- 1879 Nov 14 Charles F. Willis In 1885 a school started in the Rectory.
- 1894 Parish Councils were formed and the Vestry meeting ceased to run the village.
- 1896 Mar 27 William A. Matthews.

### 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

- 1913 Mar Arundel Leakey M. A. on exchange with Cannon Matthews.
- 1925 Jan Reverend Theodore Pocock until 16 April 1965; moved to first Rectory on Torgate Lane.
- 1966 Mar Cannon Colin Evans moved to present Rectory and responsible for all 6 churches, left Jan 1973.
- 1975 July Reverend J C Owens left 1979.
- 1981 Aug 24 Reverend P Byron Davies. Left 1 April 1985.
- 1987 Apr 4 Reverend B M Crowther Alwyn. Left 19 January 1990.
- 1990 July Reverend David Osborne. Left October 1991.
- 1992 Nov 6 Reverend Ian Slater. Left July 1996.

### 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

- 1997 May Reverend Michael Howes. Left Jan 2001.
- 2001 Sep 17 Reverend N. Buck. Left April 2015.
- 2016 July 21 Reverend Dee Freeman

## CHAPTER 1: ROMAN, SAXON & NORMAN BASSINGHAM

Our Parish Boundary has the River Witham to the West and the River Brant to the East though both have changed their course over the years. On the north the boundary is across fields with Aubourn and to the south the footpath with Carlton le Moorland known as Gorse Lane. Please see the map inside the middle pages.

### ROMAN BASSINGHAM

The earliest artefacts found are some Roman objects from the Hall Field site from the excavations in August 1995 which were given to Lincoln Museum. There was also evidence of the Manor House showing the outline of the building with ditches and a cemetery. A copy is available from Helen Ash of 18 Lincoln Road.

There were some Roman and medieval artefacts found in Rinks field by Matthew Vickers of Newark Road.

### SAXON TIMES

The Advowson (presentation of a priest to a church benefice) was in the hands of the king, then the hands of the Bassingham family. It remained with their successors until 1627 when Frances Countess Dowager of Warwick, purchased the rights from the Thorold family and gave them to the College of Corpus Christi, Oxford. The rights of presentation are still with them.

Two Saxon stones are in St Michael's Church and used as a side altar. Some think it was part of a cistern but others disagree. There must have been a Saxon Church as the Domesday Book of 1086 states - "Bassingham was made a knights fee under the Earl of Haddington who had married Judith niece of the Conqueror. As land of the king in Bassingham Morcar (a Saxon Earl) had 24 carucates of land... two mills, a church, a priest and 420 acres of meadow" Morcar rebelled against William and lost his lands. Bassingham was made a knight's fee under the crown.

Logically the Saxon Manor would have been opposite the church in the grounds of the Care Home and the Manor farm on the East side and a farm is still there.

Mill 1 was still there recently at the end of Mill Lane but was swept away by floods and Helen Ash has a photograph of the damage done in 1912.

Mill 2 Rodemill used to be at the top of the oxbow adjoining Carlton and Norton Disney Parish boundaries. Our only written evidence is of Rodemill as recorded by Bill Wilson in "The Bassingham Story" He states "Harleian Charters show about 1150 one Robert son of Turketil gave to Newhouse Abbey near the Humber a small chapel called St James Rodemill being a medieval hamlet and a watermill that lay on the Norton Disney side of the river Witham. Masses had to be celebrated every day for the Disney family which survived until 1540 when William Disney had his own family chapel in Norton Disney church.

## CHAPTER 2: THE NORMAN CHURCH

The present church was built in six phases the oldest of twelfth century but we do not know who built it. This consists of the arch on the north side of the nave nearest the tower, its capitals and columns. The other two Norman arches are of a later date but heavily rebuilt in 1860. The pattern on the outer edge is different. The westernmost one has a chevron pattern, the middle a horse shoe and the eastern a billet design. The first Norman church was much shorter than the present one, the east of the Chancel only reaching to the present chancel steps.

THE SECOND PHASE came early in the thirteenth century when the original Norman Chancel was pulled down and thrown into the nave which was lengthened to the east and two arches constructed on the south side both very different so maybe we did not have a south aisle before? Further to the east was built a new and larger chancel in the pointed Early English style. Matthews would also ascribe to this

phase one of the windows and the south porch since the lancet window on the north side of the sanctuary and the chancel aumbry near it are also thought to be thirteenth century and the pillar piscina in the south aisle chantry has a ribbed-leaf decoration, the foliage similar to the south arcade capitals.

#### THE FIRST RECTOR

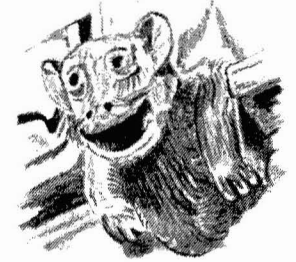
In 1214 Robert de Bassingham built a new manor house at Hall Field and presented his brother Roger de Bassingham as the first Rector. Bassingham was unusual in having, in medieval times, two priest houses. The stone building just north of the churchyard called until recent times "Church Cottage and is first mentioned in 1218 as the toft in which Richard the Parson lived. It is the only surviving stone cottage in Bassingham and apart from the church is the oldest building. "Riverside cottage" the brick cottage south of the churchyard stands it seems on the site of the medieval vicarage. This also occurs 1218 as a certain toft with a garden and orchard adjoining in which William the Chaplain has dwelt, William de Denton being Vicar of the newly constituted vicarage. The Medieval Vicarage building passed out of use in 1654.

Roberts's son John died without a male heir but he had five daughters who must have married. We presume the eldest married a Staunton, one a Wray, one a Thorold and one a Neville as they became Lords of the manor.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> BUILDING PHASE IN THE 14<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

A third building phase came in the fourteenth century with the insertion of the East window in the decorated style, the raising of the nave walls with the upper windows of the clerestory and the building of a chantry chapel at the east end of the north chancel aisle. This chapel once extended the whole length of the Chancel and blocked up the Chancel Lancet window. Under the blocked window a piscina was placed (since 1860 exposed to wind and rain on the outside of the north chancel wall though its small drainage hole is still visible.) The large five-light east chancel window also seems of

the decorated style the various three-light windows on the south side of the chancel, the priest's door. Also from the fourteenth century there are various demonic and other gargoyles. The font at the east end of the south aisle seems also to be fourteenth century. It is octagonal panelled in quatrefoils and shields. Externally the clerestory, battlemented with pinnacles, crochets and gargoyles, is one of the most striking features of the church, although the pinnacles are replicas of 1860.



#### CHAPTER 3: 16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY 1509 HENRY VIII

In a fourth phase a new priests door was inserted in the north wall either the present one or into the demolished chantry chapel and the various perpendicular windows of the north arcade. There is also a small double sun dial scratched onto a stone that forms an integral part of a perpendicular window on the south face; this work probably took place in the era 1480 - 1530.

When Henry was refused a divorce by the pope he broke with Rome and declared himself head of the English church and entitled to the clerical income previously paid to the papacy. Thus the clerical taxation of 1526 saw Bassingham's rector Richard Fisher obliged to pay sixteen pounds and his Curate Robert Stanley five pounds six shillings and eight pence.

In particular it cites "for house and lands and pastures seventy three shillings and a penny, for hay and corn thirteen shillings, for milk twelve shillings, for oblations at four seasons of the year with other lesser gifts twenty four shillings, for geese, pigs, rabbits, fowls, eggs, hemp, flax, apples, bees, thirty two shillings and four pence. For lambs and wool one hundred and three shillings and four pence, for oblations at Easter of a certain chapel called Brant, ten shillings and eight pence, total twenty seven pounds six shillings and ten pence. Of this the king took the sum of two pounds thirteen shillings and eight pence which was exactly a tenth off the twenty six pounds sixteen shillings and eight pence of which the Rectory was valued.

This chapel near the Brant was believed to ring a bell to guide travellers over the fen. Please see map.

The year 1535 saw all catholic clergy in England obliged to abjure and reject papal authority.

The religious changes that followed brought great trauma to the church building. The painted walls in the church were whitewashed over, the rood and rood loft dismantled, ornaments ripped out, all bells but one removed and church plate confiscated. Catholic priests had to face up to the new order or be removed and had to accept the Protestant Injunctions of 1558.

Between 1536 and 1539 Henry ordered the Dissolution of the monasteries and removed all the care that they provided for the poor such as food, shelter medical care and education.

The accession of Elizabeth I in 1558 saw the final establishment of the Church of England with Elizabeth taking the title of "Supreme Governor" but the English Catholics were not impressed and the government ultimately exiled any remaining Catholic priests and banned Catholic worship.

Surviving from 1565 is a report from Churchwardens Thomas Cook and Johnne Chambers stating that they "hath burned before Shroftide last past the Roode and Marie and Johanne and Peter and hath broken the handbells in pieces and made inquisition of all other ornaments" A vestment was evidently "Found in the hands of Thomas Ledman and other items in the hands of John Lambe"

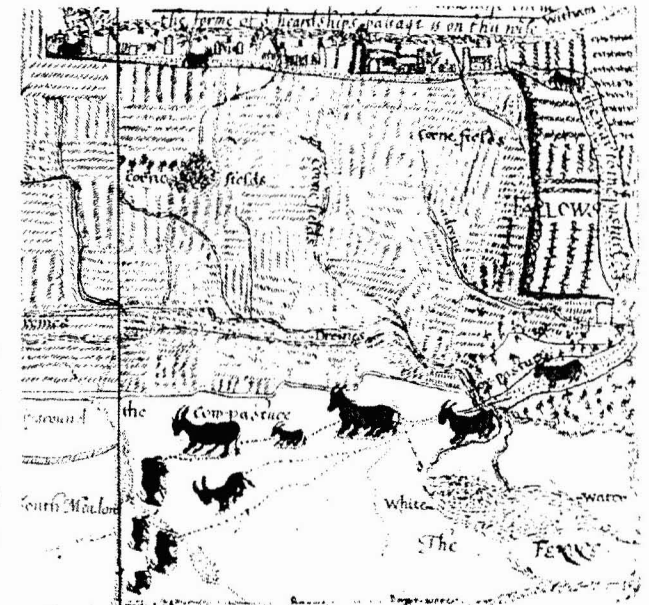
Also swept away at this time, was the provision to keep a lamp perpetually burning in the church, for the upkeep of which certain strips of land in the North End and South End fields, were known as the Lampe Wonge to judge by Terriers of 1588 and 1630. These strips were evidently the gift of some unknown person in medieval times and might have been the origin of the northern chantry chapel. As this was no longer used the Rector started to keep his vestments there and it became known as the Vestry.

## CHAPTER 4: 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

The bells first received reference when in 1632 John Brown gave five shillings in lieu of money, "bequeathed by my brother Richard Methringham unto ye church of Bassingham to be employed about ye bells thereof." To judge from this the bell left hanging by the agents of Henry VIII, known in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as the "Great Bell" had already been joined by two others in the reign of Elizabeth, called simply the second and third. There is a mention of a church clock in 1637 in the will of Richard Smith of Norton Disney who left six shillings and eight pence towards buying a clock.

The Parish had fen land from the Brant to the large syke (dike) and is still mainly used for pasturage. In the past for flax for making linen and hemp for making sacking. The land to the west grew corn a term used to cover oats, wheat and barley. There was also an area between Eastgate and Linga Lane to grow peas, beans and swede for the daily meal of pottage or pease pudding. The people drank ale.

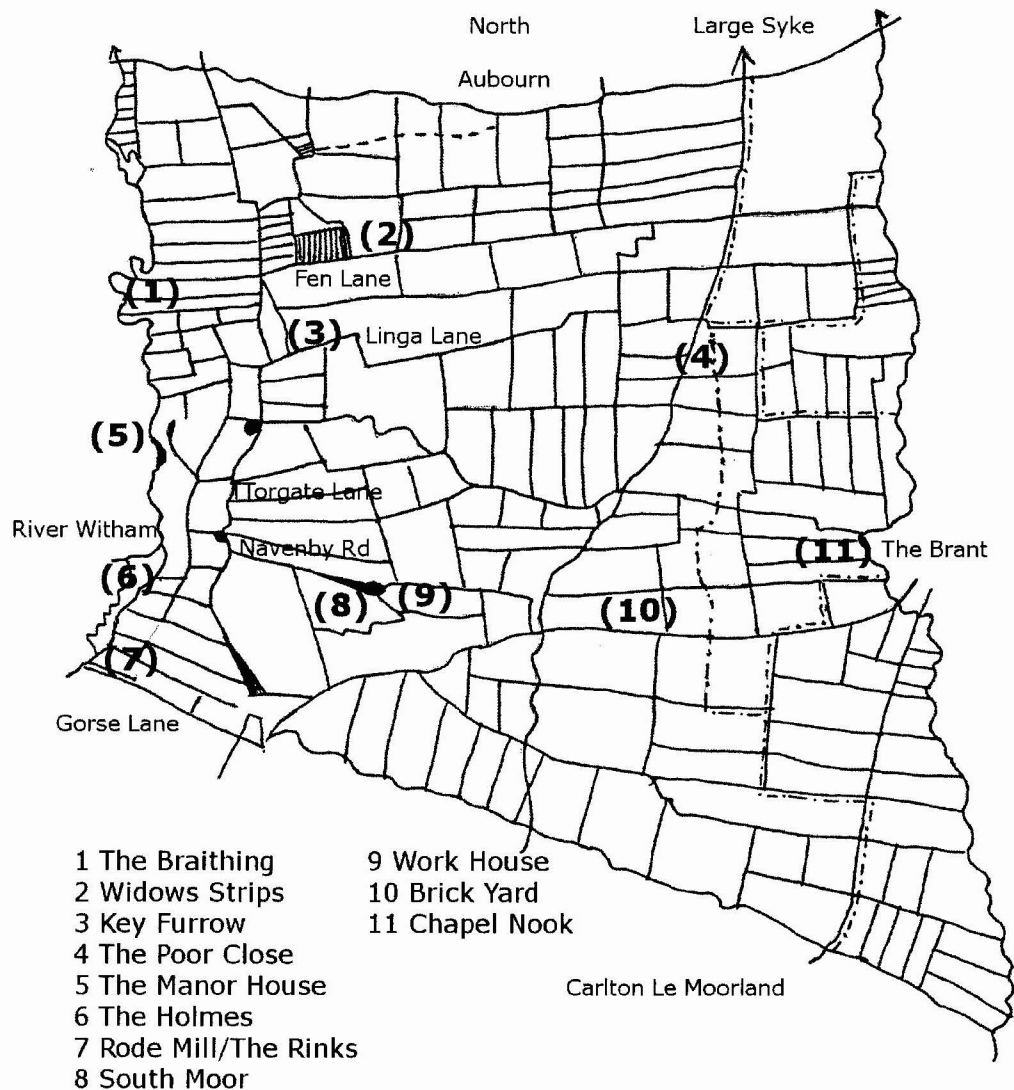
The brewery in the High Street behind number 10 opened in 1651 and in 1692 the Bugle Inn opened with stabling behind. Life was getting better.



Cattle going to pasture, sketch from the 1629 Enclosure Petition, by kind consent Lincoln Archives Office

## PARISH FIELD MAP ABOUT 1642

Provided by George Marsh with additions



## CHARITIES

Since the dissolution of the monasteries there was no help for the poor so landowners gave gifts to the church to help them.

1. 1670 William Thorold one of the lords of the manor of Bassingham conveyed the Tuft Hill Close to the rector James Metford and others charged with the payment of two pounds yearly to be divided among eight poor people of Bassingham on St Thomas day.
2. Also 1670 John Lambe gave by will twelve pounds.
3. 1672 John Garnett gave by will a further twelve pounds for the benefit of the poor of the parish and with these sums the parishioners bought "The poor close" of Joseph Perkins for sixty pounds, conveyed to James Metford rector and W. Grant gentlemen of the parish.
4. In 1692 Sir Christopher Nevil of Aubourn gave thirty pounds for the poor of Bassingham. This was expended in the purchase of a close of land known as the moor close, containing three acres from John Grant in 1736, for the use of the poor inhabitants of Bassingham, distribution of the income to be by the Rector, Churchwarden and overseers.
5. Robert Jessop in 1714 left a rent charge of ten shillings per year to be paid on St Thomas day out of a close named the four acres which lies south of Linga Lane.
6. Poole Savage gentleman, by will in 1823 gave two hundred pounds interest of which was to be distributed at Christmas by minister and churchwardens among the poor.

The Enclosure Award agreed to use the North and South Moors for the poor. On the Enclosure map is a windmill on Carlton Road belonging to Sir John Wray.

## CHAPTER 5: THE ENCLOSURE OF 1654 & THE FIRST VESTRY MEETINGS

In 1629 we read of the first petition which the Rector rejected. In 1654 a new application was made to parliament because the new Rector Christopher Reed agreed to exchange his Glebe Lands near the Brant for new Glebe land and a house at the top of Baker Lane and move from the house beside the church yard to a new Rectory across the road where the present Care Home is and the document was signed by Sir John Wray Baronet, William Thorold Esquire, Edmund Thorold Esquire, Christopher Neville Esquire Lords of the Manor.

The 1654 map shows the Manor of William Thorold in Hall Fields, the Manor House of Sir John Wray was that now occupied by Ivy House and the Manor of Sir Edward Thorold nearby. It also shows a tenement building in the churchyard as mentioned in a Terrier. We believe the Bull Charity was organised about this time to provide a bull for the village, the Holmes and Braithing were allocated for its maintenance.

In 1660 the Alms box was put in church and in 1670 the first charitable donation to the church as listed in the central page. In 1674 a new pulpit was installed and a panel exists on the north wall.

The late 1630s saw a concentrated effort to provide the church tower with a clock and donations were given. The Vestry minutes make frequent reference to oiling the clock and it lasted until 1781 when the tower was dismantled.

The Hearth tax of 1664 three households were said to have fallen into poverty and a



large group of five men and five women were resident in the various "poor houses" in receipt of Parish Relief from the church.

Nonconformists - In 1676 the returns showed one hundred and ninety five Anglicans and eight nonconformists.

In 1685, a silver chalice, cover and a Patine were donated at this time but unfortunately they were stolen in 2001.

## Chapter 6: The 18<sup>th</sup> Century

In 1752 a Gallery was erected at the West end of the church for the choir and the use of musical instruments. A pitch pipe was purchased in 1757 and in 1785 Harwood was paid "for two bassoon reeds and two Hautboy reeds". This will be the bassoon that remained in the church until modern times and is now in the Newark museum.

A Dissenters Certificate of January 1765 states that there was a small community of Independents worshipping in the house of William Street many of which were Quakers. One John Burt in 1760 opened a draper and grocery store in what is now called Greens. A John Dixon came to live in Bassingham and resided in the original Rectory and as an Independent started a group to worship in his house and when it became too large in 1802 built a Wesleyan Chapel at his own expense at the corner of Torgate Lane and Carlton Road. In the chapel yard were buried John Dixon and a child Henry Hammond Johnson. Their bodies were later moved to the present chapel. A group of Reformed Methodists built a chapel at the junction of East Gate and Lincoln Road. A group of Primitive Methodist moved to 1 High Street.

The years 1752 - 1854, saw a charity school in Bassingham. The Parish Dole book in 1773 states that in the time of Dr Morton it was agreed between him and the principle inhabitants, that the money offered at the sacraments should be applied to teaching six poor children of parishioners to read and the deficiency to be made up out of charity money. Morton was Rector 1743 - 1761 and the school was functional from 1752, when the vestry minutes recorded the



sum of two shillings and a penny as “paid for ye tyles for ye little house” and this was actually a “necessary” or toilet built in brick against the north wall of the church; the school being taught in the north aisle of the church. Then we come to the appointment of William Boole in 1796, he lived at Witham House and taught in the school until shortly before his death in 1854.

The stone carved sundial on the south aisle corresponds to 1763, when a vestry entry paying two shillings and sixpence, “To Nath. Lunn for Cutting and Painting the Sun-Dial upon ye Church Wall”.

In 1773, it was reported to the Lincoln Court of Sewers, that the coffins in Bassingham church had floated at high flood. In 1781, the architect Mr Bell, took down the bells; one only being remounted in the church as a temporary measure. A new tower was then built, largely of grey-stone blocks, with only a few of the original cream coloured Jurassic stones being used. The tower battlements and pinnacles presumably date from this time also.

The round window on the tower of the South face is actually an inscribed panel recording these events and is believed to say “Richard Gibson and Robert Pacey, churchwardens and Thomas Bell, Architect, 1783.” To anchor the tower into the rest of the structure, other work was necessary and the Church Building Committee in 1859 commented “a very considerable portion, the north aisle, being excluded entirely from use by the arches having been built up some sixty or seventy years ago”. The chancel was also rebuilt at the Rector’s expense.

In 1764 the Five Bells was opened.

#### THE VESTRY MEETING

This was made up of the Rector, churchwardens and landowners, who were responsible for organising drainage, road works, appointing a Constable, acting as Poor Law Overseers and distributing charity money. The earliest workhouse was in 1773 but replaced by a specially built one in 1850, in which a Governor was appointed.

### Chapter 7: 19<sup>th</sup> Century

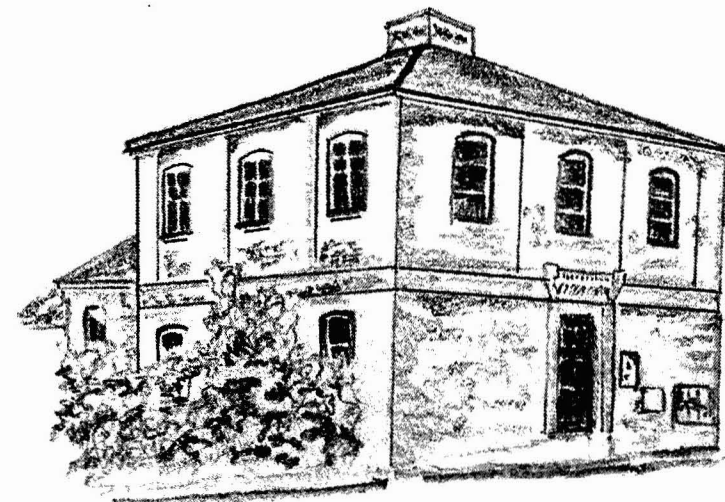
In 1816 the Reverend D. S. Wayland Rector of Kirton in Lindsey came to the Rectory to act as Curate and there are memorials to his wife and two daughters on the Chancel wall. The Bassingham Rector Reverend King lived at Ashby de la Launde.

#### CRIME

In 1826 the attempted murder of John Pearson a shoe maker by Mike King who was arrested and in 1827 deported to Australia. In 1833 William Mosley labourer aged 27 was convicted of breaking into the shop of John Storr (Green’s) and stealing material and cash. He was transported for life to New South Wales. In 1840 one Salmon a farm labourer went up the street in a drunken state and was arrested by two deputy Constables. They took him to the upstairs room of a public house and removed his clothes and locked the door. While they were downstairs having a drink the prisoner jumped out of the window and ran up the street naked to the astonishment of some rustics going to work. They gave chase but he escaped.

1839 the Wesleyan Chapel seating five hundred was opened and in 1855 a Wesleyan School Room was opened behind.

About the 1850s John Marfleet of Somersby castle moved into Manor farm as he had bought other farms as well. In 1851 was the Tithe Award and farmers no longer had to give the Rector a tenth of their income. In many ways



the eighteenth century church repairs had been something of a stop-gap, the nave in particular being left in a parlous state. In 1859 the Bishop of Lincoln drew attention to some of this. The response was a public meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> April. This set up a Church Building Committee of Messrs Bartholomew, Brocklebank, Storr and Hammond, with the Reverend H. F. Benwell, curate, as chair and both churchwardens. In May Benwell wrote of, "The Church of this parish being in a state insecure and dangerous, unbecoming the House of God, incommodious for worshippers and inadequate for the increased population." An extensive fundraising programme began and construction of a new church on another site was actually considered.

On December 31<sup>st</sup> however J. H. Hakewill, a distinguished church architect, wrote recommending instead a restoration of the ancient church, "with probably an extension of the east end of the North aisle, as this portion of the Building seems to require rebuilding. (Details in the history of the church). All this was approved and rebuilding began with Mr Huddleston as builder and Mr Hakewill as architect. In addition a tender was accepted from Messrs. Simpson and Co to place a heating apparatus in the church and further fundraising progressed.

The 1860 renovation also uncovered some re-used medieval tombstones from the walling, one a double tombstone with crosses on it, a second a sepulchral slab. Thirdly would be the medieval hogback tombstone, with carving on its west end, now resting beside the church path.

In June 1860 the Vestry agreed to level the churchyard removing tombstones and changing churchyard boundaries if possible. Most of the stones recorded in the 1827 survey of General Loft disappeared at this time. In November 1861, the Vestry accepted from General Reeve the church clock hitherto in the tower of Leadenham Church and this was placed in the tower at Bassingham at a cost of some thirty pounds. In 1865 new lamps and standards were purchased second-hand from the church of Wivenhoe, Essex.

In 1885 the Salvation Army purchased the former Primitive Methodist chapel at 1 High Street but due to lack of members sold it in 1906 to Robert Ash joiner.

The present church clock was fitted at Queen Victoria's 1887 Jubilee and the 'movement' is unusual in being "mounted on an inverted U-shaped cast iron frame."

On the 6<sup>th</sup> August 1875, a vestry meeting was held to consider a proposal made by the Reverend Mr Calverley, newly appointed rector, for heating the church by a hot water apparatus. This was less than successful however and Mathews comments, "The low situation of the cellar for the furnace, so near to the Witham renders it peculiarly liable to be flooded out at times when it is especially wanted. The first furnace wore out in the winter of 1896 and was replaced by subscription."

The organ was installed by voluntary subscription in 1854 at a cost of seventy four pounds, in 1860 the new chancel arch replaced the previous oak screen, which was thrown into a farmyard, only to be rescued and worked up into a screen for the tower arch in 1899 and the notice boards in the porch. The porch was rebuilt and given stone slab seating both sides and the whole church renovated. In 1875 the Reverend Calverley had the Rectory rebuilt and realigned so we now have a Victorian Building with no prizes for architecture.

In 1894 Parish Councils were formed and the church no longer ran the village.

### **Chapter 8: The 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

The east window contains stained glass presented to the church in 1939 and designed by the Munich artist W. F. Zettler. It shows St Michael, flanked by the Archangels Gabriel and Raphael. Two further memorial windows by Zettler were installed in 1948 and 1949 in the Lady Chapel end of the south aisle, one depicting the Annunciation, the other Mary Magdalene in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The cemetery, across the road from the churchyard, was opened in 1902 on ground given by John Brocklebank in memory of his father.

It was consecrated on July 24<sup>th</sup> 1903 by the Bishop of Lincoln. In 1908 there was a storm which destroyed the steam threshing mill on Mill Lane and damaged Manor farm.

The bells were given another major overhaul in 1913. Then, in 1926 the ring of five bells cast by Henry Oldfield II in 1770 was recast by Taylors of Loughborough and a sixth bell, the new treble, was added at the same time provided by the Reverend Pocock and local farmer Henry Collin. The inscriptions on the old bells were reproduced in facsimile. This constitutes the present ring of six.

After the war the Earl of Ancaster bought a block of farms on the south side of the village and as the farm track alongside the Manor Farm had no name so it was named Whites Lane as Harry White lived there. The letter A for Ancaster is on the side of 32 Carlton Road which was beside the old crew yard. The Earl was a trustee of the children's home and invited the committee to have meetings at Grimsthorp Castle. Due to a family bereavement he put his estate into a family trust. After his death the family sold the trust to Legal and General Pension Fund. In 2013 the Manor House and farm were sold to a builder and farming land was offered to tenant farmers.

Of all the incumbents within living memory, the Reverend Theodore Innes Pocock was one of the longest serving and most notable. He had been Rector of Bassingham for 40 years when he died in 1961. He graduated with first class honours in mathematics from Corpus Christi College, Oxford in 1891 and he was ordained in 1909. He had a long interest in geology and was apparently considered for the post of Astronomer Royal. To many, he was a 'real character', bathing naked daily in the River Witham, summer and winter, groping for words through his magnifying glass as he tottered up and down the aisle, or cycling blindly about the parish, with his cloak billowing behind him.

He moved from the Old Rectory in 1934 to a new Rectory on Torgate Lane which he paid for. The old Rectory was used during the war by the army and for prisoners of war, bought by a trust for Mr Goodyear for a Children's home and then a Nursing Home.

## Postscript

Apart from Bassingham in 1939 the Royal Air Force built a training base at Swinderby in the parish of Thurlby. The main base was on both sides of Camp Lane and the officer's quarters were near the main road with other ranks along a muddy track with a community hall the Ark. In Thurlby church yard there are 35 graves of service men many from the Commonwealth during the war and 25 afterwards.

In the 1960's the Witham was dredged so no longer was there flooding along the river bank. This had occurred for hundreds of years. Previously Stapleford and Haddington abandoned their settlements by the river and moved back to higher ground to avoid flooding their houses.

1966 Canon Evans came and St Michael's, along with the Churches at Aubourn, Carlton le Moorland, Norton Disney, Thurlby and Stapleford, became the Bassingham Group of Churches, under him and he moved to the present Rectory. He started a news sheet which later became the Witham Staple and some youth organisations.

**NEW HOUSES** Before the war the council built some houses on Eastgate and Linga Lane. After the war they built more houses on Eastgate and Linga Lane later on Torgate Avenue, Battersby Close and Chestnut Crescent. Over the years many private builders have also built houses off Linga Lane and Peter Sowerby built Badgers Oak, Blacksmith Row and Millfield named because there used to be a windmill in the adjoining field. After the Carlton Road development by Redrow the most recent is by Jackson on Village farm.

1975 the separate paired benefices of Aubourn and Bassingham, Carlton and Stapleford, Norton Disney and Thurlby, became a single benefice. Then in 2001, 'by order of the Queen in Counsel', the Group became the Withamside United Parish who started to bring a Christian presence to Witham St Hughs. In 2007 the Church of England bought 8 Doe Close to house a priest.

In 2000 for the Millennium Project the Village Organisations produced a banner in the Hammond Hall, and a brick project on Stocks Hill, in the centre is a grind stone taken from a former forge in the High Street opposite Lime Grove.

In 2000 Les Hammond left thirty thousand pounds to the Methodist church, thirty thousand pounds to St Michaels and thirty thousand pounds to the village hall and playing fields.

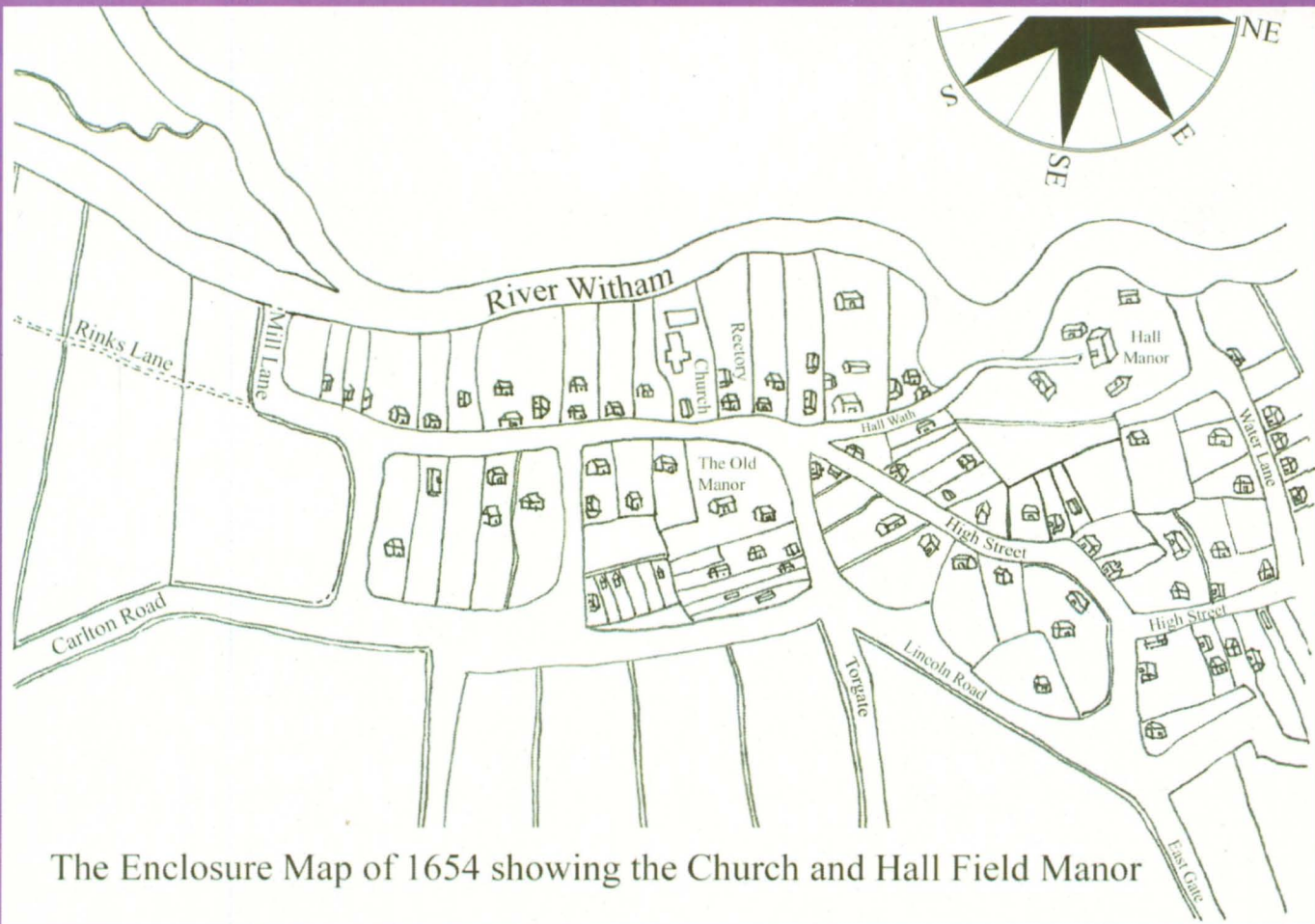
In 2003 the new town of Witham St Hughs was established on the Swinderby airfield by an Act of parliament.

In 2009 the Hammond Hall was opened and in 2010 the Methodist chapel was unfortunately closed but for eight years a very successful Lunch Club was held with Mary Oxby as cook and organiser. In 2011 Helen Ash retired as Parish Council clerk and Treasurer after fifty years in office.

In 2013 the Waterloo Housing Association bought land on Torgate Lane to provide Social Housing and this was completed in 2014 and named Vasey Close as the land had belonged to local farmer William Vasey.

On 14<sup>th</sup> March 2015 George Marsh a local farmer unveiled a memorial to seven members of a Stirling Bomber which crashed on his farm Wirelocks in Linga Lane seventy years ago.

**We used to have 100 farms but with the coming of very large farm machinery a small farm is no longer viable and we now have seven farms. Land is still an important part of the rural economy.**



The Enclosure Map of 1654 showing the Church and Hall Field Manor