

WHARPENDEN

EATHAMPTSTEAD III

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WHEATHAMPSTEAD
and
HARPENDEN

III
Church and Chapel

1975

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Introduction

This is the third booklet in the series *Wheathampstead and Harpenden*, in which a continuous history of the two parishes is being presented. The booklets are being written and printed so that, when the series is completed, they can be bound into one book. For this reason the numbering of pages, illustrations and appendices is continuous. If they do not realise this, readers may be puzzled by references, in this booklet, to pictures and pages which are not present; the references are, of course, to earlier booklets. These can be obtained from the same sources as this one.

Church and Chapel has been written by J. Harrod and M. Tomkins, and edited by Lionel Munby. The authors are grateful for the help of Mary A. Coburn, Kathleen Foreman, Daphne Godwin and other members of the W.E.A. classes responsible for this project. Without the help of many representatives of the churches described the booklet would have been far less accurate and comprehensive. Tony Baggs and Dr. Eileen Roberts have given invaluable advice on the architecture. Most of the photographs have been taken by Peter Clarke or Eric Meadows. Even a casual reading will make clear how much this booklet, like others in the series, owes to the research of Lieut. Col. J. H. Busby, M.B.E., who has made available to us with unfailing generosity the knowledge of Wheathampstead and Harpenden which he has accumulated over many years.

III

CHURCH AND CHAPEL

Before the Reformation

As King Edward the Confessor, in the last years of his life, watched the great white stones of his rebuilt Westminster Abbey rising on the marshes of the Thames, his concern was to ensure that it should be well-endowed with lands and properties. Among his many gifts to the abbey for this purpose was the parish of Wheathampstead, which included what is now Harpenden. In 1060 then, while most of the area was still forested, the King signed a document which gave 'willingly and freely . . . a certain holy parcel of land, namely, ten hides of common land situated in a place which the inhabitants of that district call in their own speech "Hwaethamstede" to be possessed for ever by hereditary right.' The document was 'joyfully confirmed' by Edward's wife Edith and also signed by Harold, afterwards King, and by other leading figures (see appendix one). One of the windows in the north aisle of Harpenden parish church, in memory of W. J. Busby (1942), portrays King Edward and the patron saint of Wheathampstead church, St. Helena. There exists a tradition that it was from the wheat grown on the Bury Farm that the bread for King Edward's table was made, which suggests that the manor of Wheathampstead was highly prized by him. For many centuries Westminster Abbey received Wheathampstead wheat, as rent. The king's gift was no mean one: over 10,000 acres of potentially rich land free from all dues, with only the rector's manor and tithe claims outside the abbey's control. From 1221 (see p. 91) and, perhaps, from the first days the abbey even had a share in the tithes.

There must already have been a church and a priest, with a glebe farm, which became a manor, for his maintenance; but it is not known when Wheathampstead had its first priest, nor when its first church was built. It was probably, however, in King Edward's time that the church was built from which the one that stands today has grown. King Edward had spent his early manhood in Normandy, where he imbibed many Norman ideas; and several Norman features appear to have existed in the church as far as it can be reconstructed. In plan it could have been a copy in miniature of St. Peter's at Westminster [*East Herts. Archaeological Society Transactions*. Vol. V, Part 1, p. 25 & Fig. 1 facing p. 26]. The fragments that are left suggest that it was built of poorly cut local flints with limestone for special features. The stone, it has been suggested by Mr. T. P. Smith in *Anglo-Saxon Churches of Hertfordshire* (1973), could have been transported from the limestone belt in the Midlands by boat along the Ouse as far as Bedford and by cart from there to Wheathampstead,

using one of the Roman roads that passed through the parish. The church may have consisted of a central tower with transepts to the north and south, a south aisle, a nave to the west and a chancel to the east, as indeed it still does today. It was probably cruciform at first, but in the early twelfth century the eastern end of the chancel was rebuilt in the round, as an apse. The apse was a traditional Roman form which the Normans adopted. Saxon work can be seen today in the south and west walls of the south transept; the fact that these are only three feet thick is indicative of this. The blocked doorway in the south wall and the round headed window in the west wall may be Saxon work. Mr. Smith concluded that the church of which they were part very probably belongs to the 'Saxo-Norman overlap', the period between 1050 and 1115. The mention of a priest in the Domesday Book description of Wheathampstead in 1086 and the importance of the rectory manor (see p. 35) is supporting evidence that there was a church building in existence by that date.

It is doubtful whether there was as yet a church at Harpenden; by the late Norman period, probably in the twelfth century, a separate chapel-of-ease was dedicated to St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra and patron saint of travellers. The dedication suggests that this was a travellers' church, built to get alms from those using the north-south route through the parish. It was a small building and, like Wheathampstead's church, cruciform in plan with a central tower. The tower was low, and the nave was joined to the aisles by arches only eight feet wide, separated by massive piers six feet in length (see Plate 9a). A model of the Norman church may be seen in the present church; of the actual building there survive only a few stones. These are on the sills of the windows of the north aisle and are fragments of Norman fluted work together with two pieces of the original chancel arch; they were discovered about 1930, not in the church, but in the garden of 'The Welcombe', now the Moat House Hotel! The bowl of the font in St. Nicholas' church is of Purbeck marble, ornamented on each side with two slightly sunken panels, each with two plain pointed arches. This also dates from the twelfth century, and is thought to have been transferred from Wheathampstead's church to Harpenden's when St. Helen's acquired a new one in the fourteenth century (see Plates 9b & c).

There is a local tradition that King John once reviewed his forces from the top of St. Helen's church tower, during his wars with the barons; they had crossed the river Lea at two fords. Such interludes may have briefly disrupted the life of the parish, but in general steady progress had been made in the clearing and cultivation of remoter parts. Wheathampstead's growing wealth at the beginning of the thirteenth century may account for the interest then shown in the rector's tithes by the Abbot of Westminster. He sent a petition to the Pope in which he claimed that St. Helen's church belonged to him on the grounds that it was among those which two twelfth

century popes had granted to Westminster Abbey for the hospitality of the poor and sick and for other pious uses. The Bishop of Lincoln, who appears to have been the patron of the living, objected; and the dispute was settled in a Papal Bull dated 21 January 1221, which is among the Rothamsted manuscripts in the County Record Office [H.C.R.O. D/ELW Q1 and Z21/21]. In it we find the first recorded mention of St. Nicholas' Chapel at Harpenden, since the settlement included the phrase 'a house and land next to the chapel of St. Nicholas, Harpenden'. This was awarded to the Abbot of Westminster with half the rector's tithes, but the right of patronage was confirmed to the bishop, and the rector was to have Wheathampstead church with a house, all the vicar's and half the rector's tithes. The rector had certain rights too in the abbot's watermills and in his fisheries in the river Lea, as well as lands in Wheathampstead village, Pickford Common and Upper Down Common. A rector was a local parish priest who had been endowed with a farm (glebe) and who received one tenth (a tithe) of all local produce. When a monastery, as patron, put in a curate (vicarius) they kept the income and only paid him a small sum. The bishops insisted that such a 'vicar' should be endowed with a part of the glebe farm and receive the 'small' tithes. The 'great' tithes, those on the main crops, came to the absentee 'rector'. After the Reformation when laymen bought up monastic property they became lay rectors. Wheathampstead continued to have a rector but he did not have the full income which a rector might normally have expected. When, in 1291, the church was levied for taxation by Pope Nicholas, the church of Wheathampstead paid £13.6s.8d and Westminster Abbey £20 for their respective shares of the total church income. There was NOT, as the *Victoria County History* suggests, any separation of the Wheathampstead and Harpenden church incomes. But a separate return valued Westminster Abbey's two local manors: the lands, the mill and the labour services of the Wheathampstead manor were worth £23.10s.0d, and its fruit and stock were worth £1.4s.0d, while the 'manor which is called Kenesborne' was worth £2.3s.6d [*Taxatio Ecclesiastica c. 1291*, Records Commission (1802), pp. 36b and 52b].

Wheathampstead was still a rich living and the Bishop of Lincoln seems to have reserved it for his favourites. Such a one was Matthew de Stratton, the first priest whose name we know. He was succeeded on 4 January 1238 by John de Dyham, Prebendary of Lincoln. It was about this time that an ambitious and protracted programme of rebuilding Wheathampstead church was instigated. If there had been a tower perhaps it had collapsed and the Saxon church become dilapidated; Wheathampstead now had the wealth to spend on the glorification of its church. The chancel was rebuilt and lengthened, perhaps to allow more space for the increasingly elaborate ritual. The window on the north side of the sanctuary, the doorway below it with its dog-tooth decoration, and the lancets of the east window

survive as evidence of the work done at this time (see Plate 10a). The work went on slowly while Simon de Jarwell was rector (c. 1265). Richard de Wic, who had been steward to the Bishop of Lincoln, succeeded him in 1271, but by 1278 he had been replaced by the Bishop's chaplain, John de Leycestre. The chancel was now completed and the crossing reached, above which was to rise a new tower. John de Leycestre faced a challenge by the Abbot of Westminster to his rights in the mills which he resisted successfully (see pp. 35-6). Whether or not he thus incurred expenses to the impoverishment of the church, when he died in 1290 funds were running low; contributors to the cost of the new tower were therefore granted an 'indulgence' of twenty days by the Bishop of Lincoln. An indulgence granted sinners who had received absolution remission of the penance still due from them. This was one of the earliest recorded examples of a method of raising funds for religious purposes which was to become widespread.

Harpenden already had its own officials, chosen by the abbot's court, yet its parishioners still had to go to the mother church at Wheathampstead to be married, to have their children baptised, and their dead buried. It is not difficult to visualise the little groups of families and friends trudging along; when autumn mists and winter rains turned the lanes into squelching mud, the walk must have been very daunting. Great thankfulness must surely have greeted the news that they had been given the right to hear 'Masses and other Divine services' in the parochial chapel of St. Nicholas by a papal deed of 12 December 1319. They were also allowed to bury their dead within the precincts of their own chapel, out of consideration for the difficulty they had in carrying the corpses all the way to St. Helen's, particularly in bad weather because of floods 'and other dangers of the roads.' The papal grant was confirmed by Henry VIII on 1 February 1537 [H.C.R.O. D/ELW Z1 see p. 98].

How did other parishioners in the far-flung corners of the parish manage? Even with a chapel at Harpenden, some places in the parish were remote from a place of worship. Because William Inge lived so far from one, he was licensed by the bishop in 1297 to have a chantry chapel in 'Inge's Place', where Hammondsend now is. He was forbidden, however, to erect a belfry or ring any bell, for fear that passers-by would be enticed to hear Mass in his chapel instead of going, as they should, to their parish church. This was a privilege that would only have been allowed to a man with some influence; Inge was the Chief Justice of the King's Bench. At the other end of Harpenden there was a chapel at Annables which was referred to in a mid-sixteenth century inventory (see p. 98). A chapel at Herons was referred to in a will made in 1428 and proved in 1436 (see p. 38). Bleak House near the Cross Keys at Gustard Wood has been suggested as the site of a chapel. It was suggested by Canon Davys, rector of Wheathampstead in the last century, that a wayside chapel

existed at Gustard Wood, but his grounds for this belief seem to be chiefly that he considered it 'unlikely that Gustard Wood would have been without a chapel in medieval times', a dubious assumption ['Notes on Wayside Chapel at Gustard Wood' in *St. Albans Arch. & Arch. Soc. Transactions* 1888, pp. 13-14]. He identified it with a building of the early fifteenth century with a king-post resting on a tie-beam too richly moulded for a secular building, north and south doors suitable for wayfaring worshippers, and the correct orientation for a chapel. Converted into cottages at the Reformation, by 1888 it was empty and dilapidated: today it no longer exists, so investigation is impossible. The description could fit a small, late medieval house with an open hall and screens passage.

There were by the fourteenth century several wayside crosses in the parish: the old form of the word CROSS is 'crouch', and the early Court rolls contain references to Fynchescruche, Stonycrouch, Kyngescrouch, Marwood's Cross and Heyecrouch. This last, High Cross or Hill Cross, was rebuilt under the terms of Thomas Cowper's will of 1485. Cross Farm is on the site which is marked on Dury and Andrews' map (see cover) as 'Wheathampstead Crosses'. What could have been the tiled floor of a chapel was found in the farm by Canon Davys (see *About Wheathampstead*, p. 14).

From 1290 until his death in 1311, the priest of Wheathampstead had been another Prebendary of Lincoln, William de Stokton. His tomb was at one time to be seen 'In the middle of the chancel . . . but time has rendered it illegible' [Edward Steele, Bodleian Library, Gough MS Herts. MSS. 4]. The chancel was the priest's sanctum and the responsibility of the rector, while the upkeep of the rest of the church had to be paid for by the parishioners. Their contributions were collected by the churchwardens who, with the priest, then contacted the master-mason. This was no doubt the procedure followed when, early in the fourteenth century, it was decided to rebuild or add to Wheathampstead church north and south aisles and to rebuild the west end of the nave (see Plate 10b). The occupant of the fourteenth century tomb beneath a canopy in the north aisle may have been an unknown benefactor.

To about 1320 belongs the arch of the west doorway, with its ball-flower ornament, and to about 1335 the rebuilding of the north transept, followed later by the partial rebuilding of the south transept. The Decorated niche in this, with its masks, is unique in Hertfordshire, and was probably made by some itinerant mason at the expense, and as the contribution, of a donor to the church. The transepts functioned as chapels. To rebuild them in such a sumptuous style, Professor Pevsner has remarked, 'much money must have been available and an architect with a good sense of display'; the decorative work he considered to be surpassed in richness, within the county, only by that in St. Albans Abbey. There are indeed similarities to the Decorative details in the Lady Chapel there, the designer of

which was William Boyden. Pevsner believes, from the tracery forms, that these could be as late as 1315-20 [*The Buildings of England. Hertfordshire*. 1953 pp. 212-13, 275]. Could it be that, when the masons' work on the Lady Chapel had been completed, they moved on to Wheathampstead? The long-standing rivalry between the Abbots of Westminster and St. Albans may have made the former determined to secure the services of the same expert craftsmen. The carved stonework, the mouldings, the delicate tracery in the windows, the canopy to an unknown tomb, and the font are all fine examples of the period. In the north transept there is a reredos, which was an ornamental screen on the wall behind an altar; this one is a particularly noteworthy survival in Hertfordshire; it would have had a statue on each of the little pedestals and would have been painted. Yet the carving was never quite finished; and this has given rise to the suggestion that the Black Death of 1349 called a halt to the work, perhaps because the sculptor died in the plague and was irreplaceable. But work continued on the fabric: though the rebuilding was substantially complete, a number of additions were made in the second half of the century. About 1350 the south porch was added and about thirty years later the two storeyed north vestry, though smaller than it is today, was built. At much the same time the traceried south windows in the chancel were inserted, and the very small clerestory, which is one of the earliest in Hertfordshire; the clerestory is the line of windows in the nave walls above the aisle roofs.

Cussans, the Hertfordshire historian, suggested an anchoret or hermit may have lived in the upper chamber of the sacristy; a low side window would have enabled him to hear the confession of the lepers, who were not admitted to the church [*History of Hertfordshire* by J. E. Cussans, Vol. III, 'Dacorum Hundred', p. 330]. But these small windows are now thought to have been for the ringing of a hand bell where there was no sacring bell in a turret above the chancel arch, and the upper chamber could have been a treasury.

Fifteenth century work can be seen in the chancel, in the double ogee moulding of the doorway on the north and in the sedilia and piscina with masks and a canopy above it on the south. Sedilia are seats for priests; a piscina is a basin with a drain, into which waste water used for rinsing the communion cup or chalice was poured. 'Here the stone carver has achieved grace down to the last finished little angel who holds the perpendicular moulding to the wall surface' [*The Parish Church of St. Helen* by the Reverend George Talbot Roe]. The improvements were completed in the fourteen-thirties with the insertion of the window in the south aisle, with its three cinque-foiled lights. St. Helen's was now a fit resting place for the bones of the more illustrious parishioners, who left to posterity lasting memorials of brass. Of one of these commemorating a knight, believed to be an unidentified Brocket, and his lady, only the lady and a

greyhound remain, set in the floor to the south of the tower. The north transept seems to have been appropriated by the Bostock and Heyworth families, who were related, and, incidentally, is where the owners of Mackerye End traditionally sit. To about the year 1435 belongs the brass to Hugh and Margaret Bostock of Mackerye End, the parents of Wheathampstead's most famous son, John, the Abbot of St. Albans who assumed the name 'de Wethamstede'. Many rectors must have been buried in the chancel; Thomas Duncomb, who was rector between 1449 and 1461, asked in his will to be buried in St. Helen's.

During the fourteenth century Harpenden's church was enlarged by the rebuilding of the south aisle and transept, while the north transept was to become the Rothamsted Chapel for the lord of the manor. Possibly this was during the time when Ralph de Cressy held the manor; he had purchased it in 1355, having come to the district two years after the famous Battle of Crécy from which he most likely derived both his name and his fortune. The parishioners were not behind-hand in embellishing their church with brasses. One that links us closely with the present is to the memory of the second William Anabull: it lies below the chancel steps and represents a man and his wife, with a dog at the feet of the man. The inscription reads:

'Hic jacet Will'us Anabull et Isabella uxor ejus
qui quidem Will'us obit 4 die mensis Octobis 1456.'

(Here lies William Anabull and his wife Isabella, which same William died the fourth day of the month of October 1456).

William owned a manor at Kinsbourne Green. Even today the farm is known by his name, Annables; the first house is said to have stood in a meadow nearby. Another surname still extant in Harpenden is Seabrook, and on the floor of the tower are some stones bearing matrices of brasses, one of which is to the memory of William Seabrook, who died in 1462. The bell which probably tolled on that occasion is still there, for St. Nicholas' oldest bell was cast some time between 1420 and 1450. Its inscription is:

'Intonat De Celis Vox Compana Michaelis'

(A voice sounds from Heaven, the bell of Michael).

It bears the merchant's mark of a cross, which was used by John Walgrave, a London bell-founder; but it has been suggested that it was actually cast by John Danyell, who took over the stamps and letters of his master John Walgrave.

Great alterations to the church building took place in the latter half of the fifteenth century. The fourteenth century rebuilding of the south aisle had left the nave walls at their old height. Now the north aisle was heightened, the nave roof raised and an upper layer of clerestory windows was inserted (see Plate 9a). The chancel was repaired, and the original low central tower replaced by another built at the west end, the lovely one of three storeys with a turret on the south-east corner, that we see today. It is built of flint with

bond stones and quoins (corner stones) of ashlar, the flint being plastered externally. Charred timbers and molten lead found when the original building was demolished in 1862 suggest that the old central tower had been burnt down, and the chancel damaged. There is no architectural evidence as to when this happened, but Col. J. H. Busby has suggested that the destruction of the central tower may have been due to the War of the Roses, the second battle of St. Albans having been fought on Bernards Heath, on the Harpenden side, in 1470. In the east window of the old church, there was a coat of arms (Azure, a cross Argent), the shield of the Aylesbury family, a member of which lived here at the time when the church was being altered. This was Lady Charworth, heiress of Sir William Aylesbury; she had married the owner of Inge's Place at Hammondsend; possibly he paid for the rebuilding of the chancel.

That the parishioners were proud of their little church with its impressive new tower and the colourful east window in honour of Our Lady in the rebuilt and redecorated chancel is suggested by the will of William Kilbie, who in 1512 left money for the 'reparation of Our Lady's window'. In the church 'lights' (wax candles) were kept burning as a perpetual reminder of God's continuing grace; they stood before the High Altar and the Rood; there were All Hallows Light and the Light of the Holy Trinity, and more burned before the statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Andrew, St. Nicholas, St. Christopher and St. Catherine. They must have glowed on the processional cross as it was carried aloft down the aisle on Sundays and feast days, and enhanced the vivid colours of the priest's embroidered vestments.

There was an altar to St. Nicholas in Wheathampstead church, probably in the north transept. There were at least two others in the church, the high altar to St. Helen, to whom the church was dedicated, and one to Our Lady in the Lady Chapel in the south transept. There was also an image to St. Catherine, most likely on the bracket of which there are remains under a canopied structure in this transept, for all these altars would have stood against eastern walls. Thomas Leventhorpe in 1499 directed in his will that he should be buried before the image of St. Catherine in 'the south ile' (by which he meant transept), and John Lawdy in 1507 before the altar of St. Nicholas. In the following year Geoffrey Symeon, Rector of Wheathampstead and Dean of Lincoln, left five pounds and five marks (£8.6s.8d.) to Wheathampstead church and forty shillings to the chapel of Harpenden for the purchase of a vestment for the high altar of both churches, to be inscribed with his name. To about 1520 belong an unidentified brass and those to the Heyworth family in St. Helen's north transept.

The rector of Wheathampstead between 1520 and 1523 was Richard Sampson, who was later to support Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, from 1523 till 1529 Richard Patys, and after

him Peter Vannes, an Italian. Vannes was given the living for his part in soliciting Henry's divorce, but, as it was only one of many preferments awarded to him, he did not occupy the rectory but lived in Salisbury. The rectorial tithes were 'farmed' out; this arrangement was as profitable for the lessee or 'farmer', who paid a fixed annual rent or 'farm' to the incumbent, as it was convenient for the rector. Vannes left the care of his parish to a curate and it was this curate, presumably, who brought to light the sins of John Hunt of Harpenden. On 20 May 1530, he was charged by the bishop in the parish church of Wheathampstead of living incontinently with his servant, Joan Willys. This he denied; but the bishop ordered the two of them to present themselves, on the following Wednesday, to purge themselves, by the hand of five honest neighbours, and afterwards to appear before the Prior of the Benedictine nunnery of St. Giles-in-the-Wood at Flamstead and pledge themselves to be married. The original record of the Bishop's Visitation is in Latin, which lapses, however, into the vernacular in alleging that John persuaded Joan to take and drink 'certayn drynkes to distroy the childe that she is with'. The bishop ordered him to confess the next day before the Prior of St. Giles; and both of them were to walk, on a certain Sunday, in public penance before the processional cross in Harpenden church. They were, moreover, to solemnise their marriage as quickly as possible and until then, under pain of excommunication, they were to cease living together incontinently [*Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln 1517-31* edited by A. Hamilton Thompson. Lincoln Record Society, p. 14].

Those who could afford it paid for masses to be said after their death. One which was said once a year was known as an 'obit'; and we find Hugh Bostock, John Cutt and John Neale all providing for the payment of obits. None of them, nor John Brocket whose will of 1532 (see p. 55) contained the request that he be buried in the Chapel of Our Lady at Wheathampstead, could have foreseen that, before the decade was out, the Reformation would have begun which was to alter so drastically the forms of worship in their churches.

The Reformation and the Rise of Puritanism

When Henry VIII had broken away from the Church of Rome and made himself head of the Church, Harpenden received its own charter. It is dated 1 February 1537 and opens

'Henry the Eighth . . . To all our beloved Subjects inhabitants and dwellers, of either sex, of the Hamlet or Village of Harpenden, in the Diocese of Lincoln, Greeting. Having inspected certain pretended Letters, by the Authority of the Bishop of Rome . . .'

This was the Bull in which the Pope had granted permission to Harpenden to hold its own services and bury its own dead. 'The said letter', the charter continued, 'is of no validity or force, issued as it is by one . . . who within this realm . . . is without jurisdiction . . . [H.C.R.O. D/ELW Z1]. Henry's purpose was merely to assert his prerogative, and the charter ended by confirming what had been previously granted by the 'Roman Bishop'! How reassured must the people of Harpenden have been that they could still bury their dead in the graveyard adjoining St. Nicholas' church; it would have been 'burdensome' indeed to have had to revert to carrying them by 'foule wayes' to St. Helen's.

In accordance with Henry's order of 1541, the 'Great Bible' in English appeared in both our churches; and in 1543 the English litany was introduced. Next the King obtained authority, by the Chantries Act of 1545, to dissolve all chantries; these were chapels and altars maintained for the singing of masses for the souls of the faithful departed. They were a source of considerable wealth; and with a view to confiscating this, as well as suppressing 'Papal superstition', 'chantry certificates' were drawn up. Though Henry died in 1547 with the work uncompleted, it continued apace in the reign of his son Edward VI. Another Chantries Act was passed; Letters Patent were issued on 14 February 1547, for a survey of all chantries, guilds, obits, lights, etc. in Hertfordshire; and in 1548 a certificate was made of payments for obits which survived in Wheathampstead and Harpenden (see Plate 11a). The text is in appendix four.

In Edward VI's reign an inventory of church property was made throughout the land. 'The Kinges' Majestie had neede . . . of a masse of money', so all but the bare necessities of worship were confiscated. 'Thomas Northe of Whethamsted . . . husbandman' was appointed custodian of the property of St. Helen's church, and in 1552 the 'Commyssioners . . . delyvered unto the said Thomas Northe all such parcell of Goodes, plait, Juelles and Ornamentes, hereunder wryttine, belonginge to the Parryshe Church of Whethamsted aforsaid; Sayfflye to kepe the Same untill suche Tyme as the kinges mausties pleasur be therein Furder Known:' (see Plate 11b). In Harpenden 'Edmund Bardolf Esquier' was the man appointed, and he took charge of the goods 'belonging to the parish church or chapel of Harpenden'. The text of both these inventories is in appendix four.

How much all the changes, of which these confiscations were a part, disturbed the parishioners of Wheathampstead and Harpenden we have no means of telling, but some perplexity there must have been as they saw their churches stripped of their colours, their images, pictures, shrines, monuments, glass, altar, crucifixes, and crosses. To the reformers these smacked of popery. From a building with the mass as its central spectacle the church became a building centred on the pulpit. Queen Mary attempted to reverse the process, since it was her aim to restore Roman Catholicism; to this end she hoped to refound Westminster Abbey and, in 1556, set aside the income from the abbey's Wheathampstead estates to provide some of the funds. But with the accession of Queen Elizabeth I in 1558, Protestantism was restored, English was reintroduced into the services, and the Holy Table replaced the altar. What had been known as the Lady Chapel in St. Helen's church became the Brocket Chapel because here, in the south transept, were buried the Brockets of Wheathampstead Place; the effigies of two of them, man and wife, carved in alabaster and coloured, date from 1558 (see Plate 5). In 1561 a general order was issued for the destruction of rood lofts, the last remnant of 'popery', though Wheathampstead's rood was not entirely destroyed. Another innovation arising incidentally out of the Reformation was the keeping of parish registers. Thomas Cromwell had issued a mandate in 1538 to incumbents to enter in a book all weddings, christenings and burials in the parish; and Elizabeth required the record to be kept in a register. Unfortunately Wheathampstead's registers have survived only from 1690, though extracts from the earlier ones (1544-1689) were copied in the early eighteenth century by the antiquarian Edward Steele and are now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Harpenden's go back to 1562, but there are some gaps; it was fortunate that it began to keep its own registers separate from Wheathampstead's, an indication of growing independence.

Protestantism had made such strides since the Reformation that Philip of Spain set himself to stamp out Calvinism in the Netherlands. This is the period referred to in a brass tablet, on the wall of the north transept in St. Nicholas' church, which states that Sir John Wittewronge's ancestors left Flanders for the sake of their faith in 1564. Thus began the chain of events which led to the association of that family with Harpenden. On the same wall is another brass memorial, to William Cressy and his wife Grace (see Plate 7a) who died in 1571. From that year, 1571, date the communion cup and cover which are one of the treasures of Wheathampstead church; while in Harpenden two bells were cast by an itinerant founder, John Grene, in 1571 and 1574. These may well have been a recasting of two of the bells included in the inventory of 1552. One bore the inscription: 'In multis annis resonat campana Johannis' (John's bell peals for many years); and the other: 'John Grene fecit Anno Domini 1574' (John Grene made (me) in the year of Our Lord 1574).

The rector of Wheathampstead since 1562 had been Nicholas Took (Urwick alone claims that he was Cook: c and t were easy to confuse in sixteenth century handwriting); he was 'of no degree, nor a preacher'. In other words he was not a graduate and either did not preach sermons or preached poorly. But the curate at Harpenden, Mark Stubbing, was described as skilled in preaching [quoted in *Nonconformity in Herts.* by W. Urwick, p. 470]. In 1586 he became the rector of Wheathampstead; and in the following year he was married at Harpenden. He was a man of some local standing (see p. 68) and became a surrogate of the Bishop of Lincoln; that is, he became the bishop's deputy, with the right to grant licences for marrying without banns being called. Typical of the new order is the bequest of William Hunt, who in 1592 left ten shillings to provide bread and wine at the communion in Harpenden, which is still paid, and also the rent of a field let for £6.13s.4d. to provide bread for the poor; sometimes this was given as loaves, sometimes as money.

Wheathampstead and Harpenden together had 700 communicants, according to a return made in 1603, but unfortunately this does not distinguish between the two communities. The Archdeacon's Court was busy watching over them all, for on 28 May 1611 the curate of Harpenden, John Starr, was charged before the Court 'that he hath enclosed, demised and lett away from his house a certain parcel of land unto one John Chaworth'.* And on 15 June it was recorded that Mr. Starr of Harpenden was to repair the one half of the house called the priest's house and Edward Hayward and Thomas Kilby, churchwardens, the other half, and not to meddle with the land. On 3 July these two were ordered to tell the minister to announce at morning prayer that the parishioners would meet in the chancel after evening prayer, and be told that there was to be a tax of sufficient money to repair one half of the priest's house; if, however, most of them disagreed, the churchwardens were to take the names of those assenting and dissenting. The records show that by 17 July they had *not* warned the minister to give public notice, and John Chaworth had meanwhile got busy and laid out the parcel of ground! Nothing further about the matter is recorded; probably John Starr won the day over the land but had to repair the house at his own cost.

The Archdeacon's visitation of 1611 revealed that all was not as it should be. Harpenden church had no copy of Bishop Jewel's works, nor did it exhibit the Prohibited Degrees of Marriage. Bishop John Jewel had written in 1562 an outstanding *Apologia* in defence of the Anglican Church; he revised the Thirty-Nine Articles in 1571.

* This and the following quotations, unless otherwise specified, come from Urwick; pp. 415-25 are about Harpenden, 470-76 about Wheathampstead.

Since 1593 it had been a statutory offence for anyone over the age of sixteen not to attend church; and the Harpenden churchwardens, Richard Kimpton and William Hey, were called to account for 'not presenting' (i.e. bringing to Court) one who 'hath not come to Church these 10 years'. He is recorded as Richard Bardell but was probably Richard Bardolph of Bowers (see pp. 66-7). Even more recalcitrant, 'Richard Hughes standeth excommunicate'. In the same year, William Sparkes of Wheathampstead was in trouble for not receiving communion, as the law required. In 1614, according to Urwick, the rector returned the information that he had 340 communicants; presumably this was the figure for Wheathampstead alone, since in 1603 700 had been reported in the two parishes together. The rector also claimed that there were no recusants, persons conscientiously refusing to attend their parish church. Was Mark Stubbing painting too rosy a picture in order to satisfy the authorities? Recusants included not only Roman Catholics but also puritans, and there were certainly puritans in Harpenden at this time. In 1616/7 Thomas and Timothy Neale were arraigned for not attending church and Thomas Kilby and his wife 'for not receiving the Communion'. The two bells cast by Robert Oldfield of Hertford and inscribed 'Prayse the Lord', which were added to Harpenden's three earlier ones in 1612 and 1613, did not succeed in summoning everyone to church. Had Harpenden more such recalcitrant parishioners than Wheathampstead, or was it that John Starr, the curate since 1604, was more active in bringing them to book than Mark Stubbing, the rector at Wheathampstead?

Under two succeeding curates at Harpenden, these presentments seem to have lapsed; but a Subsidy Roll for 1628 mentions one Catholic in Harpenden, Sir William Brooks. In 1631 John Wells of Wheathampstead was presented 'for carting of dounge upon St. Matthew's day and laying it up on the land' and, in the following year, Marion Neale of Harpenden 'for not receiving the Communion'. She was evidently one of the Neale family who had failed to attend church in 1616/7, one of whom, Thomas, even refused to let his servant Maria Smyth 'go to Communion' in 1632. The curate at Wheathampstead in 1633, John Barker, had puritan leanings; and in accordance with puritan practice he moved the communion table at Wheathampstead to the middle of the chancel. The position against the east wall which had been occupied by the altar before the Reformation was the one favoured by the High Church establishment led by Laud; and in April 1635 Barker was ordered to place it there 'and to make and set up decent rails about the same'. It was probably Barker who was responsible for the summoning of William Nashe and others of Harpenden 'for working at the stocking of a tree and peeling of bark upon Ascension Day all fore-noon' and for spending the morning of Easter Monday 'in felling of wood'; for these offences they were sentenced to do penance in the church.

It might seem that excessive zeal on his part led to the accusation that 'Joseph Bilton of Harpenden, in regard of some infirmity in his head and in that he knew not the law, hath sat with his hat on in the church at the reading of the first or second lesson, for which he is heartily sorrie'. But he may have kept his hat on as an act of deliberate defiance, for Joseph Beldon of Plovers at Hatching Green was a man of strong principles; he also disputed his rate assessment; and he was buried in 1658 'in his hope garding' (hop garden), not in the churchyard [Burial Register].

The puritans had by now become a powerful faction in the church. Dr. Williams, the Bishop of Lincoln, considered them to be 'the King's best subjects'; and he it was who was the patron of the living. True, Mark Stubbing was still the rector but, perhaps because of his age, Dr. Williams took the opportunity in 1635 to license Lambert Osbaldeston to preach, knowing that this ex-master of Westminster School had puritan sympathies. When Stubbing died in 1637, the bishop had a puritan rector in Osbaldeston and a puritan curate in Barker. But he reckoned without Laud, the Archbishop of Canterbury and leader of the High Church party, who succeeded in getting the bishop suspended, fined and imprisoned in the Tower; while Osbaldeston, on account of certain letters he had written to the bishop, was deprived of his living at Wheathampstead, and would have been fined, stood in the pillory with his ears nailed to it, and then imprisoned, had he not gone into hiding. The vacant living at Wheathampstead Laud filled with one of his High Church party, Lewis Wemys; whereupon Dr. Williams, maintaining the appointment to be his prerogative, nailed a writ up on Wheathampstead church door challenging Wemys to show by what title he, the bishop, was denied that right. Wemys' answer was to petition the king in the following words: ' . . . within these few dayes the Lord Bishop of Lincolne hath brought a writt from Your Majesties Court of Common Pleas, and served it upon the Churchdoore of the said Parsonage, charging Your Majesties petitioner to appeare and render a reason, Wherefore he hath hindred him from presenting a Sufficient Clerke to the saide Parsonage (being now, as hee alledgeth, in His Donation) . . . These', he concluded, 'are therefore humbly to beseech Your most gracious Majestie out of Your Majesties incomparable wisdom and benignity, to direct some Course, that your petitioner bee freed from the Tyranny and malicious intentions of the said Bishop whose studie is to disturbe Your Majesties petitioner from the peaceable enjoying of that blessing which your Majestie was graciously pleased to conferr upon him'. His petition was granted on 13 January 1640, when it was ordered that 'Hee may bee in quiett Possession of the said living' [P.R.O. SP/16/403(134)]. But he did not enjoy it for long, for the success of the Parliamentarians in the Civil War meant the restoration of Osbaldeston to the living in 1642.

In the same year Robert Rudston of Blakesleys, now Harpenden Hall, died. He left £20, a very large sum in those days, 'to entertain my friends who shall accompany me to my grave'. His floridly worded monument may be seen in St. Nicholas' church. In Robert Rudston Harpenden seemed to have lost a squire who was a friend to the puritans, but in Sir John Wittewronge of Rothamsted it had gained another. 'It pleased Almighty God', wrote Sir John, 'to open (my grandfather's) eyes to see . . . the saving truthes of the Gospel . . . reformed from the gross errors of superstition and popery . . . soe that he became a Protestant'. Sir John, therefore, was baptised 'in the Dutch church, whereof my father was . . . an elder'. ['Memoirs of the Wittewronge Family' printed in *The History and Antiquities of the County of Hertfordshire* by Robert Clutterbuck, Vol. I, pp. 408-9]. His mother, in her will of 1647, left ten shillings a year to the minister of Harpenden for his preaching a sermon on 5 November each year 'in memorial of God's great deliverance of this Nation from the Powder plot' as well as another ten shillings to be distributed to the poor in bread after the service, a charity which seems to have lapsed after 1710 [H.C.R.O. D/ELW F77].

In 1648 a chalice and cover was added to the treasures of Wheathampstead church; but in the following year the form of worship was once more radically altered. After the execution of Charles I England became a Commonwealth and the clergy had to abstain from using the Prayer Book that had been introduced in Edward VI's time. The church became the common ground for all men of puritan views: Presbyterians, Baptists and Independents held the livings, received the tithes and preached in the churches. Not only was the lord of the manor at Harpenden, Sir John Wittewronge, a puritan, but there were puritan yeomen: the Neale family and Nathaniel Cotton of Turner's Hall, who in 1650 was one of the wealthiest people in Harpenden. In the same year commissioners enquiring into church livings reported that 'Mr. Lambert Osbaldston . . . proprietor of Wheathampstead Rectory and of Harpenden . . . received the profits of the said parishes to his own use . . .' It was added 'that one Mr. Davis supplied the cure of Wheathampstead, and Mr. Nathaniel Eeles, an orthodox, able, and godly minister, supplieth the cure at Harpenden, for which he received a salary of £30 per annum'. In 1643 Eeles had been 'called by the People at Harpenden . . . to be their Pastor. There he continu'd preaching with great Satisfaction, and good Success' [*The Ejected or Silenc'd Ministers* by Edmund Calamy].

It was Eeles and Sir John Wittewronge who were the prime movers in an attempt to get Harpenden fully separated, as a parish, from Wheathampstead. Petitions were sent to the Long Parliament and to the Lord Protector. The text is in appendix five. A jury which was appointed to enquire into the case reported in 1650 in favour; and there for the moment the matter rested.

Nathaniel Eeles remained Harpenden's 'orthodox, able, and godly minister' and was said to be 'much respected and belov'd by persons of all Ranks . . . an excellent Text-man, and well acquainted with the Scriptures' [Calamy]. His name appears in the Harpenden registers as a witness to a number of marriages, which under the Commonwealth were celebrated in the following manner: 'Robert Jenkyn, gentleman, and Rose Kentish his wife married by Alban Cox, Esq., Justice of the Peace for the County of Hertford, in the presence of Godman Jenkyn, gentleman, Nathan Cotton, gentleman, Nathaniel Eeles, Clerke, William Cotton, gentleman; and divers others were there also present in the parish church of Harpenden aforesaid.'

By 1655 the commission investigating the alleged misdemeanours of the rector had 'questioned Lambert Osbaston for impudence, ignorance and debauchedness' and 'ousted him of a rich parsonage . . . where he was very well liked for his good hospitality'. With Osbaldeston 'sequestered from Wheathampstead for insufficiency', there was a rush to fill this comfortable living. The contestants were Robert Breton and Thomas Thornton; and Thornton it was, in recognition of 'his holy and good conversation' and his being 'a fit person to preach the gospel', who was appointed on 8 October 1655 by Oliver Cromwell.

The comparative wealth of Wheathampstead and Harpenden by this time is illustrated by the collections made in 1655 for distressed Protestants on the Continent: Wheathampstead contributed £4.3s.9d and Harpenden £15. Nathaniel Cotton was apparently the provider of the latter; no doubt he could well afford it for, according to his memorial at the east end of the nave of St. Nicholas' church, he had been a gentleman in waiting to King James I and King Charles I. The value of the Harpenden rectory, £160, exceeded that of Wheathampstead rectory, £150. These values were given in a deed that was drawn up for the creation of a separate parish of Harpenden. Signed in 1656, it is now in the Lambeth records and reads in part: 'We do adjudge it fitt and accordingly order . . . that the said Chappell and Hamlett of Harpenden and all messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments within . . . the precincts and lymitts thereof be and stand severed and divided from the sayd parish of Wheathampstead and . . . taken to be a distinct parish of itselfe'. And yet, even though the 'Hamlett of Harpenden hath bin lymitted by antient and known bounds by itself, having churchwardens, overseers of the poor, and Constables chosen within themselves', even though because of 'the distance of the sayd Chappellrie from the said parish Church of Wheathampstead, the inhabitants thereof cannot with convenience from time to time resort to the sayd parish church', in spite of all this, the deed was never implemented. The reason would seem to be that the days of the Commonwealth were already numbered.

The Restoration and the Growth of Dissent

On the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 the State Arms, which had been put up in Harpenden church in 1650 at a cost of ten shillings, were promptly taken down and the King's Arms were put in their place above the chancel arch, at a cost of £3. The removal of Thomas Thornton, rector of Wheathampstead, occurred the same year, leaving this rich living vacant once again. Hence the petition of Henry Killigrew who had been a playwright and, during the Civil War, a Royalist chaplain. He reminded the king in August 1660 that he had 'been a servant to your Majesties Royall father and your brother the Duke of York' but for 'one and twenty years till your Majesties late happy return into England never received any benefit from the Church more then a Title to a Preben of Westminster'; therefore he besought him 'to bestow upon him the Rectory of Wheathampstead . . . at present voyd' [P.R.O. SP/29/12 (137)]. Whether it was for his own services to the king or for those of his sister Lady Shannon, who was one of Charles' mistresses, Killigrew was successful in getting the living. That it was a comfortable one is evident from the fact that the house of 'Doctor Henry Killigrew Parson' was taxed on nine hearths between 1663 and 1673; it was, probably, a house close to the mill, which was burnt down in the eighteenth century.

The Restoration Settlement of the Church led to the ejection of the non-conforming clergy; and Nathaniel Eeles was ejected in 1661 by Killigrew, Joel Jones being appointed in his place as curate at Harpenden. To continue his ministry as an Independent (Congregationalist) Eeles, who had a wife and seven children to support, had to preach from his own house in the parish. In 1662 the Act of Uniformity made the use of the prayer book compulsory, and episcopal ordination a condition of preaching. By thus making meetings of dissenters illegal it was intended to silence them for good and all, but it had the reverse effect. In 1663 Robert Parker and Roger Ashton refused to pay the tax due to Wheathampstead church, and both were fined. The Conventicle Act of 1664 revived the penalties for non-attendance at church; and for this George Ashton was duly fined. The meeting of more than five persons for religious worship not in accordance with the practices of the Church was now prohibited; and the passing of the Five Mile Act in the following year meant that Eeles could no longer live in Harpenden. He therefore left his family there and went to live in Bovington; but the passing of the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672 enabled him to return and obtain a licence to be a congregational teacher in his house, which stood on the site later occupied by Harpenden Lodge. Here 'he preach'd gratis to all Comers', assisted by another ejected minister, Robert Tory. 'When the Licenses were recall'd, he continued to expose his House, and Person to the Fines, and Penalties that were then

recoverable of him, and still carry'd on a constant Course of Church Administration till his last Sickness; and Providence so order'd it, that he never was disturb'd, tho' often threaten'd'. For six years Eeles and Tory preached to small congregations at Harpenden and many places round about. Though 'his weakness was such . . . that . . . he was forc'd to preach sitting, . . . he continu'd . . . till about a Fortnight before his Death' [Calamy]. He died in 1678, leaving to each of his children a *Practice of Piety*, Ally's *Treatise of Conversion*, Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted* 'and a New Bible to such as need the same', while his wife received 'my Largest English Bible in Folio with the Annotations thereupon in Two volumes and Deodates Annotations And all the Books I have of Mr. Carill upon Job' [P.R.O. Prob11/359]. The Harpenden meeting of Congregationalists appears to have lapsed after Eeles' death.

The Neales of Hammondsend, whose relatives had been recusants before the Civil War, became members of the Society of Friends before the end of the seventeenth century. As there are no records of a meeting house in Harpenden, they probably attended one of the two conventicles that were reported in Redbourn in 1669; one of these had a meeting of 'Quakers' every Tuesday and would have been conveniently near Hammondsend. In 1683 a Quaker conventicle in Caddington was exposed, Nicholas Chaloner and his wife, George Blackstone and Thomas Liberty, all of Harpenden, were convicted of being present.

In the Recusant Rolls for 1679 the name of William Gawen, gentleman, of Harpenden, appears; 'recusant' was by now used almost entirely of Roman Catholics and Gawen or Gowing is recorded as a 'Papist' and a very dangerous man! A warrant for his arrest was issued on 14 February 1680; but the constable reported a fortnight later that, in spite of his endeavours, Gawen was still at large. Perhaps he did not try over-hard to seek out his quarry, who apparently was allowed to live in Harpenden in peace until his death in 1702. A note against his name in the parish register reads 'Mr. Gawing when he dyed he was reputed very poor'.

Stamping out nonconformity failed: according to the return made to Bishop Compton in 1676 there were ten nonconformists and 288 conformists in Harpenden and twenty-six nonconformists and 397 conformists in Wheathampstead. These were adults over sixteen. Most of the local nonconformists must have been Baptists, or 'Anabaptists' as contemporaries called them. An Anabaptist was one who was baptised again: they did not accept the validity of infant baptism and used baptism by total immersion as the sacrament which admitted an adult to church membership. On 22 March 1675 Hugh Smith of Wheathampstead drew up a list of members of the congregation of Baptists who attended the church at Kensworth: thirteen came from Wheathampstead and eight from Harpenden. The Wheathampstead families were those of Cason, Tidd (spelt Tide),

Rawlins, Smith, Penny, Harden and Osman; at Harpenden, those of Neale, Element, Catlin and Marshall. The list was kept up to date by the addition of new names and, alas, by the removal of old ones like 'Brother Neale fallen away'. A strict code of behaviour was expected to be adhered to by the members, who entered into a covenant with one another. Great emphasis was laid on sobriety; and this is why it had to be recorded that 'Brother Osman . . . an inhabitant of Wheathampstead . . . did very shamefully with others betray his trust as a servant, and left his worke, his master not being with them, and went to an alle house, where hee spent most part of day in sining agaynst God and spending his money which should releve his family, unto excese in drinking'. The employer he cheated was also, it seems, a Baptist, 'He being a servant at a brother's house'; and 'the said brother could doe no lesse but declare it to the church, all though to his great truble, for which the church did withdraw from him and he yet lieth under admonition 1678'. Brother Osman was contrite, and it would doubtless be unwarrantably cynical to put this down to a desire to be reinstated in his employment! He 'did, in the presence of the congregation, publicly declare the fact, acknowledge his sin, and manifest his great trouble for the same' and 'desired to againe returne to his place. The church gladly embraced him againe, rejoicing that God had given him repentance to the acknowledging of the truth', and he was 'admitted to his membership, March 1678'.

The case of Brother Rawlins took longer to settle. He 'did very often drink and was drunken, and kept bad company to excess, even to the wrong of his one soul, to the greif of the church and the impovrishment of his wife and children, and being chargd did in the present of the congregation acknowlege the fact and charg to bee true, desired the prayers of the congregation that the Lord in marcy might restore him againe. Yet the church thought fitt to withdraw from him and hee yet lyeth under admonition February 1679/80'. He was to remain in this miserable state for another decade, at the end of which however it is good to be able to record that he 'did by his conversation declare newnes of life, desired to return to his place. The church ware satisfied and hee did take his place in the church againe as formerly, 1691.' Other names were added, but many members 'rent off' to found a separate Baptist church at Luton, among them the Brothers Element [*The Church Book of the Kensworth Meeting* in the keeping of Dagnall Street Baptist Church, St. Albans].

The Toleration Act had legalised dissenters' meeting houses in 1689 on condition that they were licensed. No time was lost in Wheathampstead, where two were licensed in 1690 in the names of Richard Sibley and James Harding. This must have been the 'Brother Harden' who had been among the Baptists listed by Hugh Smith; when he certified another meeting house in 1694 it was for Anabaptists; in 1700 he certified, with Hugh Smith (Senior and Junior)

and the reformed John Rawlins, a meeting at the house of William Osman (also reformed) 'at the east side of Gustardwood'. James Harding was held in great respect by his congregation: 'our dear brother Harding being onely Left alone in the office of Eldershead, hee did desire some brother or brethren as the church should think fit, should bee chosen to asist him'; there were 'cells' to care for in a wide area stretching from Stony Stratford to Shenley and from Leighton Buzzard to Codicote [*Church Book*]. James Harding was the father-in-law of James Marshall, whose Charity has benefited Harpenden and Wheathampstead. James Marshall House, on some of the land belonging to this Charity, is a long-stay home for old people, a day-care centre for some infirm old people, and a day centre for the more active.

The first dissenting meeting house in Harpenden of which there is any record is one that was registered on 22 May 1711. Joseph Garrett, Richard Bigg, Martha Garnet and William Garnet, 'being Protestant Dissenters from the Church of England', certified that William Kilby's house was 'appointed for a place of religious worship'. When, two years later on 13 November 1713, 'the people known by the name of Anabaptists' registered 'the dwelling house of John Gooding, known by the name of Cold Harbour', several of the names appended were familiar: Hugh Smith, James Marshall, William Brown, William Brookes, John Hobbs, John Beckett. The Harpenden and Wheathampstead Baptists were clearly working together and meeting in either parish as suited them: the ubiquitous Hugh Smith, joined by James Marshall, John Carill, William Brown, William Brookes, John Hobbs, and John Brookes now licensed the house of James Harding in Wheathampstead for Baptist worship.

The returns recorded in the Bishop of Lincoln's visitation records between 1706 and 1721 [*Speculum 1*. Lincolnshire Archives Office] give some idea of the distribution of dissenters in the two parishes. Harpenden had two or three families of Baptists and one 'Papist', but Wheathampstead had between fourteen and eighteen families of Baptists. In September 1723 'the dwelling house of Jeremiah Downes in the parish of Harpenden' was added to those which were meeting houses, but that was the last recorded Baptist meeting house in Harpenden that has come to light. In Wheathampstead, on the other hand, there was a continuing series of Baptist meeting houses licensed: in June 1723 the house of William Young of 'Custed Wood' and the house of Richard Coddall by Marshall's Heath; in March 1728 John Grannell's house at Wheathampstead and in 1749 Andrew Tristram's in the parish of Wheathampstead. There appear to have been no Quaker meeting houses nearer than Cross Lane between Redbourn and Hemel Hempstead; and here Edmund Neale of Hammondsend was a trustee in 1732.

A tradition exists that John Wesley preached at Harpenden, though if this is true he failed to mention it in his voluminous

journals. It is recorded, however, that he preached in Luton nine times between 1766 and 1782: Cornelius Coplestone, curate at Luton, offered Wesley the use of his church in 1772, and there perhaps some Harpenden people went to hear him. Coplestone's son, Samuel, became an ardent Methodist preacher and, as he was among those who on 6 September 1790 signed an application for a licence for a meeting house at Harpenden, the inference is that this was a Methodist one. Coplestone, Robert Tomalin, William Jenkins 'and others, His Majesty's Protestant subjects' announced that they 'intend to use the dwelling house and barn of Thomas Tomalin in the parish of Harpenden, blacksmith, for the worship of Almighty God, and humbly request that the same may be registered according to the Statute'. Two years later, on 1 April 1792, Thomas Robinson, William South, Charles Evans, James Norris witnessed that Robinson's 'house in the parish of Harpenden is set apart as a place of religious worship of Almighty God for divers of his Majesty's Protestant subjects commonly called Methodists'. [Urwick, p. 424]. There was on West Common near the Rothamsted Laboratory a row of thatched cottages, demolished about 1902, known as Chapel Row, and near them once stood the cottage meeting house of Thomas Robinson. Here, according to the preaching plan for 1813-14 (see appendix six), services were held every Sunday at 10.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m.

The next development among the Methodists seems to have been the creation of a congregation at Kinsbourne Green. On 17 May 1820 the house of Matthew Luck at Kinsbourne Green was registered by himself, William Towers, William Henson and Joseph Smith. Eight years later it appeared on the Luton preaching plan. The 'Protestant Dissenters' who were licensed in 1828 to meet in the house of Mrs. Susannah Nash at Wheathampstead may also have been Methodists. By 1839 the Methodists were strong enough to finance the building of two new chapels: one in Leyton Road, Harpenden, the other on property owned by Jacob Harrison on the Hill at Wheathampstead. (*About Wheathampstead*, p. 20). Although at Wheathampstead there were only six members, among them the Grays and the Deverills, their confidence was justified by events: in three years they had doubled their number; though this was to fall away again, attendance at their services, presumably by many who were not prepared to commit themselves as members, seems to have remained high. A Wesleyan chapel was certified in Harpenden by John Crofts in 1846 [Urwick p. 846].

As far as the older nonconformist churches were concerned, by the early nineteenth century it was the Independents (Congregationalists) rather than the Baptists who flourished locally. Not all the Tomalins seem to have been of the Methodist persuasion. On 4 March 1802 'a certain house or chapel now in the occupation of Susan Tomlin' in Harpenden was registered by Susan, Mary Humphry, John Humphry, John Downs, Mary White, Mary Hatton, William

Luck and Mary Davison for a congregation of Independents. The number of names suggests that this was not just a dwelling house but a building set apart for worship; and a year later the Independents seem to have been meeting in a chapel in Harpenden in the possession of the above John Humphry, the signatories on the certificate being himself and Mary Kilbey, James Ellis, William Coles, Mary Humphry, John Downes, Sarah Downes and Elizabeth Kilbey. The next change occurred sixteen years later. The registration of William Vigis' house as a meeting house for Protestant dissenters on 12 January 1819 was quickly succeeded on 17 May by the registration of the house of the Reverend Maurice Phillips, with the names of G. Brown and Joseph Newson also appended. This is the earliest record, in the parish, of anyone other than a layman being responsible for a dissenting body. Phillips had been headmaster of Mill Hill School, the public school for dissenters, till 1818, when he left and leased Blakesleys (Harpenden Hall) as a boys' school. He died in January 1822, just before the formal establishment of the church, but his successor at the school supported it, and two of the masters, the Reverend R. Cecil and the Reverend T. R. Barker, were its preachers for the next ten years. Barker then became the first ordained minister of the church, which stood at the south-west corner of the gardens of the Hall. When the school closed in 1839 a chapel was built in Amenbury Lane at a cost of £474 with H. Davis as its minister. The chapel was opened on 14 July 1840 with seating for 300, though the church had only fifty members at this time. This is the building which later became the Salvation Army Citadel (see Plate 12b).

In Wheathampstead, too, the Independents flourished. In 1808 the houses of Ann Fillbey and of Thomas Parrett were licensed; Ann, incidentally, had to make her mark since she could not write her signature. In 1810 the Wheathampstead dwelling of Thomas Neale, no doubt a descendant of the family which had produced such obdurate nonconformists in the seventeenth century, was certified and on 8 September 1812 yet another was licensed in the dwelling of George Sutton of 'Water Mills', as Wheathampstead Mill was called. Sutton seems to have collaborated with other 'Protestant Independents' in the building of special premises, which are described in 1815 as belonging to W. Rogers, George Sutton and N. Bacon. The chapel, which stood on Brewhouse Hill, was certified on 26 May 1815 and opened on 5 July 1815, when the first sermon was preached by the pastor of the St. Albans Congregational Church, a Mr. Cox (see Plate 12c). Thus before the middle of the nineteenth century Methodists and Independents had their own specially built chapels in both parishes. Although there were four chapels, the Baptists and the Quakers had not succeeded in getting a meeting established, and had to go outside the parish to worship.

The Parish Churches after the Restoration

So much for the dissenting bodies, whose history we have now traced from the time of the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672 till the mid-nineteenth century; we will now return to the Church of England and follow its history through the same period. Henry Killigrew, the rector of Wheathampstead who was 'bred to the Church and of great esteem therein' resigned the living in 1673 in favour of John Lambe, his curate and son-in-law [J. H. Busby 'The Killigrew and Lambe Families' in *E.H.A.S. Transactions*, Vol. XI, Part I, 1940, p. 102]. John Lambe was married to Elizabeth Killigrew; another daughter, Mary, also married into the cloth, as this entry in the church register records: 'Mr. Nicholas Onley, Minister and Mary da. of Dr. Henry Kelligrew 14 Aug. 1665'. Onley was, in fact, the curate at Harpenden. A third daughter, Anne, was a poetess and painter, the subject of a sonnet by Dryden.

One other place of worship existed outside the parish churches, yet within the established church: there was a 'Chappell at Lamer' in which services were held and in 1678 a wedding took place. Perhaps this is a reflection on the poor state of St. Helen's: in 1682 'the want of a surplice and hood and two Common Prayer Books' is recorded [Urwick, p. 474]. The Harpenden churchwardens' accounts for 1691 include the purchase of 'a prayer book with thanksgiving for gunpowder treason . . . 1s.'. The thanksgiving was, needless to say, not for the treason but for deliverance from it! Some of the Harpenden parish accounts and bills still in existence throw an interesting light on prices and on the work done in the church:

'1691 P(ai)d the Glazeyor for glaying the church	
windows and soldring the Leds	7s.
P(ai)d to John Cheworth for looking to the Clock	
and for Sextons wages	£1.9s.8d
P(ai)d for bread and wine for the Sacrament ...	4s.3d'

There are four entries like the last in the same year's accounts, which may indicate that Holy Communion was celebrated only four times a year. In the following year more windows need attention:

'P(ai)d for Glazing the Church windows	13s.2d'
---	---------

A still more expensive item occurred in the following year:

'P(ai)d for glazing and ledling the Church ...	£3.9s.10d'
--	------------

The bells and the ringers were often paid for from the parish funds:

'1692 Item 5 new bell ropes	19s.8d
Item For ringing on the King's birthday ...	3s.
Item For Gunpowder Treason Day	10s.
Item when we got the Victory over the	
French	5s.
Paid to Emmanuel Clark for hanging the	
Great Bell and for Boards	16s.6d.'

[Among the parish collection of papers in Harpenden Hall].

In Wheathampstead church the Lamer chapel in the north transept was now embellished with the monuments of several generations of Garrards, the latest to John and his wife Jane, who died in 1692. By her, it is recorded, 'He had 23 Children . . . She was a most loving and prudent wife' — more loving, one might suppose, than prudent! Such sad occasions, as also the joyful ones, helped to fill the ringers' pockets or their tankards. At Harpenden two years later, on the death of Queen Mary II, the accounts record 'P(ai)d John Cheworth for ringing the No. 1 3 times for the Queen . . . 1s.'. In 1694 the churchwardens disbursed £2.9s.9d on the whitewashing of the church [Parish collection, Harpenden Hall]; but how little both it and the Wheathampstead church had changed, apart from the occasional whitewashing, is shown by Sir Henry Chauncy's descriptions of them in 1700 (see Plates 9 & 10). St. Helen's, he wrote, was 'erected after the Manner of a Cathedral, having a Cross and a Tower in the Middle thereof, with a Spire and a Balcony round the Middle of the Spire, all covered with Lead, in which are five Bells'. It had probably received rather less in the way of repair, paid for now by a church rate, than it should have done. Of St. Nicholas', Harpenden, Chauncy wrote: 'This Church is situated not far from the Vill, which is a fair Building covered with Lead, and a square Tower adjoyns the West End hereof, wherein is a Ring of five Bells; it is also leaded, and a short Spire is erected upon it: Tis a Chappel of ease to Whethamsted' [*The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire* by Sir Henry Chauncy. 1826. II, pp. 427 & 436].

In spirit, as well as in appearance, the two parish churches had changed very little, for this was a period when the Church of England was in something of a rut. Every year between 1701 and 1706 a similar footnote appeared under the entries in the Wheathampstead parish register: 'Most worthy Sir this I doe deliver as the very truth which have kept the(m) 53 years and recorded All my selfe and am allmost 4 s(c)ore and 6 years old Witness my hand Benjamin Peter Parish Clarke'. 'A Register of Births Burials and Marriages belonging to the Curate of Harden' was kept between 1701 and 1717. The curate who started this, Charles Lambe, entered in it 'An account of the perquisites arising from Wheathampstead and Harden and w(hi)ch I have received': they amounted to only £4.1s.6d in 1706 but to £14.9s.3d in 1707. In that year he was paid from 2s.6d to 5s. for a baptism and 5s. for each wedding, though he returned part of his fee on two occasions. For burials he received from 8d to 2s., but if a sermon was called for he might get up to £1.3s.6d. For a 5th November sermon he got 10s. under the will of Sir John Wittewronge's mother (see p. 103). 'Easter dues at Harden' amounted to £1.10s., and a Good Friday donation from 'Mad(a)m Whittrewrong' made him the richer by a further 10s.9d. [C. E. Jones 'Hertfordshire Parish Registers' in *St. Albans Arch. & Arch. Soc. Transactions* 1925, pp. 155 & 157-8]. The rector, John Lambe, who shares with Killigrew

a memorial in the form of ledger stones in front of the High Altar in Wheathampstead, died in 1708, leaving a flagon and paten to Wheathampstead and £5 to the churchwardens of Harpenden towards a set of communion vessels on condition that they paid for the completion of the memorial, a condition which appears not to have been kept. But how often was communion celebrated in the early eighteenth century? Only three times a year at Wheathampstead according to one return, seven according to another, while at Harpenden it was celebrated monthly according to one return, three times a year according to another as well as at the three great festivals of the Christian year. What of other Christian ordinances?

Edward Wake had been appointed rector by his uncle, Bishop Wake of Lincoln, a form of nepotism that became the pattern. Bishop Wake was later to be Archbishop of Canterbury; and to this circumstance we owe the preservation of his diaries at Lambeth:

'23 May 1712 — I got that evening to Wheathampstead.

24 May 1712 — Wrote some letters.

25 May 1712 — Sunday. I preached and confirmed about 150. After evening prayers came in Sir Sam(ue)l Garrard, Mr. Witrong & two other gentlemen, Mr. Smyth and his nephew a clergyman, who all dined with us.

26 May 1712 — Left for Welwyn.'

[J. H. Busby's copy of the manuscript in Lambeth Palace Library].

The 150 would presumably have included some from Harpenden, since while Garrard was the chief landowner at Wheathampstead, Mr. Wittewronge was his counterpart in Harpenden and Mr. Smyth too was of that parish.

Records of the Archdeacon's Visitation show that in 1717 [*Speculum*. Lincolnshire Archives Office], while there were two services at Harpenden each Sunday as well as services on Feastdays and on Thursdays and Saturdays in Lent, there were only three celebrations of Holy Communion in the year. At Wheathampstead services were also held twice every Sunday as well as on Feastdays and some weekdays; the Catechism was taught regularly for three months in the year. The curate at Harpenden, James Horton, received a salary of £40, with fees; George Barnard, his successor, it was recorded in 1720, 'instructs the sons of neighbours in his house' to augment his income. Barnard lived at Bennetts Butts.

Six bells in the tower of Wheathampstead church proclaimed: 'Richard Phelps me fecit 1717' (Richard Phelps made me 1717). In the same year there was 'work done at Harden Church'. Harden was the contemporary phonetic spelling of the old pronunciation of Harpenden.

'Item for 7 pounds of sorder spent about the lead	5s. 10d
for 5 pounds of new lead	10d
for a day work	1s. 8d
for wood to heat my irons	1s.

also for 34 new quarries	2s. 10d
for 5 foot of old glass new leaded	1s. 3d
for 9 foot of old glass repaired	1s. 6d'

This kind of account appeared intermittently; there was another in the next year, 1718, which included 'making up wall at the Church House'. The expenses of a funeral are recorded in the Harpenden Accounts for April 1720:

'p(ai)d Goody Dixon for laying out Goodman Turpin	1s.
p(ai)d Goody Liberty	1s.
p(ai)d Goody Dixon for watching	6d
p(ai)d for drink to the bearers	1s. 6d
The Parson and Clark fees	2s. 4d
The Coffin	6s.
for a cap and muffler	1s.

[Parish collection, Harpenden Hall]

At about this time the antiquarian Edward Steele wrote detailed notes about Wheathampstead church and compiled a list of its rectors: 'A neat screen divided this chancel from the church, at the W. end of the chancel is stalls after a very ancient manner. In 3 narrow windows at the E end was painted on the glass the whole history of Our Saviour from his conception unto the invention of the Cross by St. Hellin, now something decayed and indeed all the windows doth shew some remains of their former glory' [Bodleian Library. Gough Ms. Herts. MSS.4]. In 1728 Nathaniel Salmon thought that St. Helen's church was 'the oldest in the County'. Perhaps it had an air of dilapidation which misled him. Some pre-Reformation features had evidently escaped destruction by the iconoclasts of Henry VIII's time and Oliver Cromwell's, for Salmon wrote: 'The Rood seems to be left in the Church still: A plain Figure of coarse Wood, with the Head almost cut off with a Saw or some other Instrument, slanting. This Image is made the Clerk's Desk, and a Shelf made above it to hold his Book.' [*The History of Hertfordshire* by N. Salmon, p.147]. The fervour that would have destroyed it utterly in the previous two centuries had now burnt itself out and given way to indifference. 'Mr. Edward Wake' was the rector in 1728. He died four years later, to be replaced by Octavian Reynolds, the son of the Bishop of Lincoln who held the gift of the living! Reynolds moved to Wheathampstead in 1733 and in 1740 saw the dial of the church clock repainted. Services in 1743 were much as they had been in 1717: the parishioners had to be content with the celebration of communion three times a year at Wheathampstead, and four at Harpenden; divine service was held in both churches on Sundays, festivals and certain weekdays; and catechising took place for three months from the beginning of Lent at Wheathampstead, and during Lent at Harpenden. Two years later, when the curate George Barnard left Harpenden, Reynolds neglected to appoint anyone to replace him; and this annoyed his Harpenden parishioners. James Wittewronge of Rothamsted voiced their griev-

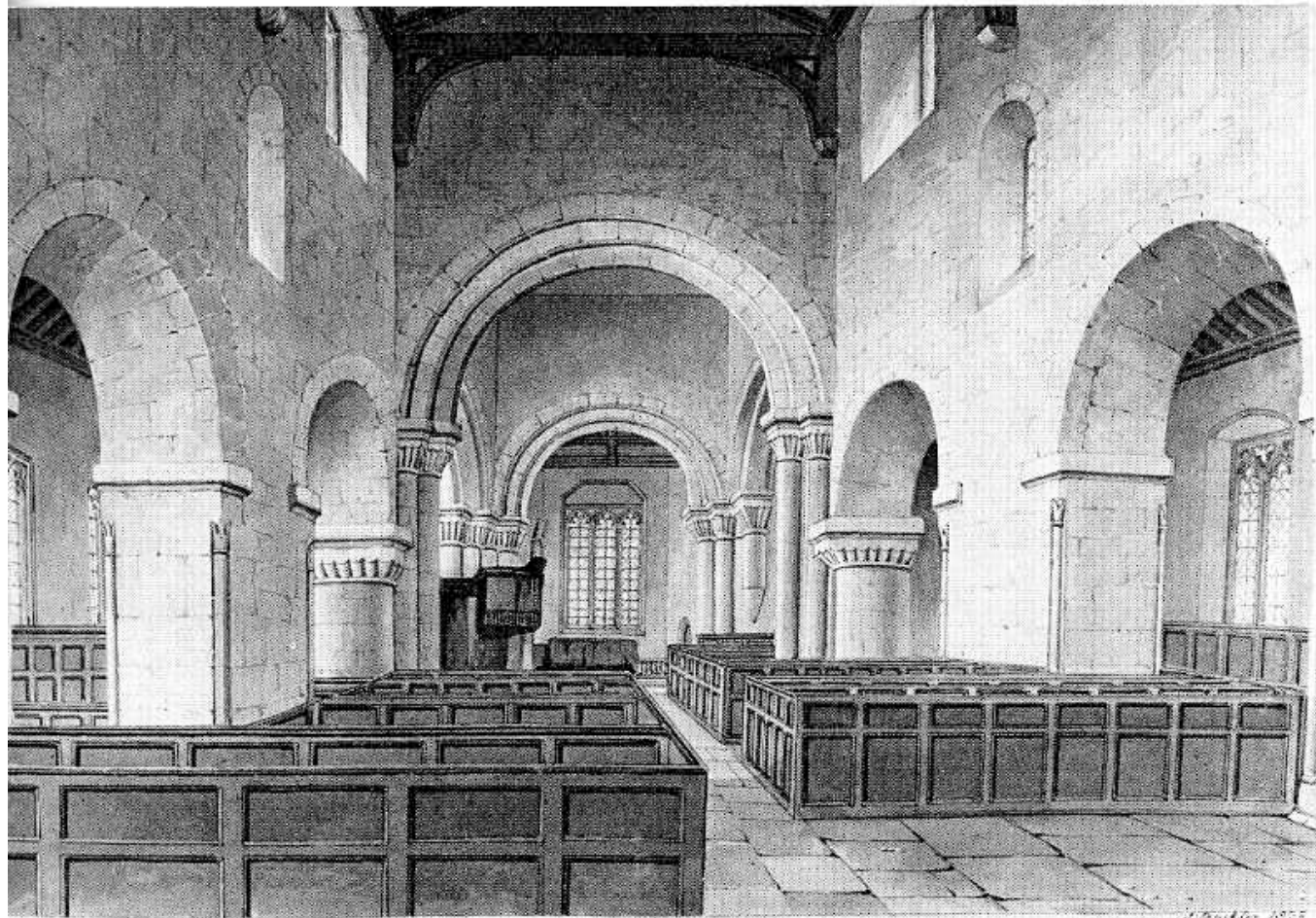
ances in a letter which he sent to the new Bishop of Lincoln on 7 September 1746: 'The Parish of Harpenden has been a Distinct Parish (Beyond the Memory of Man) Bounded by Ancient and known Boundaries by it self. The Inhabitants thereof have had (by Long Continued Custom Grounded upon an Ancient Charter) all Parish Rights (viz.) a Church peculiar to themselves, Church and Parish Officers as Churchwardens, Overseers of the Poor and Highways etc., and a Resident Curate appointed by the Rector of Wheathamstead and Licensed by Your Lordship's Predecessors. The Value of the Rectory is full 300 per ann. of which at least half Ariseth in the Parish of Harpenden. The Parishioners of Harpenden Claim a Resident Curate According to the Antient Custom, Mr. Reanolds the Rector says he will Reside himself at Wheathamstead and do the Duty of Harpenden Likewise. But as he has not since Midsummer Last done Duty oftener than once a day, in which method he has Declared to me he Designs to Continue, I have with his own Consent (we being Good Friends and desirous of Ending this Controversy Amicably) Troubled your Lordship . . '

Reynolds assured Wittewronge, in a letter of 28 September written at 'Wheathampstead Parsonage', that he would 'endeavor to give full satisfaction, having only this one desire at Heart which is to please all Mankind'. But the new year came, and no curate. 'Mr. Reynolds has settled to Duty of an Afternoon', according to a letter of 6 February from Wittewronge to the bishop, with the result that 'the Poor people either go upon their Inocent diversions or to the Ale house both which runs away with the Money paid them the Evening before and the rest of the Week their Familys starve'. This was the more the pity because 'by Mr. Barnard's care we have at present as Constant a Sett of Church men as any Parish in the Diocese'. A year later the good people of Harpenden petitioned the bishop 'that Mr. Reynolds the Rector of Wheathampstead cum Harpenden has for almost the Term of Nine Months not performed the Accustomary duty (haveing in that Time once Neglected to Administer the Sacrament) and refused to Appoint us A resident Curate . . '. Still Reynolds did nothing, even after he was presented for 'gross neglect of his parish'. The bishop wrote in July 1747: 'the plea which Mr. Reynolds makes for not keeping a Resident Curate at Harpenden seems to me a reasonable one. He says, that a Curate residing there, where the principal Gentlemen of the Parish live makes him not to be regarded at all as Minister of the Parish and I cannot blame a Rector for being jealous of losing the affections of his Parishioners.' The bishop added, however: 'I only wish that he wood do more than I think he does to deserve them'. He understood that Reynolds had taken steps to provide a curate, Richard Wadsworth [H.C.R.O. D/ELW F58].

One of the gentlemen of Harpenden with whom Reynolds, no doubt, liked to hobnob was the Reverend Benjamin Preedy, D.D. He wanted a private pew for his family, and on 18 October 'it was agreed

that the Rev. Mr. Benjamin Preedy shall have the privilege to build a Gallery at the Steeple end of the Church at his own cost and charges, for the use of his family, provided he has the consent of the Rector of the said Parish'. This no doubt would not have been difficult to obtain, but unfortunately for the parish funds the gentleman became Rector of St. Albans Abbey before his intention was carried out. The gallery, which was erected in 1757 at the west end of the church, was therefore put up at the cost of the parish, and it took over a decade to pay off the debt. At the same time, the nave and south aisles were ceiled and the rector requested that 'proper verses shall be wrote up in the church': the vestry agreed and also stipulated that 'the Letters be wrote at 5d a dozen. The flourishing of the frames to be paid at the Discretion of the Parish Officers.' [H.C.R.O. DP 122A 8/2]. They were duly inscribed, at the charge stipulated, by Henry Ashby. He had also been paid £3 3s. 0d in 1754 for repainting the Royal Arms.

In 1761 a fire at Lamer led to the dispersal of the furniture of its chapel: a window went to St. Mary's church, Amersham; the pulpit of about 1634 (which today lacks its sounding board, base and stairs), benches, pew ends (one of which is dated 1631) and a Jacobean communion table came to the Lamer chapel in St. Helen's. From 1764 Octavian Reynolds, still the rector, lived in Harpenden, at Bowers House, and appears to have let his ministrations at Wheathampstead go by the board. The Archdeacon cannot have been very impressed when he paid a visit to Harpenden in 1771, in spite of the welcome the ringers gave him which cost the parish 10s. 6d for beer. The churchwardens at Wheathampstead, James Wilkins and Thomas Weathered, complained in April 1773 of 'the many and great neglects of the Reverend Octavian Reynolds'. Since Christmas 1771 there had been but one communion; since November 1772 prayers had been read on only seven occasions and no sermon had been preached; since February 1773 there had been no service at all. On the last occasion Reynolds had preached at Wheathampstead he 'came into Church in a very indecent manner and seemingly in liquor Hatt on and lead between two persons and when in Church remained in his desk for some time and did not read a third part of the service and that in a very improper and unintelligible manner and when he preached it was without any text and seated with his Back to the congregation and in a language and with such a low voice so as not to be understood'. 'Poor persons' were 'buried in a very shameful and indecent manner by putting them in the ground without any Burial Service being read over them for a fortnight or three weeks afterwards'. Rose Bell had been buried 'upwards of Eight weeks', yet 'no burial service has yett been read' [Lincolnshire Archives Office. Notes supplied by J. H. Busby]. All these allegations were confirmed by the overseers and five other parishioners. Perhaps we can make some allowance for an old and ailing parson: the following month he died.



Interior View of Harpenden Church, Bedfordshire.

PLATE 9a St. Nicholas, Harpenden, in 1832

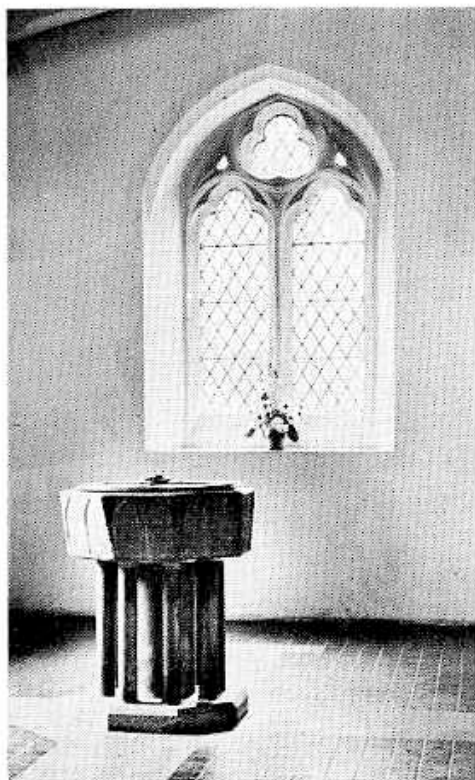


PLATE 9b St. Nicholas' font
(Photo: Handside Studio)



PLATE 9c St. Helen's font

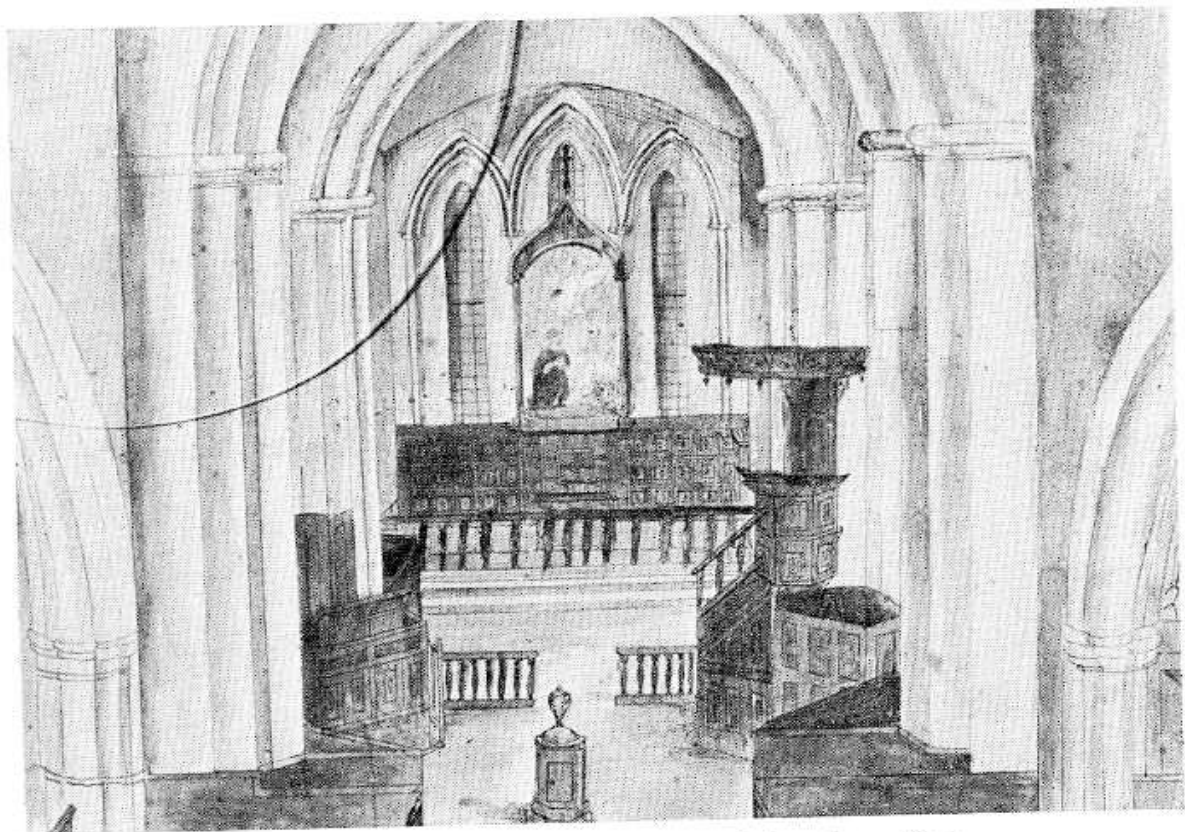


PLATE 10a St. Helen, Wheathampstead: interior c. 1840

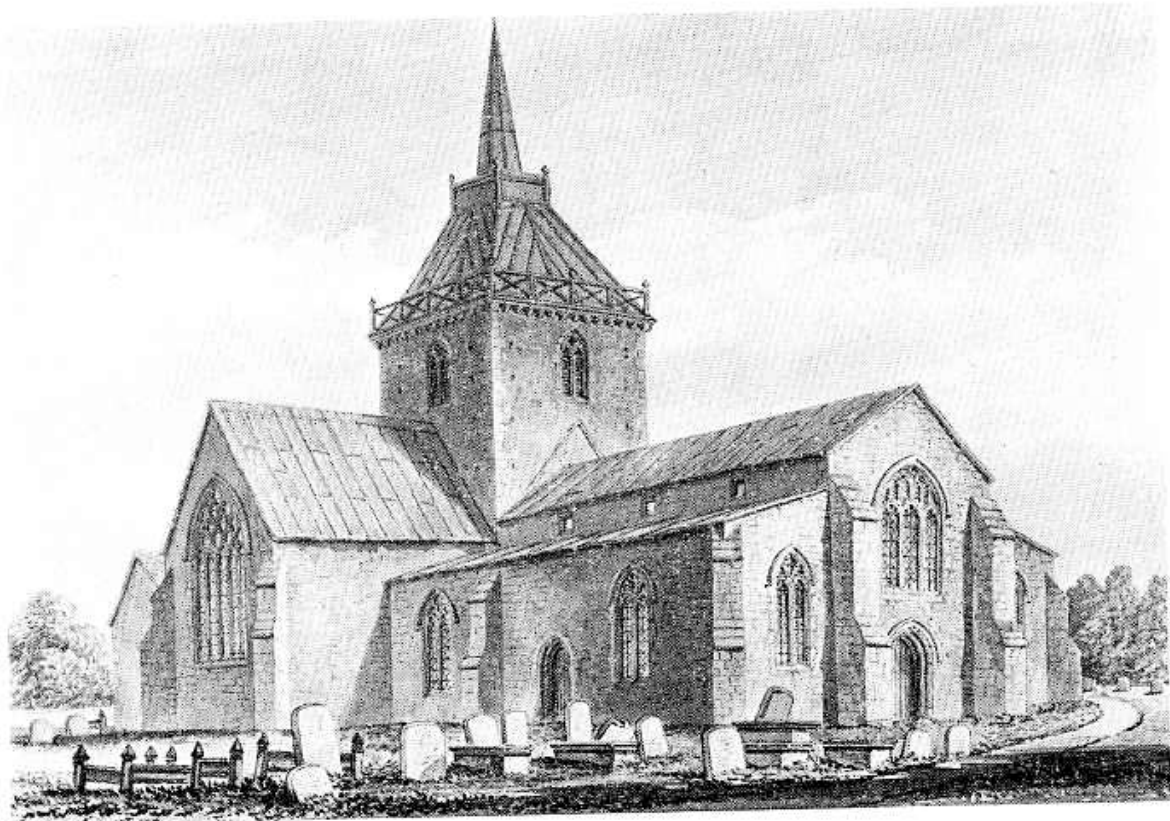


PLATE 10b St. Helen: exterior in 1831

The lorde of Westm' called for
 some of his goods called for
 memory of his lorde of Westm'
 which was by his lorde of Westm'
 foundry of an obit for his lorde
 the lorde of Westm' and
 himself by his lorde
 A lorde young' out of Westm' lorde
 called the lorde of Westm'
 of Westm' lorde of Westm'
 called for his lorde of Westm'
 lorde
 The lorde of Westm' in Westm'
 lorde of Westm' for his lorde
 lorde of Westm' for his lorde
 The lorde of Westm' for his lorde

lorde of Westm'
 in Westm'
 de Westm'

lorde of Westm'
 lorde of Westm'

lode my d

W. S. P. S.
 lode my d
 lode my d

lorde of Westm' lorde of Westm'
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PLATE 11b
 Wheatthampstead
 Inventory of
 Church Property
 1552

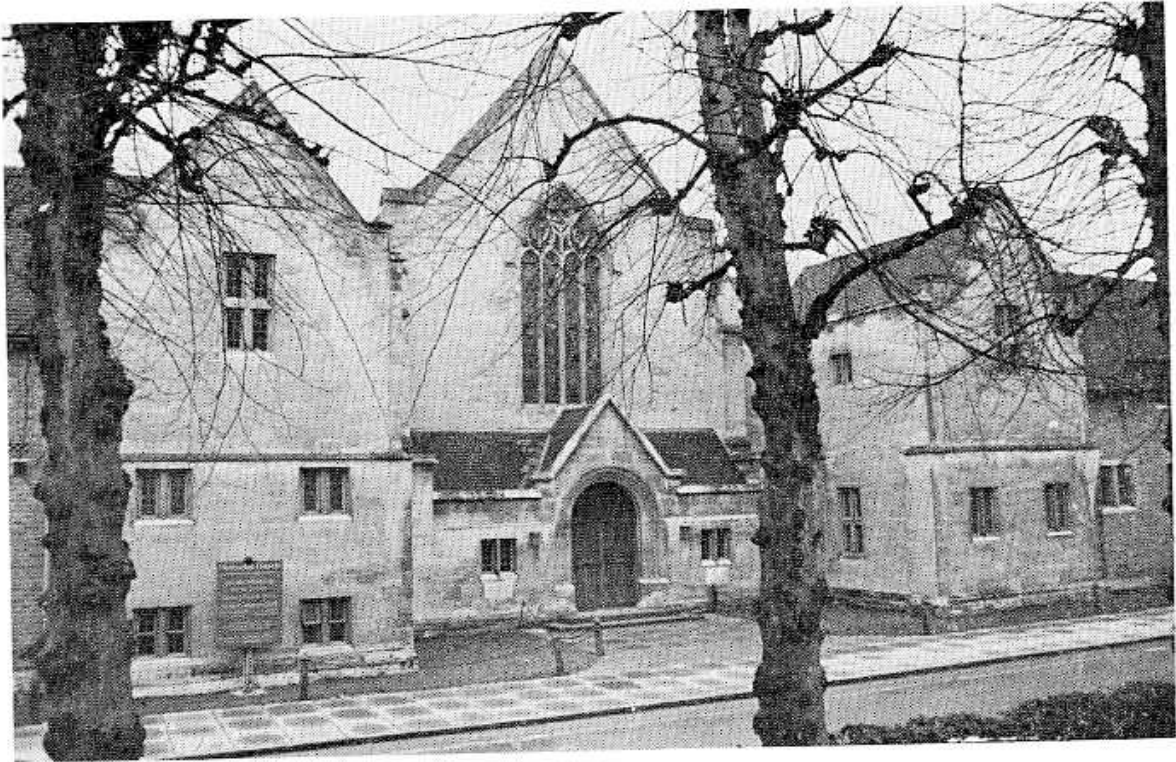


PLATE 12a High Street Methodist Church, opened 1930

(Photo: Dr. Audrey Shepherd)

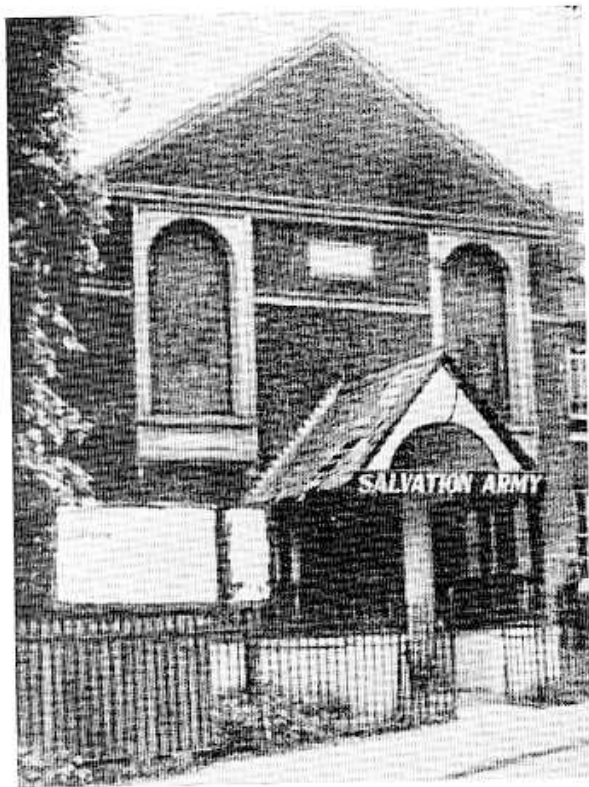


PLATE 12b Independent Chapel, Harpenden,
1839-40

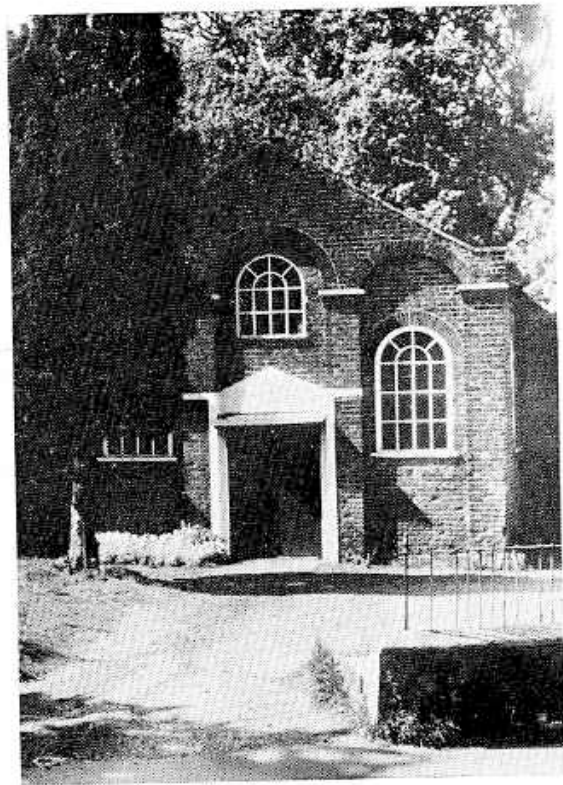


PLATE 12c Independent Chapel,
Wheathampstead

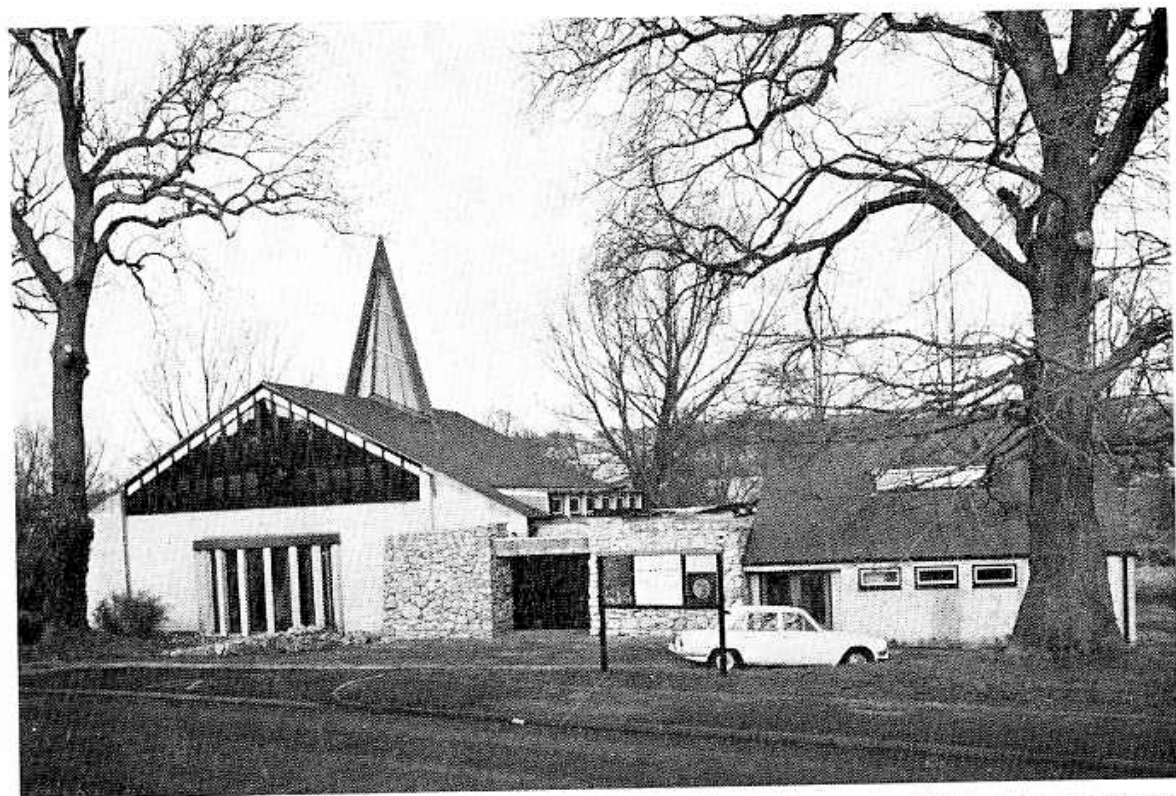


PLATE 13a All Saints, Batford

(Photo: James Davis)

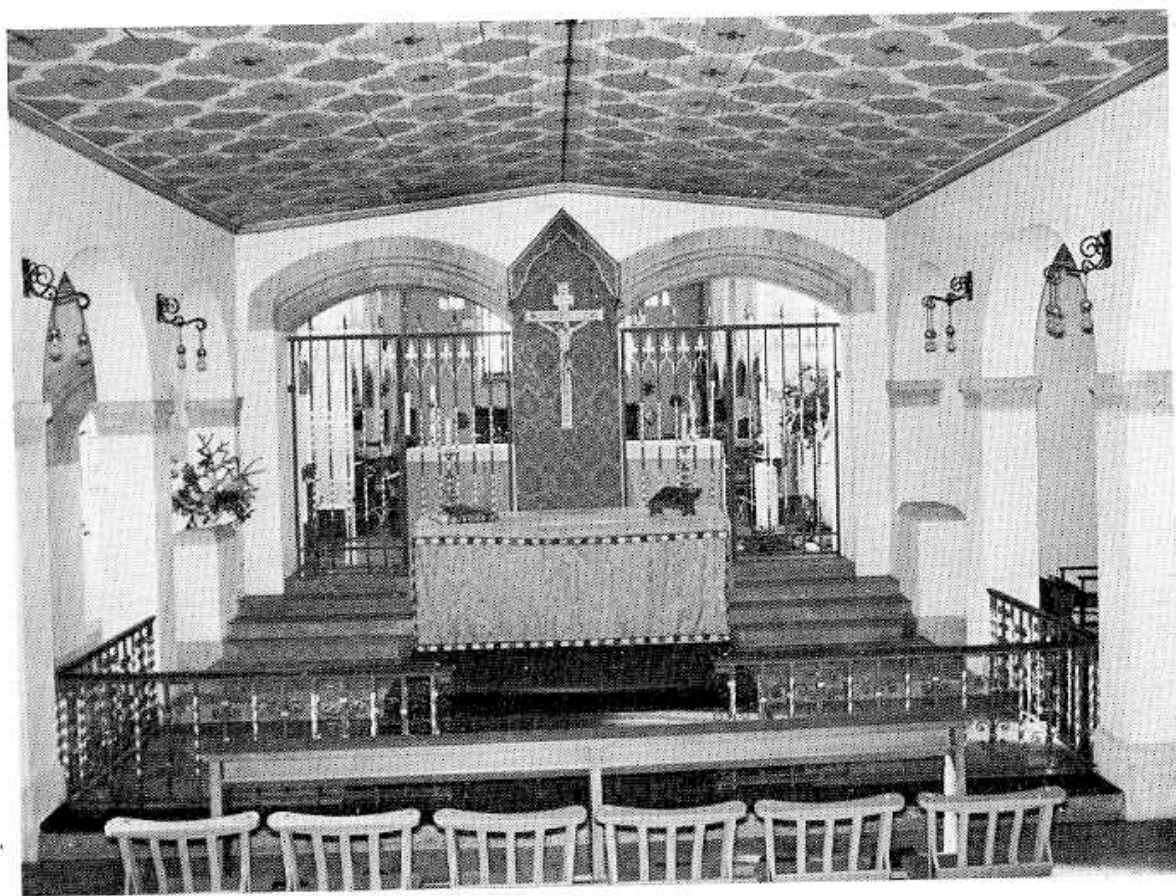


PLATE 13b St. John the Baptist, Southdown, Lady Chapel

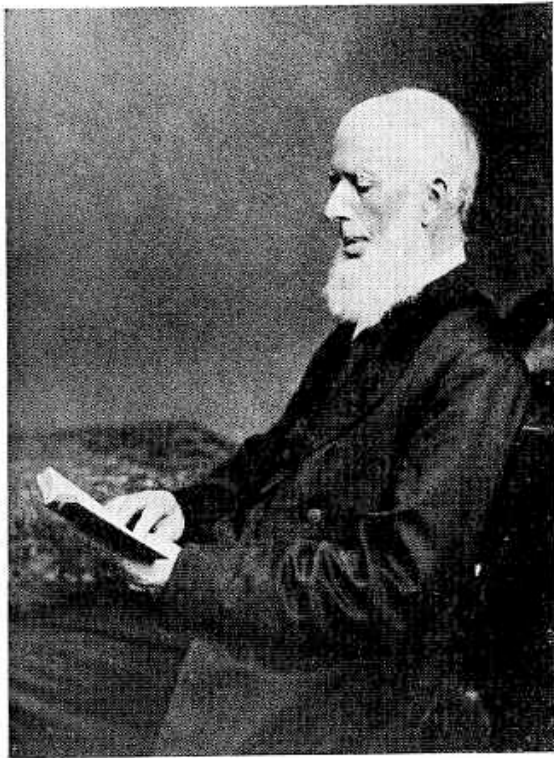


PLATE 14a Canon Edward Thomas Vaughan
1859-96

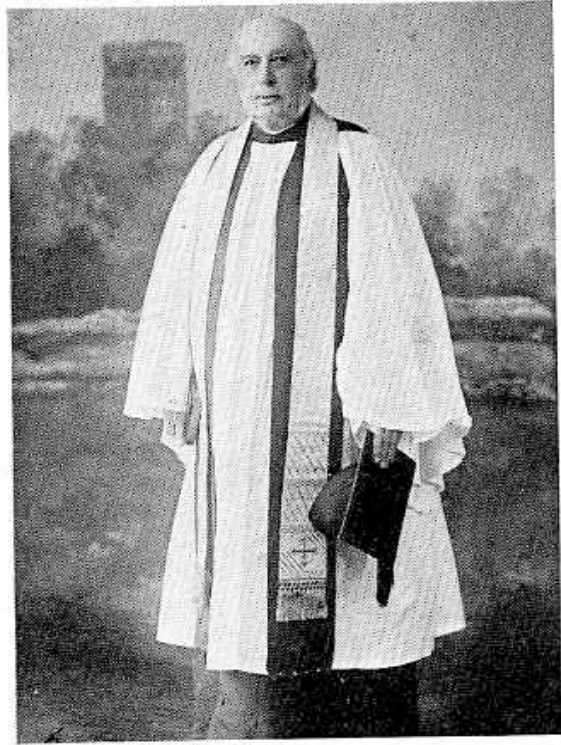


PLATE 14b Canon O. W. Davys

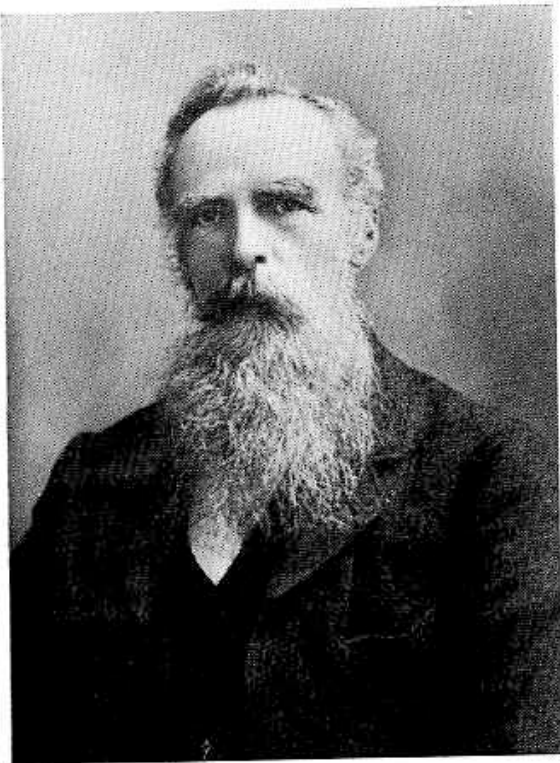


PLATE 14c Henry Salisbury, 1839-1923



PLATE 14d Canon Bernard Austin Longstaff
1919-50



PLATE 15a Methodist Choir (c. 1896) outside the Leyton Road Chapel of 1886

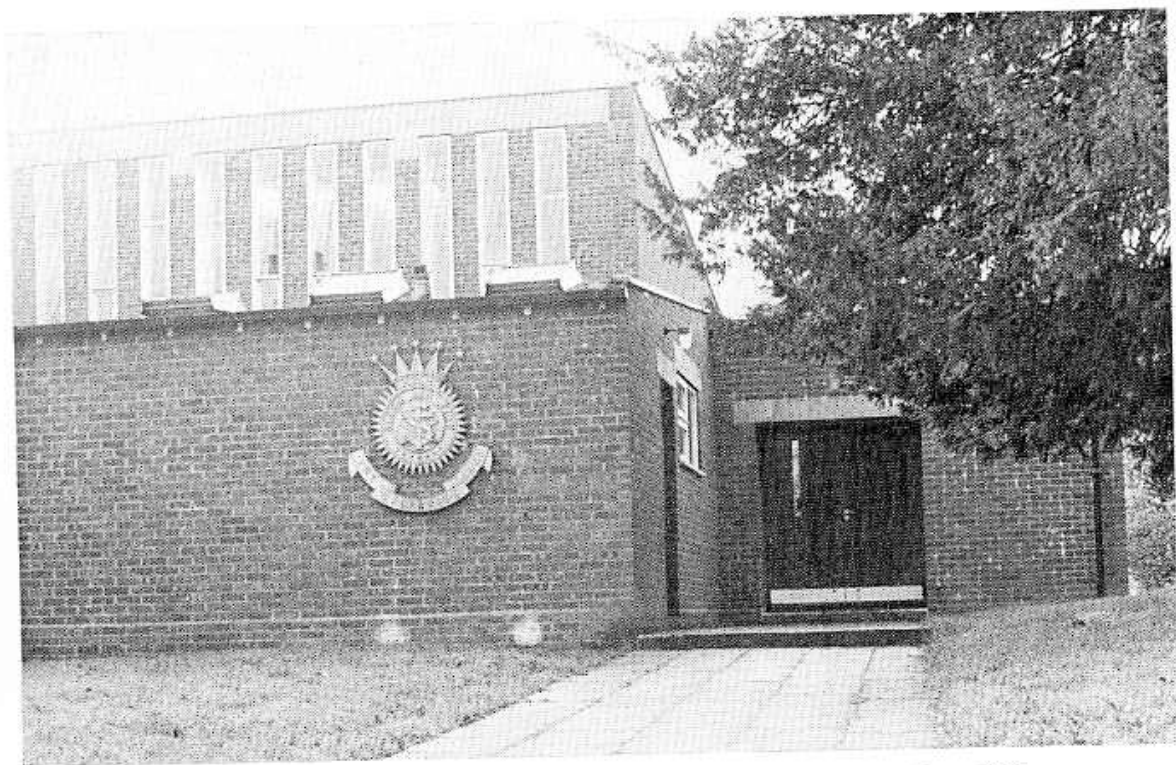


PLATE 15b Salvation Army Citadel, Leyton Green, Harpenden, 1966
(Photo: R. C. Coulter)

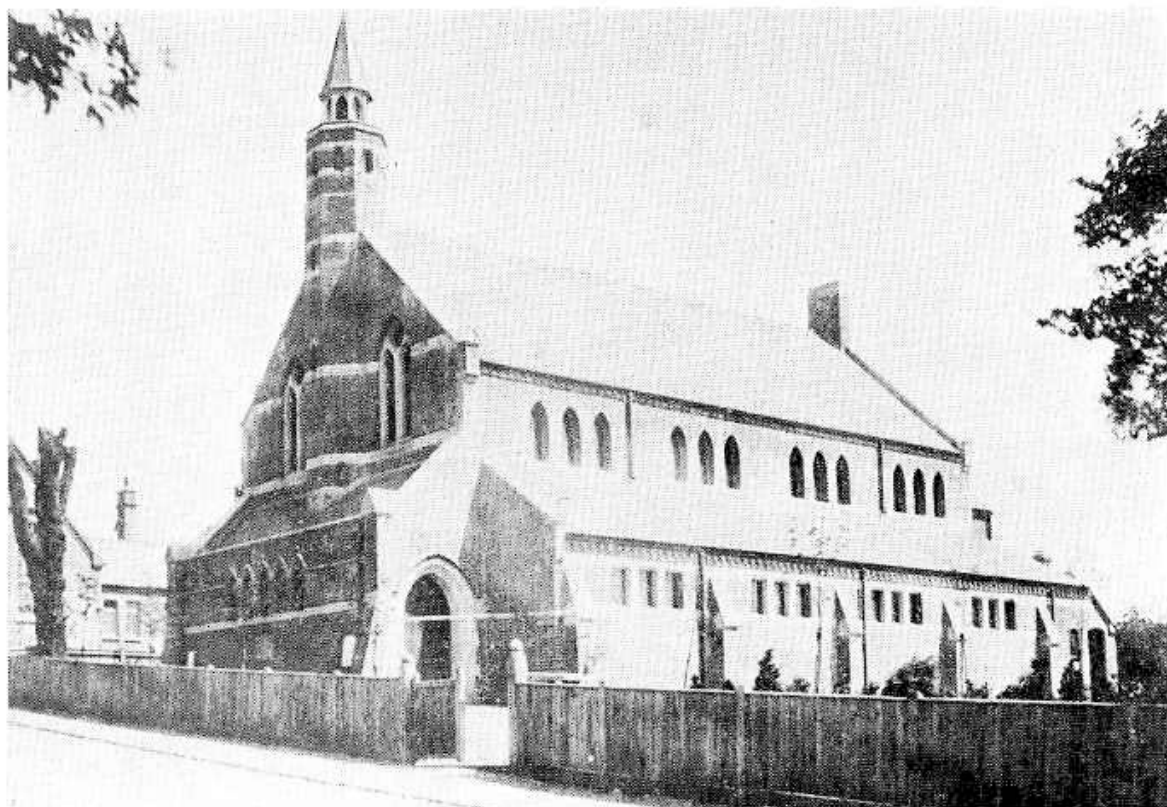


PLATE 16a Congregational Church, Vaughan Road, Harpenden, 1897

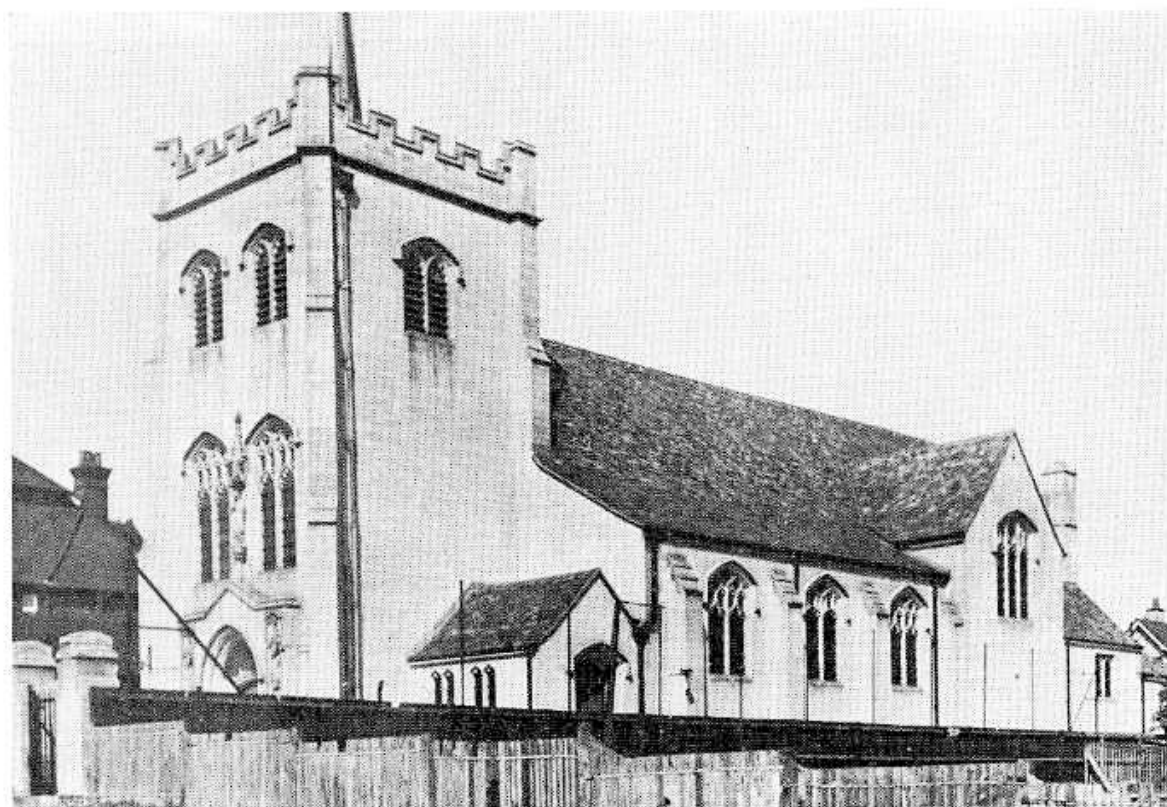


PLATE 16b Our Lady of Lourdes, Harpenden, 1929

John Wheeldon was appointed rector on Reynolds' death and, like him, owed his preferment to connexions with the patron of the living; Wheeldon's son succeeded Caleb Lomax as curate of Harpenden. Bishop Tomlin's Visitation Book records that 'Mr. Wheeldon resides at Wheathampstead and serves no other church', and that his son was the 'resident curate at Harpenden and serves no other church' [Lincolnshire Archives Office]. Harpenden churchyard was enlarged in 1774, at the beginning of the Wheeldons' stay. In the vestry there hangs a deed signed by the Bishop of Lincoln consecrating the southern portion of the churchyard. It is in this part that the vault of the Kingston family stands; the family were noted surgeons in Harpenden and St. Albans. Some of them lived in the small eighteenth century house, since incorporated into the Kingston House Stores, Halford's since 1971. Edward Barnard D.D., son of an earlier curate, George Barnard, was interred in another Harpenden vault in 1781. Edward was born in Harpenden in 1717, became headmaster of Eton but returned to Harpenden to be buried in the Annables vault.

By the later eighteenth century the hymns of Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge, both of whom lived in Hertfordshire, were giving a lively impetus to church singing, supplementing the old metrical psalms. It had become customary for the singing to be accompanied by a small orchestra of woodwind and string instruments, and the singers usually gathered in the west gallery. Of the early orchestra at Harpenden, part of the bassoon has survived. The accounts mention five shillings paid in 1803 'for reed instruments'; and another expense in the same year was 'for playing the Engonor'. This refers to the barrel organ at St. Nicholas' and is the first indication of there being one there. In 1814 six shillings was spent on '3 new Sarm books', and there were also the expenses of 'mending the claronette . . . Clarinet Reeds . . . Basson & Clarinette', while '20 Books and Clarke's fee' cost £2 11s. 3d. Five shillings was paid in 1831 to 'Hawkins for playing the Engine', by which was meant the barrel organ; but three years later this needed repair and £1 was paid to Streton 'for carriage of Engine to Hitchin and back' [H.C.R.O. DP 122A 5/2].

The Wheathampstead churchwardens record the payment, in 1805, of £5 for the Royal Arms 'of wood, carved, gilt and coloured' [quoted in *The Parish Church of St. Helen* by the Reverend George Talbot Roe]; and constant expenditure was necessary in succeeding years to keep the fabric in repair. At Harpenden repairs were carried out in 1807. The magistrates to whom the accounts were submitted did not always approve of the Harpenden method of book keeping: they wrote a warning at the end of those for 1828 that 'the churchwardens' accounts must not in future be mixed up with the overseers' accounts'; they would not accept them if they were. On 20 November 1834 William Munnun was paid 16s. 0d for taking the Harpenden children to a confirmation at Hatfield. [H.C.R.O. DP 122A 5/2]. Was his journey necessary because neglect by the rector meant that the

Bishop did not come to Harpenden or Wheathampstead? There was certainly a succession of rectors and curates early in the nineteenth century: two brothers, John Norman Ord until 1811 and Henry Craven Ord until 1815, were rectors, while Mr. Russell was curate at Harpenden in 1810 and a Mr. Elwin followed with a stipend of £100. In 1815 George Pretymán became rector of Wheathampstead and James Jenkyn curate at Harpenden. Pretymán remained until 1859, systematically neglecting his cure. He had an income of £1,404 from the united livings of Wheathampstead and Harpenden and further emoluments from other livings and cathedral appointments; Cussans called him 'The Reverend Pluralist'. The Pretymán family had the dishonourable distinction of a special entry in the *Supplement to The Black Book or Corruption Unmasked*, published in 1823 as part of the reformers' attack on the parliamentary system. George Pretymán had been appointed to his livings by his father when the latter was Bishop of Lincoln. The bishop had appointed two other sons to two or three livings each and all three sons were made cathedral officials. An uncle was Archdeacon of Lincoln and the father moved on from Lincoln to the plum see of Winchester. All this good fortune came because the bishop had been tutor to the younger William Pitt, who became prime minister from 1783 to 1801 and from 1804 to 1806.

The old rectory at Wheathampstead, which had stood on the south side of the river Lea close to the mill, had been burnt down in the eighteenth century. Canon Pretymán lost no time in building himself a comfortable new one. But he did not inhabit it during the winter, 'for he left it at Michaelmas to keep his residences as Canon at Lincoln, and Winchester Cathedrals' [*A long life's journey* by Canon O. W. Davys, p.58]. The duties he left to curates, the Wheathampstead one receiving £135 a year and the Harpenden one £110. 'From the accounts of old inhabitants', it was stated in 1893, 'it would appear that Mr. Pretymán's personal ministrations were limited to one Sunday in the year, when he drove over (to Harpenden), went into the Sunday School, asked for the "best boy" to say a part of the Catechism, laid down a guinea, a special subscription to the expenses of the Sunday School Treat, and then went on to Church, where he preached, leaving the pulpit with sufficient promptness to take off his gown, and be ready at the Church door to shake hands with the principal inhabitants as they went out' [*Thirty-three Years at Harpenden* by Miss Vaughan, p.7]. A report on social conditions in Harpenden, made for Sir John Lawes in the late 1850s, stated that Pretymán 'takes no part in any progressive movement . . . I find he holds but feebly the minds and affection of the poorer classes. He is considered by them "Haughty—stiff and proud—Keeping them at a cool distance". His means and facilities are ample enough to carry forward any measures that would secure the welfare and best interests of his parishioners' [Manuscript in parish papers, Harpenden Hall]. An unkind verse commented, in 1858, on Canon Pretymán's attitude to Nonconformists:

There is nothing to fear, but there's plenty to hope,
For the Harpenden folks are now blessed with a Pope;

.
Our Harpenden Pope has not equal renown.
But he surely will put all the Methodists down;
The great and the small must submit to his sway.
And think as he thinks without any delay.
Ye Trestrails! ye Nortons! ye Johnsons, be gone!
Lest ye instantly die by the Pope's awful scorn.

.
Remember, ye poor, that when Christmas shall come,
Without bread, coals or blankets, ye all will be dumb,
For the Pope has in might and mercy decreed,
If ye don't come to Church, ye shall all suffer need.

[V. I. Hodgson's Book of Newspaper Cuttings in Harpenden Hall].

While Canon Pretyman had built himself a new rectory at Wheathampstead, he allowed Harpenden church to go to rack and ruin: the Archdeacon's Visitation of 1842 revealed its neglected state, 'the chancel roof letting in rain and needing repair. The churchyard fences are very bad', the report went on, 'the graves much dilapidated and crowded'. The west end of the church had been appropriated for the custody of the village fire-appliances, as had the south porch of Wheathampstead church; and 'the Engine House', according to the report, was 'in a very bad state'. [Parish papers, Harpenden Hall]. Canon Pretyman was rated by the Harpenden vestry at £650 in 1843; it is hardly surprising that when a proposal was made to reduce 'the rating of (his) rent charge' it was unanimously rejected, especially as in 1845 £65 15s. 6d had to be spent on repairs to, and the repewing of, Harpenden church [H.C.R.O. DP 122A 11/2]. Henry Addington was the long suffering curate from 1845-50, and Leigh Spencer from 1850-9. Spencer signed the Anglican return for Harpenden to the census taken on Sunday 30 March 1851 of the attendances at all churches and chapels; Henry Hecker signed the Wheathampstead return. The return is summarised in appendix seven.

There were 1,908 people in Wheathampstead and 1,980 in Harpenden at the time of this census, but Harpenden had considerably more attenders at the services of all the churches. Credit for this must go to the curates and to the nonconformists. W. L. Rogers in the report on social conditions in Harpenden, from which we have already quoted, commented that there were 'few in the village who cannot read their bible' and that only five families were 'without scripture', presumably, had no bible. In Harpenden not only were the Independents with their three services a day clearly a sect apart, as they were in Wheathampstead, but so were the Methodists. At Wheathampstead, where the Methodists met in the afternoon and evening only, it is possible that they were 'devil-dodgers' who joined the Anglican congregation in the morning.

The Churches from the mid-Nineteenth Century

From this point in time it is perhaps best to pursue the histories of the various churches separately.

ST. NICHOLAS, HARPENDEN began the half century with a new clock made by Thacker of London. The church remained in the diocese of Lincoln until 1845, when it was transferred to that of Rochester; the patronage was transferred from the Bishop of Lincoln to the Bishop of Peterborough. In 1856 a petition to the patron for the separation of the churches was again made, the parishioners pointing out that Harpenden was now the larger parish and contributed £809 of the total value of the joint parishes, £1,591. This time the appeal was successful, although it was not popular with Wheathampstead people who feared the financial loss to their parish. The patron promised that, on the death of Canon Pretymen, Harpenden should become a separate cure. In 1859, with the patronage of the Wheathampstead living in his hand, the bishop appointed his son, the Reverend O. W. Davys, as rector of Wheathampstead, and a canon of Peterborough, the Reverend E. T. Vaughan, as Harpenden's curate. Until 1866 Harpenden was technically called a 'perpetual curacy'; following the District Church Tithe Act of 1865 it became a separate 'rectory'.

Canon Vaughan (see Plate 14a) took up temporary residence at Rothamsted Lodge in January 1860; in April he was able to take the cottage vacated by the previous curate. Plans for building a rectory were in hand even before Canon Vaughan came into residence and it was soon completed, occupying the site stretching from Townsend Lane to what is now known as Old Rectory Close. Apparently it was somewhat resented by the inhabitants for taking up what had been till then 'two of their best fields for wild flowers' [Vaughan, p.8].

In the mid-nineteenth century Harpenden church was described by Sir Stephen Glynne as 'spacious, and chiefly of good Norman work, though the exterior has suffered considerably from mutilations and bad modern alterations. The tower is at the West end of plain Rectilinear work, with a battlement and octagonal corner turret. The whole is principally of flint and stone plastered, and the body and chancel have plain parapets.' He remarked in particular that its Norman arches were 'very rude and plain—the pieces large and massive,' that 'the North aisle is very narrow but the south aisle tolerably wide', and that 'at the intersection of the body and transepts are 4 very good Norman arches . . . springing from clustered shafts'. These, he hazarded, 'may have been intended to support a central tower'; and this was soon to be proved correct. The high pews in the nave he found 'rather lumbering' and 'somewhat gloomy'. The pulpit was a two-decker with a sounding board and reading desk; and a Jacobean table served as altar [from a photocopy of notes lent by J.

H. Busby]. Miss Ellen Vaughan, daughter of Canon Vaughan, recalled that 'there was a western gallery, in the front of which sat as many of the elder girls of the Sunday School as could be supposed to have any voice. The remainder sat in the Chancel, "on the Communion" as it was always expressed, without the least intention of irreverence, that is on the step round the circular Altar rails. The rest of the Church was filled with square pews attached to the principal houses in the parish, with the exception of benches for about twenty labouring men under the gallery, who filled them well in their picturesque smock-frocks. The cottage-women could only place themselves in one or other of the square pews in the absence of their owners. There may have been some few unappropriated seats in the North Aisle, "that there back Aisle" as it was familiarly called, the bottom of which was inhabited by the school boys. It was badly lit and difficult to hear. The Bishop of Rochester said of it: "A boy must have a lively imagination who believes himself in church in this place". [Vaughan, p.9]

In 1860 the Canon appealed to the parishioners for funds to enlarge and rebuild the church. His letter pointed out that 'Many respectable people have to wait for seats—the poor have no seats, only moveable benches' [the modern parish magazine *Link*, Vol. 88 No. 10 October 1973. p.12]. Gradually three rival schemes evolved: restoration, rebuilding the existing church, or building a new church on a new site. There was some opposition to rebuilding and the Bishop of Rochester, in whose diocese Harpenden was from 1845 until 1877, was asked to come and help decide the issue. In April 1861, after hearing the views of various parishioners, he decided in favour of rebuilding on the same site and retaining the fifteenth century tower. The vestry accordingly applied for a faculty for rebuilding, the cost to be met by voluntary subscription. The Vestry Minute Book contains a most unusual entry dated 'Harpenden April 2 1861' and bearing the signatures of William How, Jane Kingston, William Kerl and Gerard W. Lydekker: 'The following protest was given in, and it was desired that it should be entered in the minutes':

'We the undersigned Ratepayers (being also members of the Congregation) of the Parish of Harpenden do hereby solemnly protest against the proposed pulling down of the Parish Church, as unnecessary, inexpedient and unjustifiable. 1st. Because the existing structure will, by a faithful Restoration and a judicious reconstruction of the North Aisle (with a proper re-arrangement of the sittings) allow adequate accommodation for the requirements of the Parish. 2ndly. Because should an increase of population hereafter require additional accommodation such accommodation will probably be required rather at a distant part of the Parish (which is about four miles in length) than on the site of the present Church. 3rdly. Because the contemplated destruction of the Ancient Parish Church, the House of Prayer for nearly eight centuries, the main part of

which is in substantial condition, is most repugnant to the feelings of many Parishioners and members of the congregation.' [H.C.R.O. DP 122A 8/3].

In spite of this protest the work of demolition and rebuilding went ahead, and evidence of the fire which destroyed the original central tower was discovered (see p. 96). The old Norman nave was taken down and rebuilt, with a new chancel, aisles and vestry, in imitation of the fourteenth century Decorated style, to the designs of the architect, William Slater. The mural monuments were moved to the walls of the existing tower and five memorial slabs in the floor were relaid. The Purbeck marble font had stood on a plain square base, but fragments of its old columns were now found among the brickwork of the church, and it was restored to its original form (see Plate 9b). For eight hundred years the children of Harpenden have been baptised in this same font, first at Wheathampstead, then in the old Norman chapel-of-ease, and now in the parish church of Harpenden. The altar was a gift from the people of Canon Vaughan's previous parish, which a plate on the cross bar commemorates. To beautify the new building, the wealthier parishioners gave stained glass windows. That in the south transept was erected to the memory of Caroline, wife of F. R. Spackman, M.D. The window in the north transept was in memory of J. B. Lawes of Rothamsted who died in 1822; it contains at its base three shields, each having the motto "Pour La Foi" (For the Faith) in allusion to that first member of the Wittewronge family who fled from Holland during the religious persecution of the sixteenth century. The east window, of Munich glass, was given by the Misses Wilson who lived at the Welcombe until their peace was shattered by the building of the railway line; it depicts Our Lord and the four evangelists.

During the rebuilding, services were held in the British infant school room. This was licensed for marriages, and some couples were married 'over the piano' there. Sometimes the evening service was so well attended that the candles went out because they were unable to burn in the heavy atmosphere. The former Rothamsted Laboratory building was also used for services; the choir of women, girls and young boys attended there morning and afternoon but went to the schoolroom in the evening. They at last achieved the 'wonderful accomplishment of chanting the canticles' [Vaughan, pp. 9-10]. John B. Lawes donated a new manual organ, which stood grandly at the east end of the north aisle to accompany the enthusiastic choir. The church was at last complete and glowing with colour, having cost £4,000, of which Lawes had given £1,000 and Canon Vaughan £400. The Bishop of Rochester reconsecrated the new building on 7 November 1862. But not everyone was entirely happy with the work. Sir Stephen Glynne, remembering the old church, considered the interior of the new to be 'nicely arranged' and the nave and aisle 'more uniform', but 'lamented that the curious ancient Norman arches

have been removed' and altogether reckoned that 'the alterations have been too destructive of the old work' [Busby notes].

If the church had needed enlarging to accommodate the increasing number of people living in Harpenden, how much more did the churchyard need enlarging to accommodate the ever mounting number of its dead. Previously extended in 1774, in 1862 it was enlarged by three-quarters of an acre, bought from the Dean and Chapter of Westminster for £200, and was to be further extended thirty years later. The oldest tomb which has survived is that of Thomas Law, who died in 1715, and perhaps the most notable character buried in the churchyard is Count Esterhazy, who was buried in 1923 under the assumed name of de Voilement and was the real culprit in the Dreyfus case of 1894.

The rebuilding of the church being complete, the rector and his parishioners turned their attention to the needs of the Church (National) school and the Sunday school. The Sunday school, and from 1858 the National school, had met in two white cottages by the church. The new school on the same site was built in 1865. During the building, classes were held somewhat haphazardly in the club-room of the Red Lion nearby. The well loved Sunday school 'master', George Huson, could be seen, on weekdays, bent over his shoe making in the little bow window of a cottage in the Lower High Street. He continued his services to the Sunday school until his last illness; he died in 1875. Edwin Grey recalled in *Cottage Life in a Hertfordshire Village* sitting with the Sunday school in 'the pews at the back of the font' and remembered the 'occasional reprimand or rap from old Georgie Huson or Charlie Arnold' when any of them fidgeted. 'But oh!' he wrote, 'those Sunday morning services of the Rector . . . with his firstly, secondly, thirdly and finally, how long they seemed'. The prospect sometimes led an errant boy, as the classes marched in procession to the church, to 'dart from the ranks and make a bolt across the Common, and teacher after him'; and always at the first word of the Doxology there was 'a tremendous bang and shuffle of the feet' as they jumped up 'like a lot of Jacks-in-the-Box'. None the less, many continued to attend Sunday school till they were fifteen or sixteen and then joined the senior class for youths which met in the curate's house on Sunday afternoons. And several treasured a bible won as a Sunday school prize, registering their ownership by writing in the front:

. is my name,
England is my nation,
Harpenden is my dwelling-place,
And Christ is my salvation.

For the Sunday school treat in July, 'each class, headed by its own banner, assembled on the Church Green', processed first to the church for a short service and then to meadows in Amenbury Lane; here, in large tents, a ready-cooked dinner and tea awaited them. The

sexes were evidently rigidly separated, for the boys always 'affirmed that the girls' tables were supplied with . . . choicer items'—goose-berry and cherry pies, against their rhubarb ones! Sports and games passed the time until the procession reformed and returned, 'with banners flying', to Church Green for a short speech by the rector and a final hymn-singing [pp. 142-4 and 203-4].

THE FOUNDING OF THE ANGLICAN MISSIONS

In 1860 Canon Vaughan started weekday meetings in a cottage in Coldharbour Lane for the 'old and infirm who could not well attend the Parish Church'. When the tenants left the cottage, Canon Vaughan rented it, to have more room for services; but over the years it was 'often inconveniently well filled'. Land nearby was bought for £34 and on 1 January 1889 a building, costing £157 10s. 0d, was sufficiently completed to justify a celebration, with a 'substantial tea' followed by an entertainment of vocal and instrumental music . . . and most interesting readings' [*Harpenden Banner*, 1887, the old parish magazine]. In 1865 the rector arranged for meetings and children's classes in Mrs. Crips' kitchen at Kinsbourne Green, which must often have been uncomfortably full. Three years later the lord of the manor, the Reverend William Smyth, made over 'part of the waste of the Manor of Annables called Kinsbourne Green'. [Deed of Gift, 26 Aug. 1868 in custody of the Trustees of St. Albans Diocesan Board of Finance]. There, by the following year, the combined school and church of St. Mary the Virgin proudly stood.

The indefatigable rector next proceeded to the Bowling Alley area (Southdown), where he opened a mission room in 1864 for weekday services and Sunday school. A total of eighty boys met at Cold Harbour and Bowling Alley missions. Later the room served as a day school also, until the new school-church was built beside it in 1876. The original mission room remained in use as a coffee room for men and lads, who could play games there, read newspapers and buy tea, coffee or cocoa at 1d a half pint or 1½d a pint. Members were, however, warned that 'prices might go up as it was not a charity' [*A Short History of the Parish Church of St. John the Baptist, Harpenden*, p.5].

The *Harpenden Banner* had begun in 1868 and served the parish as a whole, reporting on the activities of societies and clubs, listing births, deaths and marriages, giving details of train and postal services, all for a penny a month. Selected entries like these give a vivid picture of village interests: July 1876. Mr. Longland 'transported' twenty Sunday school teachers 'in his conveyance' to Hertingfordbury; they arrived back safely 'of God's mercy . . . having never had such a treat'. September 1878. £45.0s.9½d was collected for famine relief in India, £31 12s 3½d of which was given at the Harvest Festival service. October 1880. Henry Willmott told the Church Temperance Society's monthly meeting that he got his harvest in 'without beer' and that

'tea and coffee had advantage'. This was supported by 'some who worked for him, but strongly denied by others'. The report concludes: 'men should have the opportunity of publicly stating their views on such important questions as this'.

September 1882. The Temperance Society meeting was attended by 400 to 500 people.

August 1883. The choir outing to Hastings marked the 'first time many of them had seen the sea'. Records of the ringers go back to this year: fines of a penny or twopence were imposed for lateness or absence.

June 1888. Three ringers absent: 'They had walked to London this Sunday morning'.

October 1887. 'A bier has been bought and may be hired from the Parish Clerk, for 1s. for bearing the dead to the churchyard'.

May 1888. £10 11s. 5d. was collected at a musical recital in the parish church in aid of a small mission room at Cold Harbour: 'building will begin as soon as the fund reaches a sufficient amount'.

January 1st 1889. Golden Wedding Day of Canon and Mrs. Vaughan. The parish presented them with an address and a purse containing sovereigns made by a Miss Smith of Hatching Green. The bells pealed merrily all day, and Harpenden was 'en fête'. Expressing their thanks, Canon Vaughan spoke of his parishioners: 'we and our children have simply been leaders of many willing workers'. [*Link*, p.13].

After thirty-seven years of devoted service the rector retired in 1896; he was given an illuminated address, handsomely inscribed, and a gift of money. He died at Worthing in 1900 and has two memorials in St. Nicholas' church, the brass lectern and the brass tablet on the north wall, the inscription on which ends: 'His example and teaching will always be treasured by the Parishioners and friends who erected this memorial'. The second rector of Harpenden (1896-1903), the Reverend S. R. A. Buller, said of Canon Vaughan 'we remember (him) as scholar, friend, gentleman, worker, organiser and builder, and above all a true Christian' [*Link*, p.13].

In the Reverend S. R. A. Buller's time the parish church was enlarged to accommodate a hundred additional seats; at a cost of £800 the north aisle was taken down and extended northwards, a choir vestry added, and the bells were restored. A treble bell, purchased to make a ring of six, bore the inscription 'Laus Deo 1898 S. R. A. Buller, Rector'. Wedding bells were for the gentry only; cottagers could not afford the fee of £1, nor 7s. 6d. for the hire of Longland's carriage: they walked to church. Edwin Grey recalled that 'one of the first things done when a person had passed away, was to send to the sexton... and get him to toll the bell... three tolls for a man, two for a woman, one for a child... one shilling was the tolling fee. This tolling announced to all the village the death of one of the community, ... (it) was a survival of pre-Reformation days, ... "the passing Bell".' (p.165). The bell ropes were made by Henry

Leedham, who lived on Church Green. He used the old poor house close by as premises, and elderly residents remember seeing him walking back and forth, past the shops and over the road as far as the pond, to twist his ropes. The bells rang 'joyfully to celebrate the Relief of Ladysmith and the Relief of Mafeking' in 1900 and a torch-light procession hailed the news [Ringers Records]. To mark the coronation of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra two more bells were given by the parishioners; the first peal on them was rung in 1904 by the Ancient Society of College Youths and the County Association; and one local ringer, George Newson, had the honour of taking part.

In 1912 a larger organ was purchased for £895 and placed on the site of the present chapel of St. Nicholas; the side chapel was formed also, and on the north wall of the sanctuary a mural was painted by Frank O. Salisbury, C.V.O., depicting the Adoration of the Shepherds and the Wise Men. As a 1914-18 war memorial an oak screen was erected, and two years later a belfry screen was put up in appreciation of Benjamin Jarman, who had been a bell ringer and a member of the choir for over fifty years. The east end has undergone many changes since the church was rebuilt; the latest, in 1962, provided a more spacious setting for administering the sacrament. At this time the organ was rebuilt and moved to the west end together with the choir stalls; the sanctuary was enlarged, the war memorial screen moved, the reredos removed, and the existing panelling extended and painted. The pavement was laid down, and the priests' vestry, the new Lady chapel and the chapel of St. Nicholas were created. All this work achieved the desired result, giving a pleasing sense of space in a simple restrained setting for twentieth century worship. But there is another view of the changes. Some people regret the removal of the reredos mosaics, the gilded Victorian angels that held candles aloft at the four corners of the altar and the ornate pulpit. Others dislike having the choir and organ 'breathing down their necks' instead of leading the singing from in front. Nor, some feel, does it add to the dignity of the church to see the clergy donning their vestments in what used to be the Lady chapel, behind the open doors of the screen.

ALL SAINTS

The 1889 mission room in Coldharbour Lane was extended, enlarged and improved several times to become the first All Saints. In 1955 Dolphin Smith of Mackerye End Farm gave a meadow by the river Lea in Batford as a site for a new church; for ten years members looked after the land, mowed the grass and planted trees. Work on the new All Saints church began in 1964, on plans designed by a local architect, E. P. Wilson, a member of the church. There were many problems to be overcome. On old maps the site is marked 'liable to flood'; and the water table is still less than three feet below the turf.

Foundations had to be pumped out continuously while concrete was laid in the trenches; and because the car park is above a dried up pond a great concrete raft had to be floated over it to carry the weight of the vehicles. At last the building stood complete, at a total cost of £40,000, and the old Coldharbour Lane church was sold. Many beautiful and unusual gifts, for example the processional cross and the bishop's Glastonbury chair, one of only six of its kind, adorned the church on that memorable day, 28 May, 1965, when the Bishop of St. Albans consecrated it amid an overflowing crowd of parishioners and friends. Modern in style, it was laid out to suit the celebration of the sacrament and services of the Church of England today, building materials and furnishings being chosen for their unassertive character (see Plate 13a).

ST. MARY, KINSBOURNE GREEN continued in use as a church school for eighty-six years; when Roundwood school opened it was closed, in 1955. The parish purchased the school share of the building from the diocesan authority and continued its use as a church. But this was not always easy and attendance became very low. The rector of Harpenden, the Reverend S. N. Veitch, was often short of an assistant curate and various clergy, some retired, others resident not too far distant, gave help at St. Mary's, but holy communion was celebrated only once a month. Evensong was often conducted by lay readers. In the 1960s the rector of Harpenden, the Reverend P. Bradshaw, appointed an additional curate to work almost entirely in the Kinsbourne Green area, where many new houses had been built. The congregation outgrew the small building and after modernisation and enlargement it was rededicated on 19 December 1968. An active parishioner for thirty years described the changes: 'We lengthened the main building right up to the boundary, swept away the little old vestry and kitchen, and what had been the Sunday school room was extended to the length of the building, giving us a new porch and a new vestry. In the early 1970s the results of visiting in the new estates became evident: there was room for the average Sunday congregation at 8.30 a.m. but the 10.30 a.m. family service was crowded out; and many of the parents who once brought their children to Sunday school became regular church goers.'

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

After twenty years of double use, in 1895 the school-church in Southdown Road became a school only, for services could now take place in the new little church of St. John the Baptist, which held about 180 people and stood on the edge of the Common at the corner of Southdown Road and Crabtree Lane. The timber framework of the building was filled in with such frail material that it became known as the 'Paper church', and this building was totally destroyed by fire in a strong wind on the last Sunday of the year 1905. (See *Harpenden*:

A Picture History, p.28). An early morning celebration had been held, but when the congregation assembled for Matins at 11 a.m. there was no church—just a smouldering heap. The only relic salvaged was a door handle and latch used in the new church. That morning the congregation, led by the undaunted curate-in-charge, the Reverend W. W. Colley, adjourned to the old school-church for service and used a porridge bowl as an alms dish. They continued to meet there until March when a new clubroom, later St. John's Hall, given by H. Tylston Hodgson was ready. Money was quickly raised for a new St. John's church, built in 1908 in a road named after it. Clergy from St. Nicholas' served the church from that year until 1925; a perpetual curate was then appointed. The next advance was in 1936, when an Order in Council made St. John the Baptist a completely separate parish. On Easter Day 1953 the entire parish communion was broadcast and brought 'a vast number of letters from sick folk in hospitals and others', wrote Mark Potts, the vicar. [*St. John the Baptist* history, p.11]. Many improvements were made to the church as the years passed, and rapid growth in the district led to an extension and the addition of a beautiful Lady chapel in 1963, at a cost of £14,000 (see plate 13b). Four years later, when St. John's hall was sold, the proceeds provided funds for a spacious room next to the church where many functions cater for the growing numbers on the Electoral Roll.

ST. HELEN, WHEATHAMPSTEAD must have appeared in the eighteen-fifties much as the water colour in the church represents it: painted about 1840, this shows its box pews and its pulpit and sounding board (see plate 10a). What the Reverend O. W. Davys (see Plate 14b) found when he arrived in the November of 1859, he described. Before the morning service the Sunday school sat on a form, in the pews, and on the steps of the altar; but when the service began the boys trooped up to the gallery. Here they were kept in order by an 'elderly mercenary with a cane' who made more noise than they did themselves; his excuse to the rector was: 'Them boys is so terrifying'. There was also a barrel organ in the gallery, and in front of this a choir of young women. Presumably they wore no special dress, as Davys recorded: 'When I first came into Hertfordshire a surpliced choir was an abomination with some people'. Down below, the squire and his lady sat 'in an enormous high pew in the north transept', while immediately below the pulpit was a form on which sat half a dozen old men in their by then antiquated smockfrocks.

The new rector soon discovered that there were thirty miles of road in his parish, but he gave up riding along them on his horse after the latter had shown resentment at 'being tied to cottage garden gates . . . by lifting the gates off their hinges and going home with them fastened to his bridle'. The rector did not, however, have to seek out all his flock: he had 'a call very early from all the beggars in the parish'; and when the traditional Christmas distribution of bread took

place 'more than a hundred people struggled and fought, and women shrieked and fainted'. It was during that first Christmas that Davys discovered that the roof of the rectory was 'anything but waterproof, and the walls running down with damp'. The family had 'to charter every bath in the house to catch the water that ran into the bedrooms'. In the spring 'the house was reroofed, and the whole made habitable'. Towards the end of his life, in 1913, Canon Davys, as he had become in 1877, pointed out that the house was 'now much too large for the present value of the living', but it was not replaced until after the Second World War. [*A Long Life's Journey* by Canon O. W. Davys, pp. 58, 59, 60, 72 and 81]. The site of the eighteenth century rectory, now Helmets, was turned into the Reverend O. W. Davys' private laundry. The rectory gardens were beautifully kept, with peacocks in them. Helmets and the kitchen gardens, with an aviary, were reached by a path known as the Fernery, because it was bordered with ferns which the rector collected on his travels.

The church, too, was 'in a pitiable state. Plaster without, whitewash within; the buttresses patched up with bricks; all the windows built up two or three feet from their sills, and one completely stopped; a hideous gallery at the west end, and no less hideous high-backed pews... the rafters had decayed... their ends had been sawn off... the original high-pitched roofs were reduced to almost flat ceilings'. [*History of Hertfordshire* by J. E. Cussans. Vol. III. *Dacorum* p.329]. Perhaps spurred on by the example of Harpenden, St. Helen's was at last restored, though less drastically. Edward Browning of Stamford was the architect. The south porch was unsealed and the fire engine moved out so that the porch became the main entrance that it is today; the north porch was rebuilt. The plaster, with which the flint work of the walls had been covered, was stripped off and the walls repaired; the stone work was renewed; buttresses were rebuilt, and so were the roof, at a steeper pitch, and the spire, to a greater height; some of the old timbers and lead were re-used. Inside the church the ceiling over the chancel was painted, old seating and panelling removed, new seats inserted in the nave and stalls provided for the choir. The small organ in the gallery was removed in 1863; and in 1866 an organ built by J. W. Walker & Sons of London was installed. Its 'Vox Anglicana' was described as 'one of the loveliest in Europe... though some have complained of its obscuring portions of the remarkable architecture'. These comments appeared in *The Dawn of Day: an Illustrated Paper and Monthly Parish Magazine for Wheathampstead*, which in 1885 cost one penny. The total cost of the restoration was £4,000, of which Mr. Drake-Garrard of Lamer contributed £1,000 and the rector £500. Cussans praised the latter 'for his suggestions and assistance in the work' [Cussans, p.330]. The rector's interest was partly antiquarian and during the restoration some features of the medieval church were discovered, among them the reredos.

The Reverend O. W. Davys remained rector for fifty-five years, living comfortably in his rectory with fourteen servants to wait on him and his family. Among them were choir boys recruited from Peterborough, where his father had been bishop. These boys were all employed in the house or garden and were known in the Davys family as 'Grandfather's weaknesses'. St. Helen's became famous throughout the county for its church music. When the restored church was reopened in 1866, a dedication festival was held; and this was to become an annual event, held as far as possible on St. Helen's day. After the major work was completed, only minor repairs were necessary for some years; for these local labour was employed. In the ledgers of George Clark, Wheathampstead painter and decorator, we find:

'Due from the Church Wardens of the Church of St. Helens Wheathampstead to Mr. Clark, Painter &c. May 21 1870

At Church puttying up Beams to keep out the 'Bees'	0-2-6
Seeing to Ventilators	0-1-6
Sep. 7 Posting up Text in Church	0-2-6
Oct. 31 1 new Sheet of perforated Zinc	0-3-6
fixing do. in Church door	0-2-6
Nov. 3 painting music box	0-1-0

April 12th 1871 13-6

pd. Geo. Clark

[H.C.R.O. D/EX 57 B1].

In 1885 the bells cast by Phelps in 1717 were partly recast; and 1887 saw the lych gate added. A new underfloor heating system that had been installed soon smoked so badly that a visiting bishop joked: 'Don't let the *Church Times* know about this, or they will say you burn incense' [Davys, p.71].

The *Herts. Advertiser* for 1889, chosen at random as typical of the period, illustrates some of the activities of the now completely restored church. In addition to its dedication festival on 11 May, St. Helen's held a Sunday school festival on 24 August, at which the children marched from the school bearing bunches of flowers, which they placed on the altar and which were later presented to children's hospitals; tea and sports followed the service. A week later came the choir excursion to Ramsgate, which was reached by train via London, not the least of the attractions of the day. It was found possible to enlarge the north vestry at the end of the century. In the new century St. Helen's harvest festival was always a great occasion, as in 1908 when, 'the decorators having, as usual, displayed considerable skill in its floral adornment', recorded the *Herts. Advertiser*, 'the service lasted two and a quarter hours'. At the New Year too, according to the parish magazine of 1922, there was 'Miss Young's Annual Social

for the youths and maidens of the village'. And the annual fête held in the rectory grounds between the wars remains a vivid memory.

During the Second World War two bombs fell in the churchyard; one near the wall in Church Street did little damage, the other by the vestry corner blew out the north transept window and broke a number of tombstones. Mercifully no further damage was done. Since the war the church has continued to receive additions: there is one more Garrard memorial, to the last and most famous member of the family, Apsley Cherry Garrard. It is a bronze sculpture by Ivor Roberts-Jones of the explorer and author of *The Worst Journey in the World*. After the First World War Apsley Cherry Garrard had offered to replace the churchyard wall with a new one, incorporating glazed tiles each of which would bear the name of a Wheathampstead man who had lost his life. His only stipulation was that there should be no distinction according to rank. Those in authority would not agree and so Wheathampstead lost what might have been a moving tribute to its dead. Between 1951 and 1953 Mr. Westwood, a Wheathampstead craftsman, made the wrought iron gates by which one enters the churchyard from the south-east and south-west. The needlework on the kneelers was a contribution made by the ladies of the parish in 1972. In March 1974 two new bells were hung; they were cast by John Taylor and Company of Loughborough who had recast and rehung the Phelps' ring of six bells in 1937. One of the new bells was given by William Tame, a former chief bell ringer who died, sadly, ten days before the bells arrived. There were continuing changes. The old vestry built in 1834 was damp and too big; it was demolished about 1961 and replaced by a new one behind St. Helen's. In the nineteen-sixties the Victorian choirstalls and organ, which had served the church for a century, were replaced. The new stalls, as well as a set of altar rails, were designed by Mr. Cecil Brown, and the new organ by Hill, Norman and Beard. It was installed in 1969 at the west end of the nave in the same position which had been occupied by the pre-1863 organ; the removal of Canon Davys' organ from the chancel has not only let in more light but allows the proportions of the church to be better viewed. Recent restoration work to the fabric has included the strengthening of the central tower by the insertion of a reinforced concrete girdle at belfry level. In this ideal setting a combined flower festival and concert was held in October 1974.

ST. PETER, GUSTARD WOOD is the only other Anglican church in the parish of Wheathampstead. It was built in 1910, at the expense of the widow of a former rector of Ayot St. Lawrence, and in 1922 'Mr. Lane-Claypon', recorded the parish magazine, 'had added to his many acts of kindness to the parish by presenting a beautiful little oak pulpit'.

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN THE HIGH STREET, HARPENDEN

The Wesleyans, who had established themselves in the first Leyton Road chapel in 1839 (see p. 109), formed part of the Luton circuit, that is a number of churches grouped together for administration; they depended on lay-preachers with occasional visits from a Luton minister, all of whom came by pony trap or walked long distances from their homes. The Leyton Road chapel greatly benefited from the arrival of Henry Salisbury (see Plate 14c), a builder, and his marriage to Miss Hawes of Markyate. They were the first couple to be married in the rebuilt parish church of St. Nicholas, as at that time the Leyton Road chapel was not licensed for marriages. Henry Salisbury held many offices in the chapel and he remained superintendent of the Sunday school for forty-seven years, finally retiring from that office in 1911. One who worked with him described him as 'that grand old saint with a flowing beard, who looked like Father Abraham'. Among other active members was the popular James Busby, described in the 1871 Census as a chemist and druggist, aged thirty-one. Known by the Wesleyans as their 'great sick visitor', he had a long beard and always wore a skull cap [Williams, p. 11]. Some members ran a lively Band of Hope, which led the boys to sign 'the pledge' to abstain from alcohol. The highlight of the year was the anniversary, when friends and parents went to hear their children sing and recite; among them sat Aaron Deamer in his smock frock.

Like the old meeting house, this first chapel became too small, and at a meeting held to consider its extension the oldest member, 'Father' Lowin, gave Henry Salisbury the first sixpence towards the new scheme. No other site being available, land adjoining was bought; and in 1886, after many 'panoramic lectures' and other money raising events, a new chapel replaced the old one and was dedicated by the president of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. In the eightennineties a better organ was installed and the Salisbury family placed stained glass windows in the chancel in memory of Henry's son Frederick; and in 1896 the Luton circuit at last sanctioned a resident minister for Harpenden, the Reverend Yelland Richards, who was given a great welcome. Membership increased, the choir flourished (see Plate 15a), and more land was bought to make a better entrance to the Sunday school under the main building.

After the First World War habits changed and church attendances diminished, but G. Washington Gray and George Phillips introduced the system of pledged giving, which greatly increased the church's income and made financial planning easier. For several years, five out of the twelve Urban District councillors served as Methodist church trustees.

In 1922 the trustees bought the site of 'the White House' in the High Street for a church worthy of Methodism and began to raise money for it. Just a year later the Wesleyans, and indeed the whole

village, were saddened by the death of the patriarchal Henry Salisbury. His son-in-law, Owen Green, and Bernard Brigham, treasurer of the New Church Building Fund, together with a minister, the Reverend J. Crowlesmith, led innumerable fund raising efforts, outstanding among which was the Dickens Fair on Harpenden Common in 1925. By 1929 sufficient money was available to choose the design of Allan Brace, exhibited in the Royal Academy that year. The tender of Messrs. A. Harris and Son for £11,914.18s.2d was accepted; and George Phillips, a trustee and a local builder, generously supervised all the technical details. Stone-laying ceremonies in September, transferring the old memorial stones from the Leyton Road chapel to the new site, linked the 1886 and 1929 occasions; as far as possible these were laid by relatives of the former stonelayers. The building, described in a Methodist Synod leaflet as 'of unique loveliness among nonconformist churches', was opened in September 1930, when local dignitaries and representatives of all denominations crowded in (see plate 12a). The new stained glass window in the chancel in memory of Henry and Susan Salisbury, was designed by their son Frank and constructed by Mrs. Salisbury's brother's firm, Messrs. Hawes and Harris. Another window in the west end, executed by the same artist and craftsmen, was given later by Mrs. Burgin in memory of her husband, the Rt. Hon. Dr. Leslie Burgin, P.C., M.P., an active member for many years who died in 1945, its four lights, symbolising Nature, Justice, Law and Service. Frank O. Salisbury also painted, and later presented to the church, the four large pictures of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, the Nameless Prophet, and Samuel and Eli, which hang in the chancel. His father was the sitter for Jeremiah.

On its new site in the centre of the village, the church found that its work greatly expanded; and in 1942 it became the leading Methodist church of a group of ten forming a separate High Street circuit. Because the minister of High Street is also the superintendent of the other nine churches and committed over such a wide field, the members take a large share in the leadership and pastoral work among the members and adherents.

THE METHODIST CHURCH AT KINSBOURNE GREEN

After meeting for almost thirty years in Matthew Luck's house, the Wesleyans acquired a small plot of leasehold land, for '£5 of lawful British money', and built their first chapel in 1856. It is believed that it was destroyed by fire not long after, and a new one erected on the old foundations. Regular services took place until the 1890s; but these were difficult times, and the church had to close for a year. Help, however, came from a mission band in Harpenden, whose descendents are still the mainstay of this church. By 1910 there were sixty scholars on the roll and adjoining land was bought for extension. The First World War intervened; there were many setbacks but in 1931 a new hall costing £885 was added. Mr. J. Catton,

who was a local builder, gave £100 and allowed a strip of Kinsbourne Green common land six feet wide to be used for a path beside the hall. Twenty years later the old chapel, built on the burnt foundations of the first one, was showing signs of decay and the gallery was unsafe. The local Town Planning Committee would allow no new building on this road; consequently application was made to add a chancel to the new hall. This was passed and the work completed in 1951 for £1,360. There is at the present time a morning service only, except for special occasions such as Harvest Festival. This would have been much approved of by one of their lay-preachers in the early days, who said he had no great enthusiasm for afternoon services 'because of the feeling of preaching to roast beef and Yorkshire pudding'.

THE METHODIST CHURCH AT SOUTHDOWN

In the mid-1800s a group of Primitive Methodists from Luton held open air meetings and met in various homes in Bowling Alley. They gradually confined themselves to one house in Grove Road and used it on Sundays as a mission hall. In 1865 they built a chapel in Southdown Road. Their hundred members sat on plain deal forms with back rails, facing the pulpit. 'It was not unknown for people to fall through the backs of the forms, especially children nodding during a long sermon!' [*Southdown Methodist Church. Service of Re-Dedication*. 1970, p. 12]. In 1888 a Sunday school was added at a cost of £200, of which Sir John Lawes lent £100. Because a minister visited the chapel only monthly, mass baptisms took place when he came. Weddings had to take place in Luton till 1905, when the Bowling Alley chapel was at last registered for marriages. On Sundays whole families would attend en masse, and on special occasions such as anniversaries chairs had to be borrowed from neighbouring cottages. As in most churches at this period, a Band of Hope was extremely popular; it went in procession with banners held high and shouted derision at every public house it passed. By 1899 a new Sunday school hall, 'the Tin Hut', had been built on the opposite side of the road and the chapel renovated. Income was supplemented during the First World War by rents from the army, which used the Sunday school hall as barracks.

When the union of Primitive, Wesleyan and United Methodists took place in 1932, the chapel remained in the Luton circuit but it transferred to High Street when that became a separate circuit in 1942; and in the following year it was assigned its own minister, the Reverend A. H. Bomford. After years of hard effort by its supporters, additional accommodation was provided for the Sunday school and a new church was built. Only the shell of the old building remained, encapsuled in the modern one designed by Kenneth A. Williams, A.R.I.B.A., who skilfully used the handsomely grained wood from the old pews to construct a modern preaching area. A crowded

assembly met, and a new organ led the choir, on the rededication day in May 1970, just 105 years after the first chapel stood in Bowling Alley.

THE METHODIST CHURCH AT BATFORD

Here too Methodism began as a series of open air meetings: these were held at the west end of Bowers Heath Lane, followed in winter by services in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Smart at Cold Harbour. A Sunday school met in the nearby cottage of Robert Drury, a signalman on the Great Northern Railway. Before long a corrugated iron Wesleyan chapel stood in Coldharbour Lane, where forty or fifty people worshipped on Sunday evenings and thirty to forty members in the mornings; during heavy rain, when the noise on the roof drowned the preacher's voice, they sang hymns instead. By the turn of the century a site had been acquired on the Lower Luton Road for £33, and a chapel built for £591; but by 1922 a new Sunday school alone cost £1,150. Incendiary bombs burnt out the roof in 1941, and this led to an ambitious extension scheme, which was completed in 1952 at a cost of £4,750.

THE WESLEYAN CHURCH ON THE HILL AT WHEATHAMPSTEAD experienced 'a great quickening' in 1856, when twenty-nine members were admitted in a year. By 1864 only eight remained, but the membership stood at twenty-two in 1872. In 1887 the Methodist church at the Folly was built as part of the Luton circuit; its opening was not welcomed by the Wesleyans on the Hill, where 'Much concern arose owing to the establishment of a cause at the Folly'. They saw it as a rival as far as their membership was concerned, but in the following year they took a broader view and withdrew their opposition to it. It looks, however, as if some of their members did desert to the Folly, for by 1894 at the chapel on the Hill 'the cause was in a very feeble state'. Under Thomas Wren, the village wheelwright, the membership trebled from seven to twenty-one; but by 1897 the fact had to be faced that the 'chapel is situate at the top of the hill, away from the bulk of the population and it required some inducement for the worshippers to make the ascent'. The trustees therefore decided that 'it would be in the interests of the work of God to dispose of the present site and secure more suitable premises in the village'. But in 1907 the Wesleyans at Wheathampstead had to admit that 'All negotiations . . . to obtain another site have been futile' and at the old chapel on the Hill 'work has to be prosecuted under embarrassing conditions' [*Wesleyan Methodism in the City . . . and the St. Albans Circuit* by J. G. Greaves]. The Wren family served the chapel to the end, which came in 1939: then after struggling for a hundred years to survive, the chapel finally closed its doors. Though the building still stands, today it is a factory, and Methodists, both Wesleyan and Primitive, go to the Folly Methodist church.

THE FOLLY METHODIST CHURCH

Built in 1887 by Vince Goldhawk, this chapel was opened on 17 October; it consisted merely of one room, with a plot of grass at the back for the preacher's horse. The Mission Band from Luton are believed to have been responsible for its foundation; certainly they conducted the services, coming over in the morning and bringing their dinner with them. This could be heated on a stove in the chapel, while lighting was by paraffin oil lamps. Thomas Wren the wheelwright was active in this chapel, it seems, as well as in the one on the Hill; he was one of its earliest Sunday school superintendents. Two open backed forms were used by each class, half the scholars sitting the opposite way from the others with their legs through the backs; as at Southdown, from time to time one fell through. Other early Sunday school superintendents and teachers were Charles Smith, affectionately known as 'Uncle Charlie', Harry Smith junior and Thomas Latchford. Later the inevitable Band of Hope was formed, a bible class, and a Wesley guild, until in 1927 it was decided that for such activities another building was needed and a building fund was opened. 14 April 1928 saw the stone laying ceremony and 8 June the opening; the builders were Smith Bros. but much voluntary work was done. In the following year a primary department, for the youngest Sunday school scholars, was opened; it met in the chapel, where services were then held only in the afternoon and evening; but in 1937 it was decided to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the chapel by building a room for the primary department. This was opened on 24 August 1938; and here the department still meets, under the same leader as in 1929.

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH IN HARPENDEN

In the Amenbury Lane chapel records of the Independents, or Congregationalists as they had become, there is a break from 1845 to 1865 during the pastorate of the Reverend G. T. Johnson, who suffered from failing eyesight; this was the Johnson referred to in *The Harpenden Pope* (see p. 119). The New Congregational Hymnbook was adopted during the time of the next pastor, the Reverend George Amos; his salary was £25 per annum, this amount being pledged by the deacons, Henry Lines and Allen Anscombe. Amos' pastorate finished in 1868, and the Harpenden congregation became affiliated to Luton, Redbourn and Wheathampstead in turn, until in 1881 it obtained a pastor of its own again. As membership increased a more commodious church was needed; a site was acquired in Vaughan Road and an attractive new building opened in 1897 (see Plate 16a); the total cost of this and of the site was £2,600. A second-hand organ was bought for £420 and this did duty until it was rebuilt and electrified in 1973 at a cost of £3,000. When in 1904 the old chapel was sold to the Salvation Army, the proceeds were used to

as stables; and, in February 1973, a new hall was opened for use as a Sunday school and club room. By then, the chapel had become a branch of the United Reformed Church.

BAMVILLE MISSION

Early in this century a fine upstanding character lived in Queens Road, Harpenden, John Fensome, known as 'Honest John' or 'the Bishop of Bamville'. His bright red cheeks glowed as he strode regularly across the Common to a barn near the Three Horseshoes; this was a mission started by the Leyton Road Methodist Church to 'serve the remote area of East Common', and responsibility was soon passed to John Fensome and his band of young men and women. Services are remembered by a Sunday school scholar to have been sometimes accompanied by the munching of cows from the neighbouring farm, who poked their heads into the barn behind the congregation of twenty or thirty people. In 1943 'Honest John' was presented with the Golden Certificate of the Sunday School Union for fifty years' enthusiastic work. But during the Second World War the congregation so diminished that adult services had to be abandoned. When 'Honest John' retired in old age, one of his helpers, Alfred Newman, a sign-writer of Cravells Road, succeeded him; it was Alfred who painted the picture of 'Christ and the Children' which hung in the barn. Sunday school outings were great occasions; and harvest festivals brought a wealth of produce from Bamville Farm and the Joel Estate, Childwickbury, whose gardeners attended the mission. As times changed, however, East Common no longer seemed remote, the mission closed, and the barn grew derelict and disappeared.

THE SALVATION ARMY IN HARPENDEN

The 'Harpenden Corps', as C. F. Putterill wrote in the *Diamond Jubilee Handbook 1935*, 'opened fire' in 1885, its first meeting being held in a field in Crabtree Lane. Its platform was a coal cart belonging to a supporter; and on this lay-preachers who had walked over from Luton conducted meetings. A hall was eventually provided by Mrs. Tyler in Heath Road; this hall was later used as the Welcombe and Rovers Football Club room. Heath Road has disappeared and been redeveloped as Heath Close. Officers were appointed from among the Luton preachers, and they were much befriended by the South-down blacksmith, Charles Oggelsby, and his family. Another of the earliest supporters was A. T. H. Putterill, Corps Sergeant Major, who came to Harpenden in 1884; he recalled the hooliganism the Army encountered in its early days: he often had the sides of the drum kicked in. In his time, after the new Congregational church had been built, the Army acquired its old building in Amenbury Lane (see Plate 12b). It was his son, C. F. Putterill, who founded the band, then consisting of cornets, tenor horns and a drum, in 1912, and remained a stalwart supporter of the Army till his death. In 1966

the Army built an attractive modern citadel in Leyton Green (see Plate 15b), where 112 'soldiers' and fifty Sunday school children meet, as well as various other groups, including the hundred members of the Silver Threads Club. The much enlarged band still plays fervently from its Sunday pitch on the Common, and, at Christmas time, accompanies carol singing through the streets.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES IN HARPENDEN

After the early eighteenth century entry in the Bishop of Lincoln's Visitation Return of 'one Papist' (see p. 108) we have no further records of Roman Catholics in Harpenden till the last decade of the nineteenth century, when a St. Albans priest, Father A. Macdonell, came weekly to minister to three or four Catholics. Numbers gradually increased to twenty-two, and in 1905 they hired the gymnasium in Vaughan Road (Charlie's furniture store in 1974) and erected a portable altar; here Father Peter Martin, M.S.C., of St. Albans, celebrated mass according to the Roman rite for the first time since the Reformation. By May of that same year a temporary corrugated iron chapel was built in Rothamsted Avenue, and mass was said weekly, again by St. Albans priests who were fed and sometimes housed by the parishioners. When Canon Longstaff (see Plate 14d) was appointed in 1919 as the first resident priest, he had to live in rooms until a presbytery and the site adjoining it were acquired. By that time there were about eighty Catholics, including children, scattered over an area of about ninety square miles. The next year the Dominican Sisters arrived at Bowers Cottage where they started a school; in 1924 they moved to Harpenden Hall with a bigger school and added a new wing. Finally in 1931 they moved to Welcombe, a much larger house with ten acres of land which was named the Convent and is now the Moat House Hotel. They were a tremendous help to the priest, both in the church and by means of the fêtes held in the spacious convent grounds.

The little iron church was in very bad repair and was soon far too small. By 1923 the Presbytery had been paid for but there was no money in hand; a New Church Building Fund was started, and by 1928 generous benefactors and the hard work of the parishioners had raised £6,000. Canon Longstaff approached Frederick A. Walters F.S.A., to design a church, which he did (see Plate 16b) and, to quote the Canon's words, 'succeeded in creating a really beautiful church, dignified and graceful in design' [*The Catholic Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Harpenden. History of the Parish*, p. 29]. The building and fittings cost £20,000; the opening ceremony took place on 26 September 1929 before 450 people not all of whom were Roman Catholics. Canon Longstaff continued to work enthusiastically for many more years; he died in 1950. His successor, Canon Heenan, has proved equally tireless in his pastoral care.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS MORE IN WHEATHAMPSTEAD is the latest addition to Wheathampstead's churches. Canon Longstaff wrote: 'As I was keen to start a new parish where there had been no Mass since the Reformation, I made up my mind to start saving money from my income so as to build a church and perhaps equip it and hand it over to the Diocese ready for a resident priest'. In October 1933 a piece of land off the Marford Road was purchased for £450; part was sold off in 1935, no doubt to raise money for the building. 'I thought', wrote Canon Longstaff, 'perhaps a decent semi-permanent building could be put up for £1,000'; but this proved to be optimistic. The cost came to £2,702, £800 of which was contributed by Mrs. Tuke, £250 by Miss Longstaff, and £1,652 by the Canon, who saved it 'by not going abroad for my holidays for some years' [Typescript account by Canon Longstaff in the church's keeping]. He had the gratification of saying the first mass there on 6 December 1936, and in the following year of handing it over to Father Armitage, who had been looking for a church in the country. In January 1938 the oak high altar in the temporary church at Harpenden was taken to Wheathampstead, and on 13 February it was opened by Cardinal Hinsley and dedicated to St. Thomas More.

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) IN HARPENDEN

Although the Society of Friends dates its birth as Whitsun 1652, there was no meeting in Harpenden until after the First World War. In 1918 a few families met in one another's homes, and in 1925 Sir Halley Stewart offered a garden room on his estate at the Red House, now Harpenden Memorial Hospital, for a Sunday morning meeting; an evening meeting was also held at the Swallow Café in the lower High Street from time to time. Membership of the meeting increased and a piece of land was bought in Stewart Road for the erection of a meeting house; but when the British Legion decided to vacate the institute in Southdown Road and the property came on the market, it was bought, with garden and orchard, for £1,500. After renovations, the meeting house was opened on 8 April 1933, Wilfred H. Brown presiding at the opening ceremony; he was a direct descendant of a family who had become Quakers in 1654. In 1972 the meeting house was further renovated and improved and will provide a centre for Harpenden Friends for many years to come.

THE UNITED MISSION

Thomas Irons, as an indenture of 1908 states, owned 'two freehold cottages now converted into a Mission Room, on West Common between Rothamsted and Pimlico' [in High Street Methodist Archives]. He put the building into the hands of three trustees, one Primitive Methodist, one Congregational and one Wesleyan Methodist,

whose churches were responsible for running it as an interdenominational mission. The Sunday school was well attended and services were held on Sunday evenings, mainly for those elderly folk who lived in the Hatching Green and Pimlico area and found it difficult to walk to the village on dark or wet evenings. Numbers greatly decreased during the First World War and members ceased to use the hall and met instead in each others' cottages. This mission and the Bamville mission often met together and were entertained by their 'singing bands'; but eventually they were both closed. By the terms of the indenture the West Common Mission had to stand empty for a year; later on the Lawes Trust bought the property, and let it to the Brethren in 1933.

THE CRABTREE LANE CHAPEL

The 'Brethren', as they called themselves, were a breakaway group from the stricter Plymouth Brethren. They consisted originally of five men who, in about 1927, met in a room of the school of music in Harpenden High Street, now Connell's. When others joined them they met in various houses, until finally they rented the disused United Mission hall. They very much wanted to start a Sunday school, but there was no spare room. When the Batford prison camp, at the south end of the Batford estate, closed in 1945, many council tenants were settled in, with their families, while the estate was building. This gave the Brethren the opportunity they needed: they occupied a large hut left empty in the camp, started their Sunday school and taught a hundred children. A few years afterwards a Mr. Locke, a Baptist evacuee, offered land in Crabtree Lane for £200 to anyone who would build a church on it. The Brethren bought it and built on it an interdenominational chapel large enough to accommodate the 160 adults and scholars associated with the movement. When they ceased to rent the old United Mission hall it was closed, and the Lawes Trust divided the money from the sale and all lettings among the three churches which had originally run it.

HARPENDEN EVANGELICAL CHURCH

This was a completely independent venture by a small group of men, three of whom were co-pastors and three deacons. They met in the old Public Hall, Park Hall, in 1963 but moved to premises in Vaughan Road in 1969. The church is affiliated to the Fellowship of Independent churches. Followers number about 150, including active youth groups, some of whom make recordings to be broadcast to hospitals. For eight years they provided a weekly comment for the *Harpenden Free Press* until it was incorporated in the *Herts. Advertiser* in 1973.

The Present—and the Future

The ministry that was begun at least nine hundred years ago in Wheathampstead is still being carried on today; and worship, in however different a form, is still being offered on the same site at St. Helen's. Here, as the rector's guide to the church states, 'down many centuries praise and honour to God have been offered continually'. Different again is the form of worship offered in the churches, chapels and meeting houses of the other denominations. But after three centuries of division, there are now signs of a coming together again: already the Presbyterian and Congregational churches have united; and the ecumenical movement of which this is a sign must be as strong in Wheathampstead and in Harpenden as it is anywhere. Gone are the days, though they can still be remembered, when feelings between church and chapel in Wheathampstead were 'very bitter', when church people looked on chapel folk as 'almost heretics' and chapel folk made it a point of honour not to curtsy to the rector and his family! One old inhabitant has given it as his opinion that 'the biggest change in this village I know is the religious change'.

Harpenden has a long record of friendly relations between its churches. In 1894 Canon Vaughan, the rector, visited Harry Busby, one of the most promising young Methodists, when he was near death. Knowing that the Methodists had no resident minister at that time, the rector administered holy communion in the bedroom to him and his parents and friends. The rector also invited the Methodists to worship in the parish church on Good Fridays and Christmas Days, and many did so. The interdenominational United Mission on West Common was an early experiment in co-operation. 'A witness', thought to have been Father Martin, describing the dedication of the new Roman Catholic chapel in 1905, wrote: 'That day the sympathetic Anglican Rector, himself, from the pulpit, chimed in words of welcome' [*Catholic Church*, p. 23]. Again, in the 1955 *Jubilee Handbook*, Sergeant-Major Putterill of the Salvation Army referred to the rector as 'a very good friend, as are all the present ministers in Harpenden'. By 1963 the good relations led to the formation of the Harpenden Christian Council, with the rector, the Reverend Peter Bradshaw, as its first chairman. It is a fellowship of Christian congregations, designed to draw them into greater understanding and unity so that they can serve the community more effectively; it consists of all the clergy and ministers who are members of the British Council of Churches and lay-representatives of their congregations as well as of some co-opted members. Meetings are held in different churches in turn; at the first meeting, Anglicans, Methodists, Congregationalists, the Salvation Army and the Society of Friends were represented. In 1966 Roman Catholics attended for the first time; a united carol service was held in the Catholic church in the following year, and

in 1968 that church became a full member. The *Herts. Advertiser*, for 12 October 1973, reported that the Harpenden Christian Council had arranged services in various churches to help people understand more of each other's forms of worship; the first was held at Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic church, where mass was followed by a question and answer session, the second in the Salvation Army citadel and the third in St. Nicholas' church.

In Wheathampstead, too, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and United Reformed churches work together by exchange of pulpits and also share a church magazine. When the Congregationalists were short of accommodation in 1971, they were 'helped for a time by our friends at St. Helen's, who let us use the Church Room'. In return they are making their new church hall available for use by all denominations; its opening in 1973 was attended by the rector, the Roman Catholic priest and the Methodist minister.

The bitterness produced by doctrinal and social differences in the past is vanishing, but has this meant more support for the church? In the past religious enthusiasm has often coincided with intolerance and conflict between Christians, while toleration has led to apathy. This is the challenge which faces all the churches today. While the distribution of support may have changed as between one church and another, none can take much satisfaction in the decline in support overall. Harpenden and Wheathampstead probably have a larger proportion of church supporters among their populations than most places in England, but the proportion has sadly declined. It is extremely difficult to give precise figures, because the ways of measuring support for a church differ from church to church, and there are several views as to the significance of church 'attendance' or church 'membership' as indications of Christian belief. But it is possible to see a few general changes when we compare today's situation with that in 1851.

There are now churches with local adherents which had none in 1851 or which did not then exist. There was no local Roman Catholic worship in 1851. Today there are two Roman Catholic churches. It is difficult to count 'practising' Roman Catholics but there cannot be more than 200 in Wheathampstead and two or three times as many in Harpenden. They are now an important element in local religious life. The Society of Friends had no local meeting in 1851 and now has one with eighty-two members and twenty-two 'attenders', but the members do not all attend regularly. There are three new 'churches': the Salvation Army with 104 uniformed salvationists or 'soldiers'; Crabtree Lane chapel with sixty-nine members; and Harpenden Evangelical church with forty-three members.

The three 'churches' which were active in 1851 have not lost members, but they have not gained them in anything like the same proportion as the rise in population. Wheathampstead today has

about 5,500 inhabitants, as compared with 1,908 in 1851, and Harpenden some 26,000, as compared with 1,980. The United Reformed church in Vaughan Road has 115 members today, marginally more than the best attendance they had at any one service in 1851, which was 103. The Methodist churches in Harpenden have 785 members between them; the Folly Methodist church has forty-two and an average attendance of twenty. While this last is less than a quarter of the best attendance at a Methodist service in Wheat-hampstead in 1851, the Harpenden situation shows a great growth; in 1851 there were only 300 sittings and the best attendance at service was 151. The development of the Church of England shows the same pattern. It is doubtful whether church attendance at St. Helen's and St. Peter's together equals the 250 of 1851, though church membership may about equal the 574 sittings that there were in St. Helen's in 1851. The apparently much better situation at Harpenden is only due to the much greater population growth: some 787 members on the electoral rolls of three churches as against a maximum church attendance in 1851 of 350.

Even on the most favourable assessment it is difficult to believe that there are as many as 3,000 practising Christians in Wheathampstead and Harpenden in 1974 out of a population of about 31,500. Numbers are not everything, but they do suggest the social situation in which ecumenism is working. How well this works out within the churches is shown by the united services, the joint celebrations of holy communion, meetings for prayer and discussion, and liaison committees of Anglicans and Methodists, which meet in each other's churches. There has been an exchange of pulpits between the rector and the Methodist minister; the latter has shared the administration of holy communion at St. Nicholas and during the week of Christian Unity in 1972 preached in the Roman Catholic church. Perhaps all this heralds a day, however distant, when there will be in Wheat-hampstead and Harpenden one church, as there was in the beginning. But will Christianity by then have become the religion of a minority?

Appendix FOUR

CHantry CERTIFICATE 1548 (Plate 11a)

In the left hand margin Wheth(a)msted cu(m) Capell(a) de harpeden (Wheathampstead with the chapel of Harpenden) is written; below it there is an illegible entry; and in the right hand margin the total income received and its distribution is given: 9s.10d.; 'whereof for the Relife of the pore yerelie at obbites' 4s.1d.; 'And for the Rep(ar)as of the Churche' 3s.0d. The description of the properties is as follows:

'A Close cont. iiij Acres called the Churche Close
gyven before tyme of memorie by hughe bostoke for vs iiijd (5s. 4d.)
the fyndinge of an yerelie obite now in the Tenure
of the Churchwardens And payeth by the yere.
A Rente goyng out of certen londes called
Thorpes Crofte in the tenure of Willm Salmon iijs (3s.)
gyven by John Cutte for the fyndinge of an obite
yerelie.
One Acre of meade in Harpeden gyven by John Neale xvijd (18d.)
for the kepinge of an obite by the yere in the
Tenure of Ralfe Eyinge.' [P.R.O. E301/27]

INVENTORY OF WHEATHAMPSTEAD CHURCH PROPERTY 1552 (Plate 11b)

'Imp(ri)mis quattuor (four) Belles in the Steple & a Saunce bell
It(e)m a challise of Silluer Guilt p(er) oz xxj oz (21 ounces)
It(e)m another Challys of Silluer parcell guilte p(er) oz xiiij oz (14 ounces)
It(e)m a suyte of redd vestmentes that is to say ij Tunycles
and a vestment
It(e)m another suit of whit vestmentes withe acoppe
It(e)m another Suyte of Silke withe a Coppe to the same
It(e)m ij blewe vestmentes
It(e)m a whit vestment
It(e)m of Grene vestment
It(e)m a coppe of blake vellat
It(e)m another of old Silke
Allso ij Corporas caysses one of vellet (velvet) and thother
of Dammaske' [P.R.O. E315/497]

INVENTORY OF HARPENDEN CHURCH PROPERTY (spelling modernised)

Three bells and a saunce bell in the steeple
A Chalice of silver parcel gilt of twelve ounces 'haber Depoyse' (avoirdupois)
Two copes, one of gold finial, another of silk and thread
A vestment of green satin with an alb (white vestment)
A vestment of blue satin and another of white satin
A vestment of green silk, another of red say (fine serge), and another of
black say
A vestment of white 'Buschian' (?) and two hangings for the altar, one of
red and green satin with 'paynnes' and the other of white say
Four altar cloths, four towels with a hanging (?tassels) of silk with
'paynnes'
Two surplices, three streamers, six banner cloths, three 'Corporase Caysses'
and three cloths
Three new torchs, a chrismatory, and a pair of organs [P.R.O. E315/497]

One of the bells was Michael's (see p. 95); the saunce bell was a small bell which was rung as the priest pronounced the word Sanctus in the mass. Organs were used to accompany the chaplains and the clerk who sat in the chancel; they continued in use until the Commonwealth period. A tunicle was a vestment with tight sleeves; a cope ('coppe') the long outer garment worn by a priest; corporas cases were like portfolios, used for the corporas, the white linen cloth on which the elements were consecrated; a chrismatory was a case for the cruets which held the consecrated oil.

Appendix FIVE

PETITION TO THE LONG PARLIAMENT

'The precincts of the said parish are very large and populous, many places being two miles distant from the Church of Harpenden, and above four miles distant from the Church of Whethampsted: . . . That notwithstanding the Parsonage of Whethampsted is (of itself) worth two hundred pounds per Annum, yet the Parsons thereof have likewise enjoyed (as aforesaid) the tythes of Harpenden, being very neer the value of the other, and yet have allowed but small Maintenance to the Minister that hath Officiated in Harpenden, as sometimes sixteen pounds, sometimes twenty pounds, and at most but thirty pounds per Annum. That by reason thereof your Petitioners have usually been supplied with Ministers whose abilities for the work of the Ministry have been suitable to the meanness of the allowance, and who sometimes have been (according to the received Maxim) scandalous in their lives and conversations; and whose Wives and Families have, after their death proved burthensom and chargeable to your Petitioners, there being at the present a late Curate's wife and children whom we are constrained to relieve with Alms of the Parish . . . Therefore forasmuch as in the parish of Harpenden, as well as in the parish of Whethampsted, there is a several and distinct Cure of Souls, whereby there is an incapacity in any one Parson to Officiate in both places: and that the profits arising out of each parish are also several and distinct (in which respects your Petitioners do humbly conceive it will amount unto a plurality, if holden by one Parson) And forasmuch as there is in each of them (apart) sufficient and plentiful Means to maintain a preaching Minister:

'Your Petitioners humbly pray . . . that the Parish of Harpenden may be at all times hereafter a distinct parish separated from the Parish of Whethampsted, or that your Honors would provide for the comfortable subsistence of our Minister in some other way as to your Wisdoms shall seem meet and fit.'

[Printed copy in H.C.R.O. D/ELW Z2]

Appendix SIX

A

Plan for the Preachers in the Luton Circuit. From October 24, 1813, to April 3, 1814.

1813-14.		Oct.		November.			December.			January.			February.			March.			Apr.	Preachers' Names.								
Names of Places.	Hours of Preaching	24	31	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	6	13	20	27	3			
Luton	10½ 2 5½			3	12	2	8	1	3			2	13	1	8	3			1	11	3	8	2	1			1. Newton.	
Market Street	2½ 6																											2. Wilson.
Harpden	10½ 5½																											3. Rowe.
St. Albans	10½ 2 6																											4. Wright.
Tebworth	10 2																											5. Underwood.
Dunstable	2 6																											6. Duffield.
Dagnall	9½																											7. Carey.
Hodmell	2																											8. Leitchild.
Hempstead	6																											9. Jackson.
Charlton	2																											10. Wall.
Leagrave	9½ 6																											11. Lawford.
Kinworth	2																											12. Partridge.
Welford	2½ 6																											13. Wingrave.
Mima	1½ 6																											14. J. Wright

N. B. x stand for Kingswood Collection.
c. for extra Collection.
s. for Sacrament, and
L. for Love Feast.

Quarterly Meetings,
January 4th. and
April 5th.

LUTON CIRCUIT PLAN FOR 1813-14

Appendix SEVEN

SUMMARY OF THE CENSUS OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE TAKEN ON SUNDAY 30 MARCH 1851

VILLAGE	DENOMINATION	ERECTED	SITTINGS		GENERAL CONGREGATION						SUNDAY SCHOOL			REMARKS	SIGNED		
			FREE	OTHER	30 March 1851			average			30 March 1851					average	
					MORN	AFT	EVE	MORN	AFT	EVE	MORN	AFT	EVE			MORN	AFT
Wheatthampstead	Church of England	'Ancient'	164	410*	150	250	—	—	—	142	137	—	—	—	—	*in pews 260 schoolchildren 150	Henry Penth(?) Hecker
"	Wesleyan Methodist	About 1840	70	30	—	—	—	—	30	90	—	—	—	—	—	(First attempt, by J. P. Wingrave, local preacher, crossed through) *prayer meeting acc. Wingrave	(Rev.) Maurice Britton
"	Independ ^t .	1815 on Brew-house Hill	150	50	30	50	60	30*	50*	60*	30	30	30*	30*	—	*over 6 months	John Messer, deacon
Harpenden	Church of England	'Ancient'	190	360	197	293	—	200	350	—	121	121	120	120	—	'The Sunday school children have additional Forms to sit upon when required'	Leigh Spencer, curate
"	Wesleyan Methodist	1839 in lieu of smaller one built before 1800	100	200	76	110	151	20*	20*	20*	80	100	10*	10*	10*	*less than usual because of affliction' (Was it intended to put this note against the average?)	Wm. Henson, Shoe Maker
"	Independ ^t .	1840	100	130	53	70	103	—	—	—	51	73	—	—	—	'The Independents have had regular Sabbath Worship in this Village for more than 30 years.'	George Terry Johnson, minister

WHEATHAMPSTEAD and HARPENDEN

*their history is being told in a series of booklets
the first two are*

- I The Settlement of Wheathampstead and Harpenden
(1973), 30p**
- II New Men and a New Society:
the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries (1974), 50p**

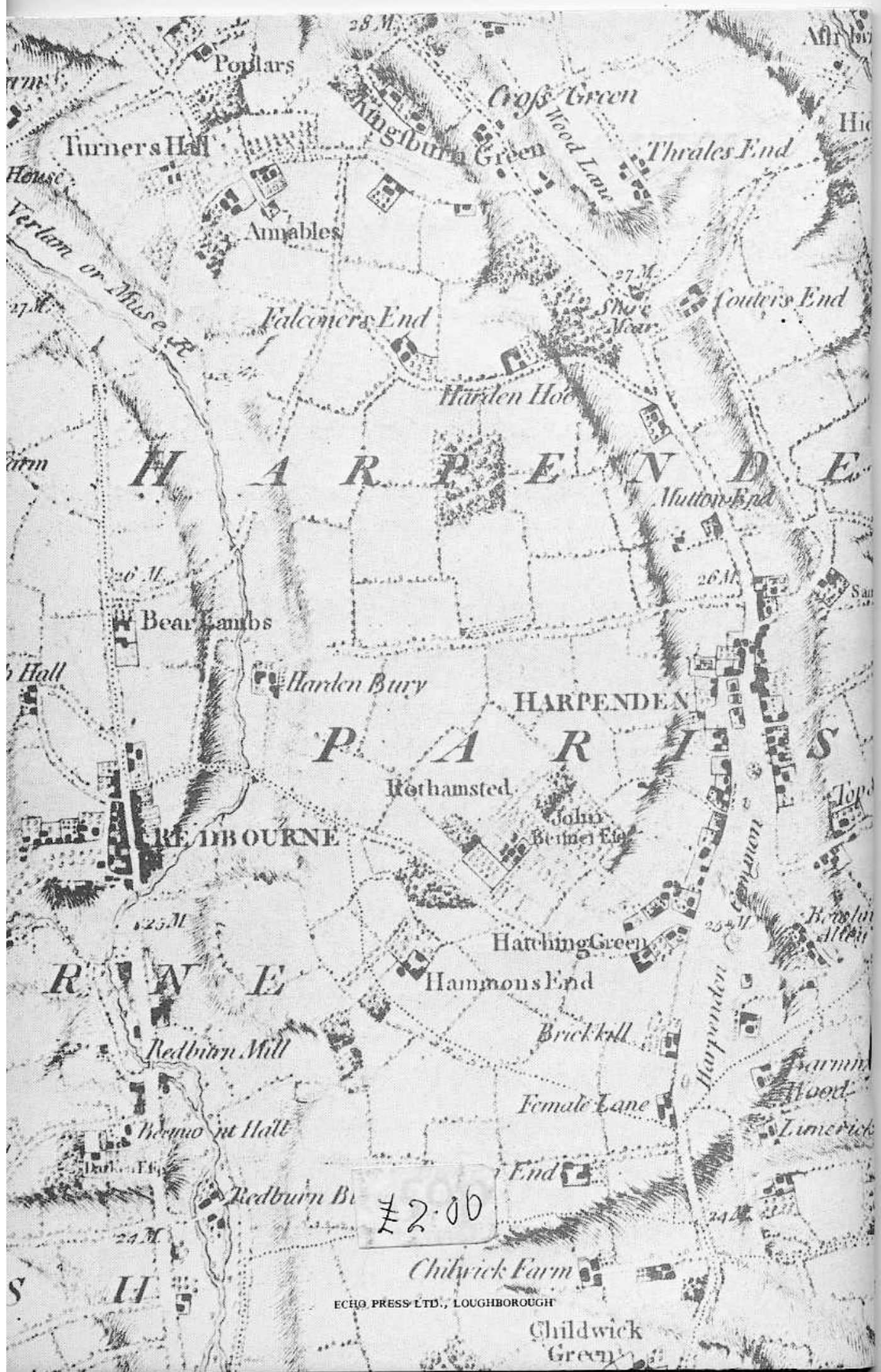
Two other booklets published recently by the Harpenden and
St. Albans branches of the Workers' Educational Association
are:

Harpenden: a picture history (1973), 50p
About Wheathampstead (1974), 50p

All these booklets are still available
In Harpenden they are on sale at
Brading & Harmer, 1 Station Road
Button Bros. Ltd., 48 High Street
Hockadays, 122 High Street
Thorn's, 3 High Street
and at the
Public Library, Vaughan Road

In Wheathampstead they are on sale at
Busby's, Collins Antiques and
N.S.S. (Newsagents) Ltd.

In St. Albans they are on sale at
The Tourist Information Centre
Alban Books, Catherine Street
Stamp and Coin, Chequers Street



Turners Hall

Poullars

28 M.

Cross Green

Wingsburn Green

Thrales End

Annables

Falconers End

27 M.

Soulers End

Harden Hoe

H A R P E N D E N

Mutton End

Bear Camps

Harden Bury

HARPENDEN

P A R R I S

Rothamsted

John Bennet Esq

REDBOURNE

25 M.

Hatchling Green

R E D B U R N

Hammons End

Redburn Mill

Brickkill

Hermonnt Hall

Female Lane

24 M.

Redburn B

£2.00

Chilwick Farm

S H

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Childwick Green