



A History of Trentham  
and St. Mary & All Saints  
from AD 680

by

The Rev. J. F. Challis  
Undated – c1955

[A transcription for the Trentham Heritage Project 2021]

## Acknowledgment

The Rev. Preb. EJJ Edwards, Vicar of Trentham 1841-86 was in possession of notes on Trentham collected by his predecessor, the Rev. Thomas Butt. He studied many original documents in the library at Stafford and published the story of Trentham Church with the Annual Financial Statement during two years, together with the account of the excavation of British Barrow.

In 1857 Mr Wm. Molineux published "Trentham and its Gardens", now out of print, but the late Mrs Penson kindly gave me her copy. Miss Graham, sister of the Archdeacon (Vicar from 1908 to 1932) published "Notes on the History of the Church", also out of print. The "Staffordshire Parish Register Society" commissioned the Rev. SW Hutchinson to copy the ancient Registers, 1558 to 1744, which copy was published in 1905, and in the foreword was given a brief survey of the history of the parish "which in early times up to 1841 comprised 7,317 acres, including the present parish of Trentham and also Blurton, Hanford, Dresden and part of Normacot, and Butterton." There was also appended the list of Rectors, Priors and Vicars from 1136 to 18986.

I would also acknowledge the help given by Mr Gordon Yates of Parkway for material obtained while, at Trinity College, Cambridge, and Mr Anthony J Tunnicliffe of Greenway for his research.

## Reference Books:-

Oxford Dictionary of Place names;  
White's Survey of Staffordshire;  
Edwards' Story of Staffordshire;  
Eardeswick's Staffordshire;  
Staffordshire Domesday, by Fraser;  
History of Staffordshire 1638, by Plot;  
Chartularies of Trentham – Salt Library.

## TRENTHAM

### Early Days

The History of Trentham up to a certain date is involved in much obscurity. The earliest name was Trinkingham or Tricingham, the home of the sons of Trinka, who may have been an early chief of the tribe inhabiting these parts. Another suggestion is that it means the confluence of three streams, viz. the Trent, the Keele (Park Brook)) and the Mill (Longton Brook) which meet within the space of 100 yards. It was the junction of these streams that made Trentham an attractive place to its first inhabitants. The angle made by the Trent and Keele Brook would be an ideal position. The rivers gave a sense of security from any enemies, so they built their houses probably of wood near where our Church now stands.

Their handiwork is still to be seen. "Everyone who walks up the Ley (on the east side of Stone Road at Ash Green) can see that the side of the hill there is quite different from most; instead of a gradual slope it is rather like a huge irregular staircase; these are the corn ridges of the Ancient Britons."

A great deal has been learned of the ancient history of Trentham from a small mound in a field on Northwood Lane, now called The Cow Pasture.

THE BRITISH BARROW – an account furnished by Mr Joseph Barnard Davis, MRCS, ENG.FAS etc. (Shelton, Staffs.) of the opening of a Barrow, discovered May 1859 by Mr Molyneux, one of the staff of Trentham Hall:-

This Tumulus is situated to the north of the village in a pasture called The Northwood; it forms the summit of some rising ground in this pasture and is about 70 feet in diameter with an elevation of about 6 feet in the centre above the surface of the soil, on which it has been raised. An attentive examination suggested that was a sepulchral mound of the Ancient Britons and on application to the Duke of Sutherland permission was given for its exploration.

Soon after opening the first transverse trench small fragments of charcoal and of calcined bone were observed to be interspersed with the soil. A fragment of flint which had been chipped into the form of a rude arrow head, whitened by exposure to the act of fire, was next met with; and further examination everywhere revealed among the soil indications of charcoal, burnt bone and fragments of sandstone, the latter blackened by a carbonaceous deposit as if from combustion; and in one or two places small pieces of pottery. Upon reaching the natural surface, at a depth of 6 feet under the centre of the Barrow, the primary interment was discovered.

A shallow and rather irregular cist had been cut in the "rotchy" about atrium covering the spot, about 2 feet long, 1½ feet wide and 1 foot deep - the longer diameter being nearly east and west. This imperfect cist, was, covered with small broken slabs of the rotchy sandstone of the spot, blackened like the other fragments. When these slabs were removed the cist was found to contain a considerable mass of calcined ashes of bone unmixed with soil. The careful examination of these burnt bones enabled us to discriminate among them portions of the human skull, thigh bones, vertebrae, (sic) ribs etc. and, among the rest, a canine tooth of a small dog. The mass of ashes contained in this cist was so large as to lead to the supposition that, although interred at the same time, they belonged to more than one person, and we found among the fragments the first phalanx of the ring finger of the left hand, and this bone was so long and slender as to render it very probable that it belonged to a woman; and besides this the first phalanx of the little finger of the right hand was found, but so robust as to lead to the opinion that it belonged to a man.

We have in these appearances all the evidence that remains at this distant day of a fearful funeral custom which prevailed among the British tribes – a custom common to aboriginal man in very many parts of the globe, of sacrificing the living at the burial of the dead. When a chief died his most intimate companions in life were (and are) by a not very forcible exercise of imagination, devoted to his service in a future world. His favourite wife, slave, horse or dog, and in some cases more than one of any or all of these, are killed and burned on the same funeral pyre that they may continue to minister to his enjoyments; and portions of food and drink are also interred with his remains for his future use.

We believe we have proof of such dark practices in Northwood Barrow. The tooth of the small dog (it is known from other examples that the Ancient Britons had small dog) indicates, however trifling it may seem, the same custom and confirms our conclusion.

We have therefore in this cist, under the central and deepest portion of the Barrow, the primary interment; that which, most likely from the fame of the individual chief whose ashes have so long slept in it, consecrated the spot for future funereal (sic) rites.

In the further exploration of the Barrow numerous other objects were brought to light, but, from the dampness of the mould of which it was chiefly composed, all these were in a soft and fragmentary state. Among them were the remains of three or four very rudely ornamented earthen vases and of a cinerary urn. This latter contained human ashes and fragments of charcoal mingled in the soil with which it was filled, and also a small, piece of the precious flint. This piece of flint was calcined by the action of fire and has a special interest attached to it, from being spilt by the heat into these fragments. It removes all doubt as to the cause of the blanched appearance of the Barrow flints. This clearly arises from calcination at the funeral pyre and not from changes produced by long interment in a foreign earth has been surmised. This material, flint, capable by expert manipulation of easy conversion into various indispensable tools and implements – now the work of the metal smith working in iron or steel – such as knives, saws, hammers, arrow heads etc. – was the most valuable article possessed by the British tribes. As a crude material it was imported into these parts of the island, in which it does not naturally occur, and obtained by long journey or in some cases by barter. The flints used by the tribes of North Staffordshire and North Derbyshire (the Cornavii and Coritani of Ptolemy) which are sometimes met with in Barrows in crude nodules as imported, were probably procured from the Parisii and Brigantes of Yorkshire. A number of such fragments of wrought flint were met with during the excavations, either in the translucent or blanched state, mostly imperfect, and appear to have been arrow heads, spear heads etc., others were mere flakes. That such a precious and useful material should be placed among the ashes of the dead, or buried in the Low raised over his remains, was no doubt an impressive mark of respect and of affection. One at least of the vases was of the small kind designed to contain food for the dead in his future career. The fragments show it to have been about  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches in height.

During the examination of this Barrow no interments of simple burial were met with; all had taken place by cremation or burning. There has been much discussion among antiquaries as to the frequency of one or other of these modes of disposing of the dead. It is the opinion of a very experienced Barrow-digger, Mr Thomas Bateman, of Derbyshire celebrity, that both were practised from the earliest times by the aboriginal tribes of these islands. Probably we might conclude from general principles that burial by simple interment would be first adopted; but there are so many advantages in cremation itself – its greater facility to those who possessed no suitable instruments for digging graves of any depth: its dissipation of any offensive portion of the dead, whilst osseous relics were purified and preserved: its effectual preservation of precious remains from the depredation of wild beasts – that it seems likely the funeral pyre would soon and often be raised in a country where trees and wood were plentiful. We know by enquiry among other aboriginal people that in all parts of the world one tribe has immemorially adopted one mode, and another, perhaps in the closest proximity, the other.

On the introduction of Christianity cremation as a heathen practice was universally condemned and abandoned.

This Barrow has clearly been dug over or had its soil disturbed for fresh interments, and not improbably witnessed many cremations, the remaining ashes of which were not collected but merely scattered over the ground - ground dedicated or consecrated to this use – most likely by the primary interment itself as already mentioned.

The dateless mound carries us back to a period beyond British history; beyond the preceding Roman conquerors and occupiers of our island.

It reveals man with the same hopes and fears and sentiments – unilluminated and unpurified by Christianity – still exciting our interest and sympathy, and exhibits a slight glimpse of Trentham to us, as a place of some resort when its forests were inhabited by wild animals now extinct; when the native aboriginal hunter was the master of the scene, which by the exercise of skill in the arts of the chase he has subdued to administer to his wants, but still if

our own convictions are adopted, where tenderness and affection, the best sentiments of the heart, were not unknown, and their expression not unmanifested”.

This account was sent to Mr Lakin of Northwood Farm by Mr Nicholls of Newcastle in September 1925.

An official of the Ministry of Works who visited Trentham and was shown the Barrow gave the date as between 1500- and 1000 BC. Is there any connexion between this old burial place and the ancient fortification of Bury Bank?

BURY BANK is situated about three miles south of Trentham. There is an interesting note in “Trentham and its Gardens” dated August 1<sup>st</sup> 1957:

“According to the various tests of history, Staffordshire, as part of the ancient kingdom of Mercia, was governed from 659 to 674 AD by Wulphere, 6<sup>th</sup> King of Mercia, a pagan who had at Bury Bank a castle or palace called Wulpherecaster.”

The entrenchments are of oval form, running in a southerly direction, with a vallum about 200 yards in length. Over the surface in irregular groups are spread a quantity of dwarfish oaks, and the sides of the hill, at one time entirely open, have within the last twenty years been planted with masses of spruce, birch, oak and other trees. It appears in some places to have been guarded by a double fosse and on the western side are traces of a gateway; on the east is not so distinct.

At the southern end is a distinctly raised plot of ground, with a ditch, about 20 yards square, on which grow a few ancient English firs and several small elms with a scattered underwood. From the north side of this square piece of ground gradually rises a conical hill or low almost perfect in form. This is probably the grave of one of the Mercian Kings, maybe of Wulphere himself.

There are no traces of building materials to be seen, not one stone is left to attest its former importance; but curiously enough there are accounts referring to it as being of a very

different description from what it is now. Leyland, a historian of the time of Henry VIII, says: "Not veri far from Stone Priori appeareth the place where King Woulpher's Castle or Manor Place was. This Bryri hill stode on a rok by a broke side. There appere great dikes and squarid stones".

#### HOW DID THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH COME TO THIS PART OF OUR ISLAND?

There are various traditions as to how The Faith came to Britain but what is certain is that by the year 193 AD the fame of the British Christians had reached Africa. Origen in 250 AD states that in his day the religion of Christ was established in Britain. A Christian Council was held at Arles in Gaul in 314 AD and at this were present the Bishops of London, York and Caerleon-on-Usk together with Priests and Deacons. These evidently represented the British Church as a whole and reveal an advanced state of organisation of the Church in our island in those days.

It is probable that these early British evangelised Wales, Ireland, the Isle of Man and Scotland.

The coming of the Anglo-Saxons with their heathen practices laid waste the Christian Church so that all that remained Christian was the North and West of our Island. From Iona in Scotland S. Aidan was sent by S. Columbus to Northumbria and he established the Church and Monastery at Lindisfarne, under the support of King Oswald. He had with him twelve students; three of these were Saxons and they were the means of evangelising Mercia.

Penda, the Pagan King of Mercia (626-655), was the prop and mainstay of a decaying paganism, though he allowed Christian missionaries to work in Mercia during the last two years of his life. These first Christian Evangelists came to Mercia through the marriage of Peada, eldest son of Penda, to the daughter of Oswy, King of Northumbria, in 653 AD. Peada had accepted Christianity while in Northumbria and when he returned with his bride he brought with him four Christian Priests – Diuma, a Scot, and three Saxons, among whom were Cedd and his brother Chad. These four began to work in Mercia. (Cedd afterwards became Bishop of London.)



In 655 Penda was slain in battle and Oswy ruled over Mercia but allowed Peada to govern that part of Mercia which lay south of the Trent. A year later Peada was slain and Oswy ruled alone for three years. This early missionary work had prospered, and in 656 Diuma was consecrated "Bishop of the Mercians, of the Lindisfari and of the Middle Angles". On the death of Diuma he was succeeded by Ceollach, also a Scot, who was appointed by Oswy and consecrated in 658. His Episcopacy was short, for he retired to Iona when Oswy was evacuated to Mercia.

Wulphere the second son of Penda had been concealed by influential ealdormen on the death of his father. These ealdormen revolted against Oswy in 659 and set Wulphere firmly on the throne of Mercia. He was apparently a Christian, for he sent to Northumbria for a Bishop, and Trumhere, Abbot of Gilling, Yorkshire, was consecrated the same year. He was succeeded by Jaruman who died in 667. These four Bishops had their See at Repton, at that time capital of Mercia.

S. Chad accompanied his brother as Missionary in Mercia, and when Wulphere asked for another Bishop he was appointed and established his See at Stowe, near the present Cathedral at Lichfield (670-672).

Werburcha, daughter of King Wulphere, was the first Abbess of the little Nunnery at Trentham, established in 680 AD. Thus in Trentham we have a link with the earliest missionaries to our land. The form of worship would be that of S. John of Ephesus, and the customs and ritual that of ancient Greek Churches. The British Church was independent of the Italian Mission from Rome in 597 under Augustine and continually protested against any claim to Papal authority. It is well for us to realise these links with the Apostolic Age. Where was the Church in which S. Werburch worshipped? It was exactly on the spot where our Church now stands. The foundation stones of her Church were discovered when deep digging for the draining of the Churchyard was undertaken in 1858. Underneath the walls of the present Church were found the foundations of two other Churches. They were built in different ways. The lower of these, consisting of large slabs of stone, must have been the foundation stones of her Church.

THE STORY OF S. WERBURGH (drawn from Butler's Lives of the Saints). She was the daughter of Wulphere, King of Mercia, her mother being Ermenilde, daughter of Ercombent, King of Kent, and Sexberga. In her was the blood of all the chief Saxon Kings. She had three brothers – Wulfade and Rufin, who died martyrs, and Kenred who ended his life at Rome in the odour of sanctity. Wulphere resided near Stone; his elder brother had already begun to plant the faith in Mercia. Wulphere on his marriage promised to extirpate the remains of idolatry from his kingdom and was then a Christian, but worldly motives made him delay the performance of his promises. Ermenilde tried to soften the fierceness of his temper, but found it a more task easy to dispose the minds of her tender nursery to be faithful to Divine Grace, and under her care all her children grew up faithful plants in garden of the saints. Werburgh excelled the rest in fervour and discretion, spending many hours on her knees in private devotions. Her beauty and extraordinary qualifications, rendered more conspicuous by the greater lustre of her virtues, drew to her many suitors for marriage. A prince of the West Saxons waited on her with rich present but she refused him. Her greatest victory was over the insidious attempts of Werbode, a powerful and wicked knight of her father's court who was a heathen. The king was greatly indebted to the knight for his temporal prosperity and entertained a particular affection for him. He gave his consent to the marriage subject to the approval of the Royal virgin. Queen Ermenilde and her two sons Wulfade and Rufin were grievously affected by the news. At the time they were visiting S. Chad in his cell at Lichfield under the pretence, of going hunting and by him were baptised. Werbode, finding them an obstacle to his design, contrived to their murder. He shewed to their father the princes returning from S. Chad, and incensed him by slanders to order their death. Werbode died soon afterwards, and the king hearing of the death of his sons was stricken with remorse and gave himself up to the instruction of his wife and S. Chad. He destroyed the idols, converted the temples into churches, and founded the Abbey of Peterborough and the Priory of Stone. Werburgh, seeing the change in her father, disclosed her earnest desire to give herself up to the religious life, and though averse to her doing so he at last consented. He conducted her in a great state to Ely where she exchanged her rich coronet, purple, silk and gold for a coarse dress.

King Wulphere died in 675 and, his son Kendred being too young to govern, Ethelred, the brother of Wulphere, became king. Werburgh at her uncle (Ethelred's) request left Ely to

superintend the house of religious women in his kingdom. By his liberality she founded those of Trentham (dedicated to S. Mary) and Hanbury in Staffordshire, Weedon in Northamptonshire and Repton in Derbyshire. The king also founded the Collegiate Church of S. John Baptist in West Chester.

S. Werburgh both by word and example conducted to God the souls committed to her care. It is said she foretold her death and, giving her last exhortations and orders, she breathed forth her pure soul on the third February 683 at Trentham, having become Abbess in 680. Her body, as she had desired, was interred at Hanbury. Nine years later her body was taken up in the presence of King Coelred, his Council and many Bishops, and being found entire and uncorrupt was laid in a costly shrine on the 21<sup>st</sup> June. In 875 her body was still entire when, for fear of the Danish pirates who had advanced as far as Repton, her body was carried to Trentham where it rested for a time till the alarm was again given, when they fled onward to Chester in the reign of King Aldred, the Church of S. Peter and S. Paul becoming her last resting place.

The shrine of S. Werburgh was converted into the Episcopal Throne of Chester Cathedral in the time of Henry VIII.

Another story of the conversion of Wulfere is given in Plot's "Staffordshire"

"St. Ceadda or Chad came into this part of the country from the North and lived a hermitical life by a spring side yet remaining by the Church of Stowe, near Lichfield. He there existed upon the milk of a doe which being hunted by Wulfade, son of Wulfere, King of Mercia from 659 to 674, brought him to the cell of St. Ceadda, who first converted him to the Christian Faith and his brother Raffine after. This place being too remote from Wlfercester, the seat of their father, the young prince prevailed upon St. Ceadda to remove to a secret place a little nearer them, for the purpose of receiving instruction and performing their devotions with him. Here under the daily pretence of hunting, they came to avoid their father's anger, who was yet a pagan. They were one day observed by Werebod, a concubine of their father and accused of Christianity to him; who came from Wlfercester above mentioned, and finding them at their devotions in this new oratory, in the midst of his wrath he slew them both; one at Stone, where a Church being erected over the place of his martyrdom, gave

both name and original to that town; and the other at Burston, where there was erected a Chapel, which was standing in Erdeswisk's time. St. Ceadda fled to his cell near Lichfield to avoid the fury of the bloody-minded king, but shortly afterwards was visited by the remorse-stricken monarch (led by the same white doe) whom he converted and prevailed upon to banish from his dominions all idolatrous worship."

It is possible that when the Nunnery was established in Trentham a small monastery was built at Hanchurch (the Church on the Hill) dedicated to All Saints, in the plot of ground now surrounded by old yew trees, almost square in form, 66 yards long by 64 yards wide. Human bones have been found in this enclosure and pieces of stone, turned up by the plough many years ago. This too may have remained until the coming of the Danes; but there is no proof of the existence of such an edifice, yet Hanchurch Wakes were held on the Sunday after All Saints' Day.

There is an old legend that there was once a Church in Hanchurch but that it was carried down to Trentham by white oxen, white swans or white mice, accounts differ as to which, but it was something white. Another legend stated that while the building was going on the Trentham people went up to Hanchurch and, being helped by fairies, they carried away the stones and built their own church. Probably the meaning of these stories is that at one time there was a Chapel of Ease attached to Trentham at Hanchurch, and when it was closed the Sacred Vessels were carried by white robed clergy and choristers to Trentham.

The base of the Cross in the Churchyard belongs to this Saxon period and may possibly have been erected to mark the place where the body of S. Werburgh rested on its journey from Hanbury to Chester. The upper stones and the base of the shaft are evidently of a later period. It would be a praying or penitential Cross and may also have been a market Cross at some time. The lower stones are greatly worn. In the top of the shaft the dowel holes are still to be seen, upon which the upper section would be fixed.

The wall on the East side of the Churchyard must always have been a necessity as a protection against the overflow of the river and to uphold the artificially raised ground on which the Church stands. The lower portion of the wall is of great age and considered to be

coeval with the Nunnery, ie 680 AD. It is best seen from the Courtyard on the Stone Road near Strongford Bridge are fields still called Offandyne, named after a Saxon King.

Another link with the far past in the old yew tree in the Churchyard near the East wall. Its gnarled and hollow trunk shows signs of a very great age, and it has been suggested that it was planted by S. Werburgh herself.

THE SECOND CHURCH. From the flight of the nuns from Hanbury, through Trentham to Chester, bearing away the body S. Werburgh from the fury of the Danes, little is known of Trentham until the Norman Conquest, but from Domesday Book it is evident that a Church had been built to replace that destroyed by the Danes, for a resident priest is mentioned. Who built this Church is not known. It is stated that Elfleda, daughter of Alfred the Great, rebuilt the Church in Chester where the remains of S. Werburgh rested, dedicating it to S. Oswald and S. Werburgh. She also rebuilt other Churches destroyed by the Danes. It is very probable she rebuilt Trentham about 907 AD.

As already pointed out, in June 1858 deep digging for the drainage of the Churchyard was carried out to a depth of 14 feet, and under the present building were found walls of different periods, some carefully built and pointed (the foundations of the Norman Church, which are also the foundations of the present building), others roughly put together about 6 feet thick (on which rested the Church of the Danish period, and a lower course of large flat stones resting on a lower level on which the Church of S. Werburgh stood). These walls give the assurance that for nearly 1,300 years this spot has been sacred to the worship of God, and also confirms that the level of the ground was raised as a protection against floods.

Domesday Book (1080 to 1086) is a record of the Survey of England made by William the Conqueror for the purpose of taxation. This is what is said about Trentham: "The King holds Trentham; there is one hide of arable land, there are three carucates, five villeins, one border and a reeve who have three carucates and a half, there is also a priest and one freeman who have two carucates and three villeins and six borders and one plough. There is a wood one mile long and half a mile broad. In the time of Edward the Confessor it was valued at 100 shillings, now at 150."

It is interesting to note that Trentham was Royal property as it had been for many years, from Saxon times or even earlier. The wood in the Park is still known as King's Wood.

The King's property was one hide, ie 120 acres. A carucate might be from 80 to 120 acres; it was as much land as a single plough drawn by oxen could plough in a year. Villeins were yeomen who worked the land for themselves, a border was a cottager, a reeve was steward, the freeman a bailiff.

The word Church is not mentioned, but the presence of a Priest shows there must have been one for services to be held. The Priests appointed by Elflada were seculars not monastic. He was the Rector of the Parish living on the land he owned. It was at this time that parishes began to be formed in England.

Hanchurch is also mentioned in Domesday Book, though there is no mention of Church or Priest, and was valued at 5 shillings. It was assigned to Richard, the King's ranger of Cannock, together with Hanford and Normacot.

THE NORMAN CONQUEST. During the reign of William II (Rufus, 1087-1100) the site of S. Werburgh's Nunnery was given to Hugh Lupus, nephew of William the Conqueror and first Earl of Chester, who thereon built a Priory. This Priory was of the Order of Augustine and dedicated to S. Mary and All Saints.

About this time Blurton and Barlaston with many other districts were given as appurtenances to Trentham, the latter on condition "that a resident Chaplain should always be provided for the celebration of Divine Worship and for the administering of Baptism and the Rites of Burial to the Parishioners." At this time Trentham was recognised as the Mother Church of the neighbourhood.

The interest taken by Earl Hugh in Trentham was no doubt an account of its connection with S. Werburgh, the most venerated Patron Saint of the city of Chester, of which he was Earl.

Henry I (1100-1135) also gave 100 solidates of land to the Church, ie land bringing in the rent of 100 shillings.

A Deed of Institution by Roger de Clinton, Bishop of Lichfield in 1139, describes John the Prior as instituted to the Priory of Trentham and its appendages, specifying Barlaston. He was presented to the priory by the Empress Maud at a Synod held at Whitsuntide in the year of her landing at Arundel and subsequent return to Bristol. This gives an interesting sidelight on the history of the time, for it shows that the Empress, in her brief attempt to secure her father's crown for herself, was able to exercise her royal prerogative over Trentham.

The next benefactor was Randle or Ranulph de Gervons, fourth Earl of Chester and great nephew Earl Hugh. He was a loyal supporter of the Empress Maud in the civil war with Stephen, and in gratitude for this and her son, Henry II, showered favours and lands upon him, including nearly the whole of Staffordshire. The Charter, which is generally referred to as the Deed of Restoration, was granted by this Earl of Chester in 1152. He restored or rebuilt the Priory and the Chapel on the site of the former Priory and the present Church in the latter part of the reign of Stephen, and the remains of his work are seen in the trefoil over the arch of the porch and in the pillars of the Church with their solid foundations and simple capitals, which are exactly as they were in his day. It was the time when the heavy Norman architecture was giving place to the lighted Early English. It is said that he was poisoned by Wm. Peveril at Gresley Castle, but from his deathbed he addressed the Charter to Bishop Walter Durdent, restoring the Trentham Priory and endowing it with 11 solidates of land at Blurton and Cocknage and portions of the Manor of Trentham, for the perpetual service of God in that place, for the good of his own soul and soul of his predecessor.

A relic in our Church of that time is the broken figure in the niche in the North Aisle, supposed to be the effigy of Earl Randle. It would originally be placed on an Altar tomb, but on some evil day had been cast out, and was found in fragments in the churchyard in 1854. The tool work of the chain armour is especially good. It has an almost unique feature in that the helmet is held in the hands of the knight. The stone coffin lid in the porch may belong to

these days. It covered the body of one of the Knight's Priors. This is suggested by the Prior's staff and sword.

The death of King Stephen and the ascent of Henry II to the throne were followed by a prompt resumption of the Royal demesnes including Trentham. He confirmed the last Will of Ranulph and enlarged the bequest and took Trentham under his own protection.

In 1162 a Deed dated October 18<sup>th</sup> addressed to John the Prior by Pope Alexander confirmed certain gifts and privileges to the Priory. It enumerates its territorial rights including "Trentham, Berleston (sic) Betteley, half of Baltry de Laye", a certain township of Newcastle, 100 solidates of land (given by Henry I), the hermitage of Well of Dunstall with the land which Walter the Hermit cultivated, three carucates of land in Gaddesby, the Church at Barkby a certain bovate of land in honas and six bovates of land in Barkby.

The Pipe Rolls and Priory Records state that in 1167 the estate of the Prior of Trentham was fined one Mark for forest trespass. Grants made to the Priory include the moiety of Beltesford Church as well as land from the de Bayvilles, Lords of Longton, Robert de Mere in Hanchuch and William Joyce, his successor, and Ralph de Knutton in Whitmore. The Pipe Roll of Michaelmas 1169 records the Sherriff withholding one shilling for the payment from one Knight of Trentham Castle; he also charges three-fifths of a penny daily per man to ten men at arms as the cost of guarding Trentham Castle. A field in Trentham, on the Stone road is still known as Castle Field.

1165-75. During this period, in the time of Henry II, there was a long dispute relative to the chapels of Newcastle and Whitmore. This was settled in full synod before Bishop Peche of Coventry at the Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The result was that both Chapels were declared to be attached to Trentham.

1181. Hugh Cyvelick, son of Earl Ranulph of Chester, bestowed on Trentham the Church of Bettesford.



1201. The Canons of Trentham sought a licence to fence their wood. This was granted providing it was so done that the King's deer could pass in and out without hindrance.

1227. Clayton Griffiths became an appendage of Trentham.

1280-81. John Peckham, Archbishop of Canterbury, visiting his Province, stayed at Trentham and from here wrote his letters to the King.

1292. A deed dated January 16<sup>th</sup> states Over Elkiston in the Parish of Astonfield belongs to the Priory.

1300 TO THE REFORMATION. A system which proved disastrous in its results was extended in the fourteenth century viz. the appropriation of Parish churches by the Monasteries. This meant that the Parish Church lost its tithes and its Rector. The Church was presided over by the Prior in the case of Trentham and its revenues passed into the hands of the hands of the monastery. The result was that in the time of Henry VIII at the dissolution of the monasteries the Church, monastic buildings and land passed into the hands of lay proprietor. This often meant that the whole of the endowment passed into lay hands and the lay Rector had to appoint a Vicar to take services. The Choir at Trentham, as the Priests' Chapel, was taken down but the Nave as an ancient Parish Church was allowed to remain.

The Abbots and Priors were almost all Lords of one or Manors and great landowners, and often necessarily involved in lawsuits. In 1307 the Prior of Trentham was sued in the King's Court for carrying off by force of arms the corn of Geoffrey Griffin, of Clayton Griffiths, to the value of £40. This was probably the Prior's way of collecting arrears of tithe or rent.

About 1327 the Prior complained that Adam de Fulford and others had forcibly entered the Monastery against the will of the Canons in the name of the late Earl of Lancaster (beheaded in 1322).

Edward II ordered a tax to be levied in 1309 towards the provisioning of his army in Scotland, and the Trentham assessment for this is recorded as being twelve quarters of

corn, sixty quarters of oats, four oxen and thirty sheep. He also, in 1313, confirmed Ranulph de Gernon's endowment of 1152 with "sac, soc, tol, team and infangetheof". These terms mean that the manor could have its own court and the power to compel the male residents to do suit and service at the court, that the manor Lord and vassals had the right to buy and sell in other markets free from toll, that any holder of stolen goods could be obliged to name the person from whom they had been obtained and that the court had the right to try a thief caught within the bounds of the manor.

Although Trentham was always one of the smaller religious houses it is recorded, according to an analysis of Ordinations in the Lichfield Diocese to the sub-diaconate, diaconate and priesthood, that from 1360 to 1367 twenty four ordinations were made to Trentham. In 1427, in the reign of Henry VI, the Prior obtained from the King in very express terms a confirmation and enlargement of former gifts. After reciting the original deeds of Henry I and Earl Randle, Henry himself "bestows upon my Canons of Trentham" certain lands for cultivation "the maintenance of the brotherhood and the hospitalities of the house". This land seems to have been that extending from King's Wood and Northwood down to the River Trent, one field still being called "Prior's More". The mention of hospitalities of the house, recalls the fact that Trentham was in the direct line of pilgrims going from the north to the most popular shrine of the Middle Ages, that of S. Thomas a Becket at Canterbury, and it would doubtless be a much frequented resting place on the long journey. It would be in recognition of this hospitality that an order was allowing the Prior to obtain all his provisions free of toll.

(The monks' hospitality was continued by the Leveson-Gower family when in residence and was dispensed at the "Poor Travellers House" just outside the Church-yard, till the fifties of the last century. The amount of the Charity in 1819 may give some idea of what was provided: 1590 loaves, 1703 gallons of beer – consumed by 9504 men, 2376 women and 1785 children.)

That the Prior's life was not as peaceful as might be imagined is made clear by an entry in the Priory records which tells that in 1428 Prior Thomas sued Reginald Twig of Assheburn

for carrying off his goods and lying in wait to kill him, so that he could not leave the Priory without being guarded by a strong posse of men.

The names of the Priors who ruled in Trentham are preserved and are given at the end of this booklet.

The greater part of the Charters and Deeds from which much of the knowledge of Trentham is obtained are still preserved in the Muniment Room of Trentham Estate Office. Many of them naturally refer to local places and people, names which though spelt in the spelling of the years 1100-1500 can easily be recognised in the locality today – Bertram de Barlaston; Simon Abbot de Hulton; John de Blorton; Robert Cokenage; Robert de Mucleston; John de Draycote; Robert de Swinnerton; John de Wytemore; John de Haneforrd; Thomas de Titnesover; Willielms de Bagenholt; William de Caverswell; Robert le Marchall de Aston juxta Stone; Richard de Stoke; William de Fenton; Gilbert de la Mere; Henry de Longeton; Thomas Clayton de Clayton Griffyn.

THE REFORMATION. The days of the Priory were, however, drawing to a close. In November 1529 the Prior of Trentham, Robert Stringer, was called to the Reformation of Parliament and also to the Convocation which followed. Trentham Priory was surrendered in 1536 when Henry VIII asserted the right to the ancient royal demesne and resumed possession. The nine canons were dispersed and the Priests' Choir at the East end of the Church was taken down, the nave being allowed to remain as a Parish Church which purpose it had previously served. Various members of the royal household obtained leases of monastic lands at the Dissolution, eg: Richard Trentham of the Household had at Trentham Priory with the Rectory in November 1537.

By a Deed dated December 19<sup>th</sup> 1539 Henry granted the site of the Priory and all estates "late belonging thereto" to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, in exchange for land in the County of Essex and the link of many centuries between the Crown and Trentham was broken. The Priory buildings were occupied by the new owners and the tithes which had been the property of the Priory were entirely alienated from the Church and passed into the hands of the proprietors who became Lay Rectors.

By a Deed dated December 21<sup>st</sup> 1539 the Duke of Suffolk sold the whole of the estate to Sir Thomas Pope, who by a Deed dated April 10<sup>th</sup> 1540 again sold it to James Leveson Esq.

The First Act of Dissolution ordered that the new owners of the religious houses were “to kepe or cause to be kept an honest contynewell hous and houshold in the same cyte or precynt and to occupye yerely as moche of the same demeanes in plowyng and tillage of husbandry, that ys to saye as moche of the seid demeanes which hath of ben commonly used to be kept in tillage by the governors, abbottes or pryours of the same howses, monsteryes or pryoryes.” How far this was carried into effect at Trentham may be seen from the licence obtained by the Duke of Suffolk to “empark” five hundred acres of land there. A list has come down of the furniture remaining in the Church after the Priory was suppressed. The date is 1553 and it is headed “A just trew and pafett survey and invetrorie of all the goodes plats jewells vestments bells and other ornaments of all Churches and Chapelles Brotherheddes Guilds Frater Companions within the hundred of Pirehill in the County of Stafford, taken the last day of September in the VI year of our Sovereign Lord King Edward VI, by Walter, Viscount Hereford, Edward Aston and Thomas Fiztherbert, Knight, by virtue of the King’s commission to them directed on that behalf.

### Trentham

First a chales of silver with a patent

111 vestments with all things thereto

belonging, a cope and 111 belles in  
the stepull.

It’m a crosse of coper and gilte and

11 small candlesticks.

It’m a pix of masten, a bookett of brass,

VI Altar cloths.

It’m 111 towells and 111 miks in money

In a stoke.

Thomas Fitzherbert

Edward Littleton.”

A poor selection of what must have been in the treasury of the Priors of Trentham.

THE LEVESON FAMILY. The Levesons were an old Staffordshire family, the seat being at Prestwood Manor near Wolverhampton. James Leveson, who purchased Trentham, was the third son of John, on of Nicholas de Prestwood. He was succeeded by his son Sir Richard, Kt. There is a record of a beautiful life preserved on the East wall of the Sutherland Memorial Chapel in the South Aisle of the Church. She was the wife of a Sir Richard Leveson (there was a bewildering number of Sir Richards) and died in 1591. The estate was bought by the family in 1540. The monument represents her and her husband kneeling, facing each other, he with their one son, and she with their two daughters. The black letter inscription on brass is as follows:-

“Here lyeth ye body of the Lady Mary Leveson, wife of Sr Richard Leveson, of Lyleshull, in the Coy of Salop, Knight, daughter to Sr Edward Mytton, of Galsworth, Knight, having issue Walter, Mary and Ane. Walter was Sr Walter Leveson, Knight, who married Ane, ye daughter of Sr Andrew Corbet, Knight, and Mary married George Curzon of Croxall Esq. Ane dyed in infancy. This Lady Leveson became a wyddow at the age of 30 years in September 1559, and continued so all the days of her life, spendinge the most part of her time at Trentham in good hospitallie for poore and riche, justely commended to all posterity for vertue, woorship, wysdome, modesty and sobrietie, even to the verie day of her deathe, beinge the 27 of July 1591, at Battersee in ye countie of Surrey; and by her executors and friends according to her owne testament, her reverend corps was conveyed to this place, and was here interred the 26 August 1591.”

On the death of Sir Richard in 1559 he was succeeded by his own son Sir Walter, and then by his grandson Sir Richard who became Vice Admiral in the Navy. He was on the flagship of Lord Effingham (afterwards Earl of Nottingham) and fought in most of the engagements with the Armada 1588-9. He was in charge of the fire ships which went into Cork harbour to drive the remnants of the Spaniards out to sea to their final doom. Today we see a statue to this gallant sailor (who was also a friend and confidant of Queen Elizabeth) fixed in a niche

on the side of the clock tower facing the courtyard. The Vice Admiral lived in the residence that was retained after the suppression of the monasteries and from an old estate map it would appear that the Priory stood very close to the present Church. He died in 1605 and having no children bequeathed Trentham and other estates to his cousin Richard Leveson, afterwards created Knight of the Bath. He pulled down the Priory and built an Elizabethan mansion in its place. A picture of this house is given in Plot's History of Staffordshire published in 1638; there is also a coloured copy in the Clergy Vestry in the Church. After the house Sir Richard turned to the Church, which he restored internally "to decency and order". The massive oak screens were made and erected at this time, the main screen being placed one bay further west than at present. Each division is surrounded by a framework, the apex being a goat's head, and the centre containing a shield on which are carved and gilt the three laurel leaves of the Levesons. The Communion Table with rails and the original oak pulpit were also made; the Church was fitted with box pews and an oak dado was carried round the Chancel. Over the centre of the Chancel screen was erected the Royal Coat of Arms, according to the law that all churches built or restored at the time were to possess them. These are the Arms of Charles I, now very rare, and were painted by Samuel Kyrk and are dated "Lichfield 1634". They are now placed over the north door, being placed there at the last restoration in 1844. A copy of the water colour painting of the Church interior by John Sell Cotman (1782-1842) which he made in 1806 is in the Clergy Vestry. The original is in the Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery. It really shows the interior of the Church from 1633-1844. On the south wall of the Church are the two doors which connected the Church and Hall, so that it was partly a family Chapel. Sir Richard married Katharine, fourth daughter of Robert, Duke of Northumberland. She was created Duchess of Dudley by Charles I on May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1645 and this title was confirmed by Charles II. She is a benefactress Trentham can never forget, for it profits still by her bequests. These are pensions for widows, money for apprentices, and an endowment for the school-master. The large silver flagon for use at Holy Communion bears her name and the date 1670. Sir Richard had previously given the small silver paten 1637 and the large silver chalice, dated 19-12-12, but by the Hall Mark 1637, in use at the present time.

DURING THE COMMONWEALTH, 1649-1660, Sir Richard suffered severely for his loyalty to Charles I. His property was confiscated and he had to the largest sum ever inflicted by Parliament to redeem it, £6,000, and added to this soldiers were quartered upon him. A certain Captain Stone, Governor of Caverswall Castle, was ordered to "send some of his cavalry to Trentham to Sir Richard Leveson's house and there quarter for a time to prevent the enemy from making a garrison and also to keep the provisions stored there from falling into their hands". He was also ordered to make arrangements at the Hall for both foot and horse to have charge of the house as long as it was needful. Consequently a body of cavalry and infantry marched to Trentham Hall and the place was put in a state of defence. The Hall could hardly have provided enough accommodation for so numerous a company and doubtless some were lodged in the Church as happened in other places. The bullet holes and marks on the Coat of Arms of Charles I are probably their handiwork.

During the Commonwealth a Mr. Thomas Adams was approved, November 10<sup>th</sup> 1656, as a preacher and ordered to take the income of the Rectory as long he fulfilled his duties, by a Commission "appointed by His Highness, the Lord Protector, acting by the advice of his Counsel, for the approbation of public preachers."

The Parish Registers ceased to be kept for a period during the Commonwealth. They are in order from 1558 to 1641; then there are some years with no entries giving a hint of the disturbed state of the parish.

The Church in the time of Sir Richard had a fine tower and to this six bells were added, cast in 1714. One given by Richard Astbury, the village blacksmith, bearing his name and the signs of his trade, had been cast in 1623 and was recast in 1714. In 1752 the tower being unsound it was decided on October 1<sup>st</sup> that it should be taken down. The cost of this was £25. The bells were sold to Wolstanton in 1767. They were valued at 9 pence per pound. One bell cast in 1707 was bought from Wolstanton in the June following (1768) and weighed 11 cwt. 1 qr. 24lbs. and now hangs in the Mausoleum.

THE DUKES OF SUTHERLAND. Sir Richard died in 1660 and having no children bequeathed his estate to his nephew Sir William Leveson Gower, son of Sir Thomas Gower of Stittenham. In him the two families of Leveson and Gower became united, the present Duke of Sutherland being the direct descendant of both families. Their Title has undergone the following changes: to the ancient Baronetcy of 1620 the Barony was added in 1703, the Earldom in 1746, the Marquisate in 1787 and the Dukedom in 1833.

In 1793 Thomas Moss was curate of Trentham, the author of a ballad which had great popularity for many years "Pity the sorrows of a poor old man".

George Granville Leveson Gower was created Duke of Sutherland in 1833. His death occurred in 1834 and a monument to his memory in the form of a massive statue, by Chantry, crowns a hill, called the Monument Oaks, to the south of Trentham Gardens. The second Duke rebuilt the Hall in the years 1834-1845, a fine Italian Mansion containing over 200 rooms. The Hall which contained a magnificent collection of paintings, statuary and other art treasures was occupied as a residence until 1905. The reasons given for its closure are first, that the pollution of the Trent rendered it uninhabitable and, second, that there very heavy expenditure involved in maintaining an establishment such as Trentham together with other family estates at Lilleshall and Dunrobin was too much for the family fortunes. It was demolished in 1911 and only the Grand Entrance, the Sculpture Gallery and the Courtyard remain.

The Gardens were laid out from plans prepared by Sir Joseph Paxton. The second Duke also practically rebuilt the church, commencing on July 6<sup>th</sup> 1842. All except the south wall was taken down to its foundations. During the process many traces of colouring were discovered which has been defaced by a coating of plaster. The late Norman pillars were taken down, each stone numbered and, on rebuilding, replaced on their original beds, so that these pillars are exactly as they were when the masons left them in the middle of the twelfth century. The Gallery was erected as the ducal pew and a passage led to it through the robing room (now the ladies' vestry) and up the flight of stairs. Both the new Hall and restored Church were designed by the famous architect Sir Charles Barry who designed the Houses of Parliament. The restoration took almost two years, during which period the services were



held in the Sculpture Gallery, and was reopened for services on Sunday, July 28<sup>th</sup> 1844. When almost complete the people of the parish gave the Duke a sum of money in token of their gratitude with which to purchase a Font, and the one now in use was his choice. The panelling of the wainscot was completed from the panels of the old pews, and the open oak seats were made largely from the pews of the old church and partly from buildings taken down during the extensive alterations of the Hall and also from an old house which stood on the site of Moreton Hall, and from an old farmhouse at Newport.

The tiled floor was the gift of the late Herbert Minton who died in 1854.

THE MEMORIALS. We have already noted the Alabaster and Brass Memorial to Sir Richard Leveson 1591.

A statue to the second Duke, who rebuilt the Church, stands in the Sutherland Chapel at the east end of the south aisle. It is in Carrara marble and was moved to its present position on the dismantling of the Hall in 1911. He stands looking down on his good and beautiful wife, the Duchess Harriet, whose gracious memory still lingers at Trentham. The Duke in early life took part in a political mission sent from England to Prussia, and became so deeply and romantically attached to the unhappy and heroic Queen Louise, mother of the Emperor William I of Germany, that he did not marry until years after her death. Then he found a perfect companion in his young cousin Lady Harriet Howard, daughter of the Earl of Carlisle. The monument in the centre of the Chapel, her recumbent figure is by Nobel. The effigy is in Carrara marble, and the altar tomb principally Sicilian marble, and is considered to be his masterpiece. An original model is in the National Portrait Gallery. The Latin inscription is by William Gladstone, who was a personal friend. The translation is on the reverse side of the tomb:

“The faithful effigy in marble of Harriet, Duchess of Sutherland. Her beloved image will ever seem to linger among her own, as of one who much loved, and by many, loved perhaps yet more in return. Eminent gifts of mind and person, and, as daughter, sister, wife, mother, kinswoman most perfect. She possessed furthermore, in wealth of her heart an abundant store for her friends. Whatever of sweetness and delight is given to mortals to enjoy she was permitted long to taste, and had the rarer faculty of spreading around her. During the latest period of her life, tried also by searching pain, she proved ever equal to herself. At

length embracing freely the purposes of God, and to the last most tender, but not weak, she calmly asleep in Christ, in London, on the 27 of October 1868.”

The monument was erected by her son, who wrote “Worked and executed with loving care and skill it is marvellously to the original”, and “After her death existence seemed to be blank, and life lost for ever what makes life most precious and worth living.”

Queen Victoria honoured the Duchess with her special friendship; for many years she was Mistress of the Robes. She survived her husband eight years. A tribute to this lady’s beauty was once unwittingly given by a poor crossing sweeper, who feeling in his pocket for a match, turned to see the Duchess stepping into a carriage. “Missis”, he said, “let me kindle my pipe by the light of your eyes.” The Duchess was heard to say it was the greatest compliment she had ever received.

Other Monuments in the Chapel:

A Marble Shield with the inscription:

“Near this place lyeth ye body  
Of William the third son of William  
Leveson-Gower of Trentham  
in county of Stafford Esqr  
(who was ye youngest son of Sir  
Thomas Gower of Stitnam in ye  
county of Yorke Knight and Baronet)  
by ye Right Honorable ye Lady Jane  
his wife the eldest daughter of ye  
Right Honorable John Granville  
Earle of Bathe  
He was born ye 24 of September 1680  
and dyed ye 13<sup>th</sup> of September 1686.”

Immediately beneath this are two separate inscriptions on brass let into a stone tablet:

“Here lyeth the body of Sr Wm Leveson Gower, Baronet”

and underneath:

“Jane, the relict of Sr William Leveson Gower, Bart. Mother to John Lord Gower, Eldest daughter of John Granville, Earl of Bath, was buried here March 30 1696.

The other Alabaster monument with a Marble Shield tablet bears the inscription:

“M.S.

Near this place is interred Sr William Leveson Gower Bart son of Sr Thomas Gower of Stittenham in the County of Yorke Knt and Bart by Dame Francis Daughter of Sr John Leveson Knt (Elder Brother of Sr Richard late of this place)

He was 2<sup>nd</sup> son of Sr Thomas but by ye death of his Elder Brother and Nephew became heire to the Paternal Estate and title.

He died Dec 21 1691 in the 44<sup>th</sup> year of his age and having had issue by his only wife ye Lady Jane Eldest daughter of John Granville Earle of Bath

2 daughters      Catherine married to Sr Edward Wyndham of Orchard Wyndham in Somersetshire Bart and Jane married to the Lord Hide eldest son of Lawrence Earle of Rochester

3 sons              Sr John Leveson Gower now living Richard who was born Sepr 28 1676 died Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>. 1689 and lies by his Brother William who is buried on ye other side of the Altar.

These members of the family were buried in the Church, and later their remains were transferred to the family vault.

There are also a bust of Lord Albert Leveson Gower, son of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke, who died in 1874, and a head of the eldest son of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke who died as a child. These, and also that of the Duke, were carved by Nobel. There is also a medallion portrait of Lady Florence Chaplin, daughter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke who died in 1881.

Let into the wall of the South Aisle is a memorial to the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke who died in 1913, given by the inhabitants of Trentham. It represents our Lord in the house of Simon the Leper, and was modelled in clay by Tidworth, who did much of this work for Messrs. Doulton.

THE PICTURE OVER THE HOLY TABLE is the work of William Hilton, born in Lincoln in 1786. His main works were historical and religious and many were hung in the Royal Academy. This picture is “manifestly of the school of Rubens” and depicts the carrying of our Lord’s Body to the Tomb. The Artist died in 1839.

THE ORGAN, built by Messrs. Binns, was presented to the Church by Millicent wife of the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Sutherland in memory of her father Lord Rosslyn. It was erected in 1894. It was rebuilt and modernised in 1950.

THE STONE COFFIN LID fastened to the wall in the porch was found about the middle of the last century, forming the cover to a drain which emptied into the Trent not far from the Church. Its date is about 1250, and the sword and florated cross denote an ecclesiastical warrior. It may have covered one of the Priors of Trentham, but nothing further is known of its history.

THE CHURCH REGISTERS dating from 1558 are prefaced with the note: "A description or Register in three parts of all Christenings, Weddings and Burials, happened in the parish of Trentham since the 17<sup>th</sup> dial of November, Anno Domini 1588, the day of the Coronation of our most Gracious Sovereign Ladie Elizabeth, the Queens Majestie that is now".

The first entries are:

- !558 The 11 December was baptised Margerie Bould, the daughter of Thomas Bould.
- 1561 July 15<sup>th</sup> Thos Hall and Ellen d. of Hughe Bradwell Married.
- 1559 The first of Januarie was buried Margaitte Hunte daughter of Thomas Hunte

The registers were kept regularly except during the Commonwealth 1656-1661. Some interesting entries:

- 1574 Jan 26<sup>th</sup>. An old woman, mother to Edw. Lovatt of Hanchurch Buried
- 1583 a pore child, a beggar named Ales Buried
- 1586 Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> a pore man, a cripple whose name was not known Buried
- 1674 Apr. 3<sup>rd</sup> The Right Hon. Ye lady Katherine Leveson, Relict of Sir Richard Leveson buried at Lilshall.
- 1678 Oct 16<sup>th</sup>. Edw. S. of Thos. Doody of Hanchurch & yt' he was buried in woolen, acc. to a late Act of Parlt. the affidavit was made before a Justice of the Peace  
Oct 21 Buried
- 1681 Ap. 9<sup>th</sup>. Margaret w. of Richard of Richard Hassells of Hanchurch, contrary to ye late (Act) of Parliament & ye forfeiture paid to ye overseers of ye poor.  
Buried
- 1709 Sept.10 John, Lord Gower, Baron of Stittam. Buried. Died at Belvoir Castle  
Aug.31<sup>st</sup> and buried in the Chancel at Trentham Sept 10.

The Body of this Rt.Hon.Lord was removed and laid in the vault with ye Bodys of his Lady and Eldest Daughter March 15<sup>th</sup> 1722.

1712 May 1<sup>st</sup>. the Hon. Kath. Leveson Gower (eldest daughter of John, late Ld. Gower & of the Rt. Hon. Lady Kath. eldest D. of John, Duke of Rutland, now Lady Dowerger Gower) departed this life in London Ap.20, being Easter Day, & was at Lilleshall Church, May 1<sup>st</sup> buried. The Body of the Hon. Virgin was brought from Lilleshall and was deposited in ye vault by ye side of her Rt. Hon. parents March 15 1722 at ye funeral of ye Rt. Hon. Lady mother. The Rt. Honble & truly goode and pious Katherine Lady Gower, eldest daughter of John Manners, the first Duke of Rutland – Relict of ye late Ld. Gower, Baron of Stittenham – 47 yrs. Born ye 19 of May 1675. Died at London Mar 7<sup>th</sup>. Apoplexy. Buried in the vault in Trentham Church March 15<sup>th</sup> 1722.

#### SOME COLLECTIONS IN TRENTHAM PARISH CHURCH:

Collected in our Parish Church toward ye redemption of captives in Algiers and Sally and other parts within the Turk's dominion July 4<sup>th</sup> 1669 00-06-01

Collected in our Parish Church for some distressed persons in ye Isle of Carrydon adjacent unto Ireland. 00- 2- 7

Given by ye Churchwardens out of ye Parish Stock to a poor distrest woman and nine children who had their habe in London burnt twice ye summe of 00-02-06

Collected in our Parish in November 1671 toward the redemption of English subjects from Turkish slavery 00-09-00

Ser/1694 Collected for the poor French Protestants, the sum of two pounds four shillings and sixpence 2- 4- 6

THE PULPIT was dedicated on Sunday, December 1956. It stands as a memorial to Adolph H. C. Wenger and was reconstructed from a legacy left by him. It incorporates the moulding of the old Jacobean Pulpit of 1633.

Trentham Wake used to be held on August 15 (Feast of the death of the Virgin Mary).

Hanchurch Wake was on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

A religious census of the Parish was taken in 1676, the result was Church 427, Papists 2, Nonconformists 2.

Population: 1801 – 1857; 1831 – 2344. In 1833 various neighbouring parishes were taken out of Trentham so that in 1861 the population was reduced to 821; in 1891 it was 849, at the present time over 2500. The extent of the Parish is 7,317 acres.

#### THE COMMUNION PLATE:

- Chalice: Silver handbeaten – gold lined – five band Gold decoration. Embossed with Tudor Roses on the stem. Maker's mark "E.R.". Trace of Hall Mark on base – illegible through cleaning. Weight 9¾ ozs. Date – Tudor period 1509 – 1603.
- Chalice: Silver - inscribed "The gift of Sir Richard Leveson Gower 19-12-12. Silver Hall Mark 1637. Charles I. Weight 14½ ozs.
- Paten: Silver – inscribed "Parish of Trentham 1637". Silver Hall Mark 1637. Charles I. Weight 6½ ozs.
- Flagon: Silver – inscribed "The gift of Right Honourable Lady Catherine Leveson to Trentham Parish 1670". Silver Hall Mark 1670. Charles II. Weight 6 lbs. 2⅞ ozs.
- Paten: Silver – inscribed "The Parish Church of Trentham 1825". Silver Hall Mark 1825. George IV. Weight 1lb. 3¾ ozs

The grounds of the Hall have undergone numerous changes. In the early centuries the lake, Italian gardens and the site of the house were all under water, the Trent flowing freely where it willed. The second Duke undertook the construction of the Italian gardens and the general layout of the grounds from plans by Sir Joseph Paxton. The diversion of the river into a new channel made the lake a separate feature and it now covers roughly 85 acres. The Italian gardens covered 10 acres and were planted with the choicest flowers and vegetation.

Before the bridge in the gardens existed to take one from the road to the courtyard the only means of crossing the Trent at this point was by a ferry boat operating by a rope.

The small bridge near the Church and the lodge gates replaced a narrow drawbridge which spanned the moat that Sir Richard Leveson had built round his new house as a defensive measure.

In the courtyard, about six yards from the end of the wall nearest the steps which lead to the site of the former Hall, is a curious inscription, unfortunately badly worn. It reads:

Here Pullo is laid  
On purpose 'tis said  
To wait on fat Dick if he's able  
When to cellar he's been  
And filled up to ye brim  
He'd wait on him to ye coach stable"

"Fat Dick" is presumed to be:

"Richard Beasley, Coachman to ye Rt. Honble  
Ld. Gower Died Jan. 30<sup>th</sup> 1722, Aged 63."

who lies in the Churchyard with the above epitaph on his tombstone. Pullo, the faithful, is believed to be a member of the canine fraternity who, ever attentive to the wants of his master, was in the habit of waiting for him on the spot indicated by the inscription each time he went to the cellar.

Outside the gardens the bridge over the Trent which leads to the Park is of interest. The south parapet is very ancient but on the north side the bridge has been widened three times. The recesses on the buttresses, which are now railed, were originally provided so that pedestrians could step back into them and escape the flying wheels of the carriages.

The Mausoleum was built in 1808 by Lord Stafford who became the first Duke in 1833. It was the burial place of members of the family. The adjacent land was presented to the Parish of Trentham as a burial ground.

Lord Beaconsfield in his novel "Lothair" remarks: "It would be difficult to find a fairer scene than Trentham offered, especially in the lustrous effulgence of a glorious English summer."

#### THE LEGEND OF S. WERBURGH AND THE GEESE

(from a record in Chester Cathedral)

This Holy Virgin (S. Werburgh) when she dwelled at Wedon

In Northamptonshire with a devoute Convent,

Which place sometime was a king's mansion

Translated to an Abbey by her commandment,  
A miracle was done by this noble president  
As the true legend doth us say  
And all the inhabitants to this present day.

A great multitude of sometime of wild geese  
Commonly called Gauntes made a great distinction  
(destruction)  
Upon her lands, pastures, waterfields  
Devouring the corn and fruits of Wedon  
Grievous to her subjects within that possession  
The people could find no sufficient remedy  
But shewed their complaint to Werburg their Lady.

Werburch, on hearing their complaint, sent a servant "to drive those wylde gees and brynge home to her place, there to be pynned and punished for theyr trespace." He marvels at her order, but obeys and to his amazement all the wild geese go meekly to the House. They spend the night "Lamentynge there in captyvyte." Next day they are allowed their freedom and fly away promising amendment. But a servant takes one of their number and when they discover that one is missing they return complaining; "They flewe over this blessed vrygyn's hall mournynge and waylynge after theyr intent".

"But as Wyllyam of Malmsbury sheweth expresse  
The goos that was taken and stollen afore away  
Was rosted and eten the same nyght doubtless  
So when it was asked for upon the other day,  
The bare bones were brought after this lady veray,  
And there by virtue of her benedyecyon  
The byrde was restained and flewe away full soone"

S. Werburgh sent away the geese, bidding them praise God. The right supporter of the misericord shows the wicked servant confessing his fault to S. Werburgh.



This scene is represented in the middle of a misericord seat in the Choir of Chester Cathedral.

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CAMBRIDGE 12. 2. 52.

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These facts about the life of St. Werburgh have been taken from:

“The Holy Lyfe & History of Saint Werburgh.  
Very fruteful  
for all Christen people to rede.”

The life was written by Henry Bradshaw (d.1513). Described as “Henry Bradshaw- sometime monke in Chester”. It was published by Pynson in the very rare quarto of 1521.

It is thought that Bradshaw based his writings on a Latin manuscript extant in Chester Cathedral at that time with reference also to Bede, Alfred de Beverley, Malmsbury, Gerardus Cambriensis, Higden’s Polychromion, Ethelred and Sexburgh.

Family tree –at end of document

Among St. Werburgh’s famous ancestors of the previous few generations were the following:- Woden, Hengist, Cryda king of Mercia, Oswy King of Northumbria, All Kings of Mercia, the Kings of Kent. Also approximately 24 Saints.

Verses in Bradshaw’s “Life” referring to Trentham

This sayd King Ethelrede/ derely consyderynge  
With due cycumstaunce / the hye perfeccyon  
Of Werburge his nece / and virtuous Lynyng  
Her great holynesse / and ghostly converfacyon  
Dayly encresynge / with feruent deucyon  
The excellent fame / and myracles full right  
She wed by our fauyour / both day and night.



This glorious vyrgyn / and moost blessed abbace  
Departed from this lyfe / caduce and transytory  
(As afore is sayd) the yere and time of grace  
Almoost seven hundredth / the thyrde day of February  
To celestyall blysse / and infynyte glory  
Her subiectes oppressed / wiyh wylfull pensyuenesse  
With great trybulacyon / care and heunesse.

But where Werburge gave /in commandymment  
To bury her corps / at place of Hanbury  
As was the wyll / of oure Lorde omnytpotent  
Her subiects of Trentham / which had her body  
Purposed her wyll / and entent to deny  
Prepared to kepe / the corps by stronge hande  
With them to remayne / as ye shall under stande

The sayd people of Trenham / watched full dilygent  
Her corps fulfyllynge / the obsequyes funerall  
Entendynge to auoyd / and frustrate her testament  
Gate a great company / by power marcyall  
Closed fast their doors / and gates one and all  
Made sure yche place / by theyr procedens  
For to kepe the corps / excludyng Thamburgens

But as Salomon sayth / sentencyously  
There may be no counseyll / power ne prudence  
Wysedome of men / nor natural policy  
To derogate or chaunge / deuyne sentence  
Proued euer day / by true experience  
Tho mankynde prepose / his mynd to fulfyll  
Yet god despoeth / all thyng at his wyll

And as they watched / the same sayd nygth  
Moost busily / to execute they wyll and entente  
By deuyne prouydence / passynge mennes myght  
Sodeynly on slepe / was all that couent  
Hauynge no power / for to waken doubtles  
God so prouyed / for theyr great maystres.

The shortly resembled / unto that sayd place  
The people of Hamburgsens / a great company  
With the mynysters of god / people full of grace  
And anone by the wyll / of our lorde almyhty  
The lockes and the barres / of that sayd monastery  
Fell down to the grounde / by power supernall  
Without mannes hand / that enter they might all

Whit miracle proued / the people of Hanbury  
Entred Trentam Abbay / with myde reuerent  
And found there on slepe / all the other company  
Men / women / and chylde / all that were present  
They kneeled all downe / and worshypped the sacrament  
Praysynge out maker / of theyr good spede  
Theyr spycall socour / euer at theyr need

Her blessed body / from Trentam they dyd take  
Gladly departyng / out of the monastery  
Nother man nor woman / had power to wake  
Till they were passed / all greuouse iopardy  
Magnyfyenge our lorde / of his grace deuoutly  
Solemply syngyng theyr songs celestiall  
With infinite gladness / and comfort spirituall.

There is a verse describing her appointment as “gouverner” of her monasteries and another telling where she lived:-

Her honourable vncler / kynge Ethelrede  
Consyderynge her vertue / and her deucion  
Made her gouerner / for ghostly helthe and mede (merit)  
Ouer all the monasteryes / within his region  
Foure of these monasteryes / we have in memory  
As wedon / Trentam / Repton / and Hambury

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Her dwellynge was most at the place of Wedon  
Where many myracles were showed openly  
And at trentam Abbay / of her foundacyon  
From payne she departed to eternal glory  
After her entent was buried at Hambury  
Of whom it may be sayd / Here lyeth nowe present  
A princesse “a virgin / a none / and a president”.

Of the comynge of cruell pagans to this lande / and how Saint Werburge longe lyenge hole  
and incorrupt at Hambury, then was resolved to pouder. And howe the kinge of merciens  
was chased from his lande.

After these infidels had been to London  
And there accomplished theyre cruell entent  
They soone proceeded towarde Lincoln region  
From thens directly with hasty iugement  
To the realm of merciens, noble and auncient  
Right unto Repton where the kynge lay  
Robbyng and spoiling all theyre way.

This kynge of Marcelands called Burdredus  
Regnyng xxii yere upon the merciens  
Was derely expulsed by the pagans furyous  
And went unto rome with pure conscynce

Where he is buried by diune prouidence  
Which kynge so glorious pudicall (bashful)

This grycous virgin and preelect abase  
Buried at Hambury (as is sayd before)  
Contynued incorrupt and hole in that place  
In vesture and body iihundred yere and more  
But when the danes came with suchenrigour  
To Repton abbey / then she was resolued  
And of deuocion full richely shrined

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In meane tyme the danes pitously destroyed  
The monastetyes of Werburge / Trentam & Wedon  
As they many other places had euyll oppressed  
In the north and eest part of this region  
The kingdom of Kent suffred lyke punicion  
The Ile of Wyght endured moche turment  
So dyd the Westmarches / for punyshement

The people of Hanbury wisely consyderynge  
The comynge of danes unto Repton  
And of the departure of Burdred theyre kynge  
How all England was in greatafflyction  
And howe they were next to endure punicion  
Whiche forsyd Repton was distaunt from Hambury  
The space of v mile sayth the history

As they continued in cotidian prayer  
The best remedie sekyng for to fynd  
To auoid vexacion all greuious danger  
Of theyre great ennemies cursed and vnkynde  
The holy goost inspired theyre mynd

To take the shrine with great humilte  
And brynge it to Chester from Perill and enmyte.

Finally, part of the prologue written by one J. T. in honour of St. Werburgh:

Honour / ioye / and glorie / the toynes organicall  
Endeles myrthes wt melodies / prayse ye all ye princes  
Nourissed in virtue / intact / as pure as cristall  
Relefe to all synners / o Werburge lady maistess  
In grace thou passed / all other and in goodnes  
When thou was present in this mundayne lyfe  
None was the lyke / widowe / maybe / ne wyfe.

## S. Mary and All Saints', Trentham

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About 680 A.D. Nunnery of S. Mary founded by King Ethelred, brother and successor of Wulphere, 6<sup>th</sup> King of Mercia; S. Werburgh, daughter of Wulphere, appointed 1<sup>st</sup> Abbess, Monastery of All Saints' probably founded at Hanchurch – Yew Trees mark site.

Lower courses of Retaining Wall, and the Old Yew Tree East of the Church, may be of this date.

683 S. Werburgh died February 3<sup>rd</sup>: buried at Hanbury.

875 Danes sacked Hanbury and also Nunnery and Monastery – body of S. Werburgh carried to Chester, rested one night at Trentham. Penitential Cross (base in Churchyard) erected as Memorial.

About 907 The daughter of King Alfred – the Lady of Mercia probably rebuilt the Church, and it became a Parish Church.

1086 Domesday Book records: "The King holds Trentham" and mentions "a Priest with a man" in residence here.

About 1100 William Rufus granted site of Nunnery to Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester, who built a Priory.

The stone Coffin Lid now in Church Porch dates to this period.

1152 Priory (dedicated to S. Mary and All Saints') restored by Ranulph de Gernons, Earl of Chester.

The Foundations, Pillars and their Capitals in the Church, the Trefoil of N. Porch and part of S. Wall are parts of the Norman Church.

The portion of figure of Knight in Chain Armour, in Niche in N. Wall may be part of effigy of Ranulph.

1539 Henry VIII granted site of priory and Estates to Charles, Duke of Suffolk, who sold it to James Leveson in 1540.

Chancel (Priests Choir) destroyed and has never been rebuilt.

The Priory became Private Dwelling House with Chapel and Parish Church. Later, by marriage, came to the Sutherland family.

1633 Hall built in place of Priory Building and Church refurnished.

Oak Screen erected. The Coat of Arms of Charles I now over main door, was formerly in the upper Frame of Screen, dated 1634.

NB – Holes in Coat of Arms, made by Cromwellian Bullets.

1752 Tower taken down because unsafe, stood at W. end.

1767 Bells sold to Wolstanton Church.

1844 Church rebuilt by 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Sutherland.



S. Wall is of old stone of former Church. Norman Pillars taken down and rebuilt stone by stone, but pointed arches replaced round arches.

The Reredos picture of the Entombment of Our Lord is by William Hilton, RA, he died in 1839.

- 1894 Organ given by Millicent, 4<sup>th</sup> Duchess of Sutherland.
- 1911 Hall taken down
- 1933 New Vestry built as memorial to the Venerable Archdeacon JMA Graham, Vicar of Trentham, 1908-31.

#### Memorial Chapel

- 1633 Partitioned on Restoration of Church – the Vault is of earlier date.
- 1591 Lady Mary Leveson – Alabaster with Brass kneeling figures and Inscription.
- 1686 William, 3<sup>rd</sup> Son of William Leveson Gower.
- 1689 Richard Leveson Gower.
- 1691 Sir William Leveson Gower.
- 1696 Jane, the relict of Sir William Leveson Gower.
- 1861 George, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Sutherland – full sized figure.
- 1868 Harriet, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duchess of Sutherland – Recumbent figure. (These two memorials by Nobel in Carrara Marble.)
- 1874 Bust of Lord Albert Leveson Gower.
- 1881 Florence Chaplin, daughter of 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Sutherland

THE CHURCH REGISTERS commenced in 1558.

#### RECTORS, PRIORS AND VICARS OF TRENTHAM

About 680 AD	Nunnery Founded.	S. Werburgh 1 <sup>st</sup> Abbess
	Rectors	Royal Assent
1086	Priest-in-charge (Doomsday Book)	
1136	Resigned, Richard Butler	Henry I
1139	John, Chaplain to the Earl of Chester	Empress Maud

## Priors

c. 1153	John	Henry II
1200	Samson	Rochester Abbey
1206	Alan	
c. 1230	Richard ?	
1242	Roger	
1255	Roger	
c. 1272	Richard	
1277	John de Conyngeston	
1297	Richard de Lavyndon	Edward I
1321	Richard de Dulverne	Thomas, Earl of Lancaster
1343	Richard de Whalton "a monk of Trentham"	Edward III
1353	Nicolas de Mokoliston, "a Canon of Trentham"	
1402	Thomas de Trentham "Prior of Calwich"	Aug. 20 <sup>th</sup> Henry IV.
1422	John Clifton – a Brother	Sept. 4 <sup>th</sup> Henry V.
1422	Thomas Madeley	Dec. 10 <sup>th</sup> Henry V.
1442	William Rossyndon – a Brother	March 5 <sup>th</sup> Henry VI.
1445	Stephen Brown (Brom)	May 3 <sup>rd</sup> Henry VI.
1482	Alexander Greyhorse	Oct. 6 <sup>th</sup> Edward IV.
1487	Thomas Williams – a Brother	Jan. 16 <sup>th</sup> Henry VII.
1522	Robert Stringer	
1530	Thomas Bradwall	May 14 <sup>th</sup> Henry VIII.

## Vicars

## Patrons

1590	John Cliff	
1599	John Bradwall	
1620	Arthur Braithwaits	
1656	Thomas Adams	Sir Richard Leveson
1667	John Etherington	
1691	Thomas Welles	
1702	William Cradock	
1706	Jeffrey Williams	
1732	Robert Fowler	Lord Gower
1770	George Butt	Earl Gower

1773	John Chappell Woodhouse	Earl Gower
1806	Thomas Butt	Marquis of Stafford
1841	Edw. Jas. Justinian Edwards (Prebendary)	Duke of Sutherland
1886	Edmund Vincent Piggott	" " "
1908	John Malcolm Alexander Graham (Archdeacon)	" " "
1932	Algernon Ernest Grimes	Exors. of Duke of Sutherland
1947	John Frederick Challis	" " "
1958	Francis Samuel Lloyd Ramsden.	" " "

## GENEALOGY OF ST. WERBURGH

