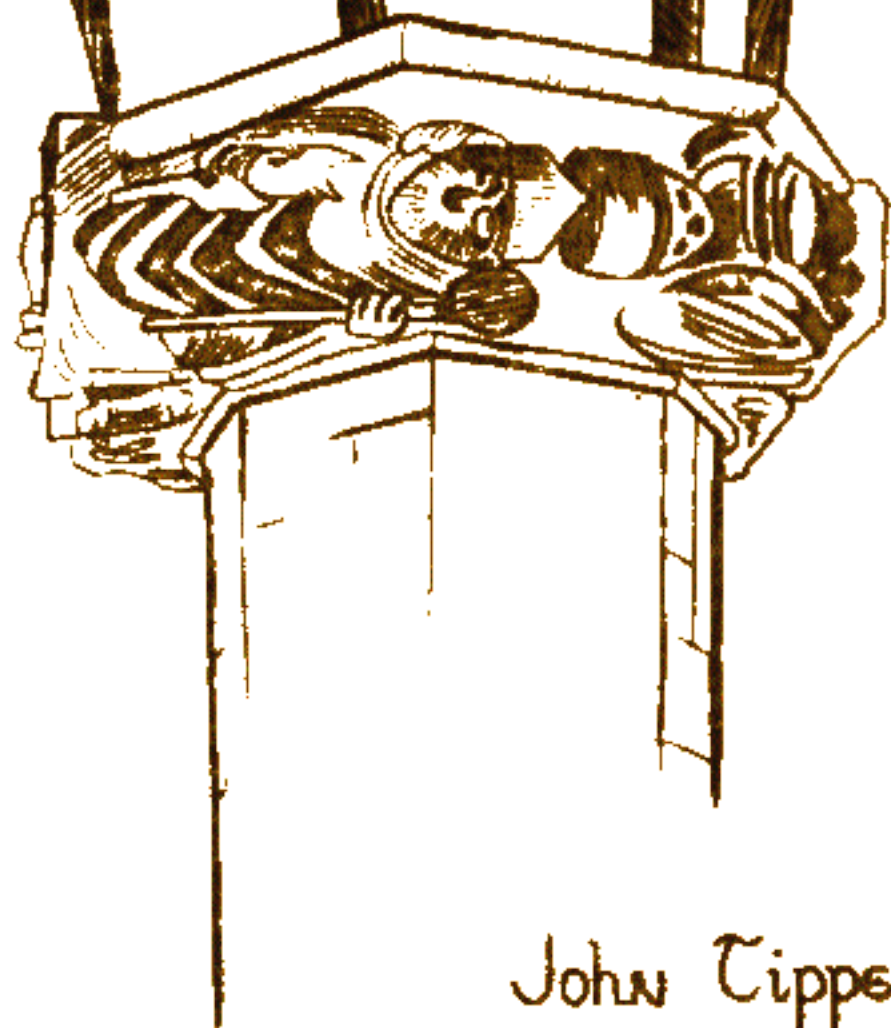




Notes on the Church of  
St Mary Magdalene,  
Cottingham



John Tipper

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FOREWORD

In writing this history of Cottingham Parish Church, John Tipper has given us a much needed parish document. For local residents it will provide them, for the first time, with the information many of them have longed for about their parish church; while for visitors it will act as a guide, and answer many of the questions they frequently ask.

Although we may not possess many of the fascinating historical items to be found in some parish churches, nevertheless John Tipper has drawn attention and given detailed coverage to those we have, and to those things that make up the history of our church.

More important, he has skilfully outlined the growth and development of this church, and set it in its true perspective as a centre of developing and continuing Christian life and worship, and not just a museum of past religious life.

Geoffrey E. Ward

Rector.

August 1976.

## Section 1. Early Background.

According to the Venerable Bede, our oldest historian, it was Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury from 669 to 670 A.D. who introduced the Parochial System. He arranged "that every village in the Kingdom should have its own Parish Church, and thus would provide Sunday Services for all; Saints Days would be honoured with daily prayers being said, and village schools would be instituted."

If this was done in Cottingham there is a gap of some 500 years before the recorded date of our first Rector's appointment. It is believed that sometime during those five centuries a building of some sort, probably built of wood, was erected on the site of the present Church, and that the parochial services were performed there by the Monks of Medeshamstede - the ancient name for Peterborough.

At the time of the Norman Conquest of 1066, all the land from Market Harborough to Rockingham was Royal Property and owned by the Countess Judith who was a niece of William the Conqueror. However by the Domesday Survey of 1083/6 Cottingham and its environs were in the hands of the Abbey of Peterborough, and early records show that in 1146 the Church, a Wood, the Mill and twenty cottages were confirmed in the possession of the Abbot and Convent of Medeshamstede (Peterborough) by Pope Eugenius III.

During the Black Death 1348 to 1350 this may have been one of the safest places to live in, as the percentage of deaths here was less than half those of Yorkshire and Leicestershire where 27% of the Clergy died. A new Rector was appointed in 1350, and one wonders whether the vacancy was caused by the Plague.

## Section II. The Church.

The Church is dedicated to St. Mary Magdelene, the Nave and Clerestory being from the 15th Century and the Tower and Spire from the 13th and 14th Century. Records mention a scratch dial high on the Church Wall, a primitive clock which for centuries told the time for Mass. The Norman Window in the Tower is perhaps the oldest piece of architecture in the village. The Nave is wide and the Aisles are narrow, and the columns of the arcades have some fascinating capitals. One of them is perhaps unique. It has four figures lying round it, head to head, a Lady, an Abbot or Bishop, and two armed Knights with vizors hiding their faces. It is a very strange group, and it is thought it represents St. Mary Magdelene, the Abbot of Peterborough, and the Lords of the Manors of Cottingham and Middleton, symbolising the authority of the Church, the Parish and the two Manors combined in the one capital that carries the most weight in the nave. It is possible there are other explanations of this symbolism!

Another of the capitals has a dwarf on it, and a mythical creature, and on the third one are two unknown ladies lying head to head.

The niche situated at the base of the pillar at the westernmost end of the North Aisle or Arcade, being cusped so roughly, may have been a Reliquary or a heart burial place. If so it would have had a lid or perhaps a built-in casket.

The 13th Century Arch built into the Sanctuary was probably built as a tomb or to contain a memorial of some kind.

The South Aisle, built about 1300 has three bays with quatrefoil piers and double chamfered arches, and there is a piscina on the level of one of the windows, which suggests that a pulpit once stood there.

\* ironstone / Norman window & traces of a former  
 roofline. 3.

The west wall of the Tower has the Norman window, and inside are traces of a former roof line; these two are not necessarily contemporary. The first arch is separated from the second one by a cross wall which suggests that the Norman builders had a wall further west. If this was so, it was incorporated in a tower which preceded the present one.

The transition of Tower to Spire is by a parapet or battlements and angle pinnacles, and the broad spire adopts these pinnacles.

The ancient stone figures built into the north side of the Belfry Tower wall at ground level, may have been a memorial to someone unknown, or it could have been a coffin lid originally.

A complete restoration of the Church was carried out in 1880, and an account of this is quoted from The Northampton Herald of 12th June, 1880.

### Section III. The Bells.

There are five bells in the tower, and also a small Priest's Bell. Their weights, inscription and dimensions are as follows:-

- |   |      |                       |                     |
|---|------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. "Alexander Rigby made me"  | 1704 | 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins. | 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt |
| 2. Thos. Scoulthorpe & W. Northern<br>C. Wardens<br>R. Taylor St. Neots Fecit                                   | 1790 | 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins. | 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt |
| 3. "Alexander Rigby made me"  | 1704 | 31ins.                | 6cwt                |
| 4. Thomas Aldwinckle, Henry Bunckley<br>C.W. "Alex. Rigby made me"  | 1704 | 34ins.                | 7cwt                |
| 5. Thomas Clayton, Rector<br>Charles Barnes, Curate<br>John Chamberlain, Jun.) Church<br>John Carriss ) Wardens |      |                       |                     |

4.

J. Taylor & Co. Founders,  
Loughborough.

1865 39 $\frac{1}{2}$  ins. 11 cwt

Priest's Bell in the West Window of the Spire.

During the nineteenth century a bell was rung daily at 8 a.m. and at 1 p.m. Formerly a Daily-bell was rung at 11 a.m. through Lent, for the ringing of which the clerk collected eggs at Easter in lieu of cash. On the death of a parishoner the Tenor Bell was tolled as a death-knell; three tolls were given for a male, in honour of the Holy Trinity, two tolls for a female in honour of Christ being born of a woman, and one toll for a child. For children under 13 years of age the fourth bell was usually used. At funerals the bells were chimed "as the funeral comes up the street", if so desired; otherwise generally the Tenor bell was tolled.

On Sundays the first bell was rung at 8 a.m. and the second and third at 9 a.m.

For Devine Service in the morning the Tenor bell was raised, then the other bells were chimed, the Tenor "ringing in", after which the Priest's Bell was sounded: for Evensong the first bell was rung for a few minutes, and then the second and third were rung.

#### Section IV. Notes on the Bellfounders.

Alexander Rigby worked as foreman for Tobie Norris at the latter's old established foundry at Stamford, and was his successor in business. He died in the year 1708 and was buried at St. Martins Church; Stamford, as appears from the Church Register there:-

"1708 Alexander Rigby, bellfounder, bur. Oct 29."  
At his death the Stamford foundry was closed.

Robert Taylor was apprentice to Edward Arnold (who made the clock and hung the bells in East Carlton Church) at the St. Neots foundry which was opened in 1731 by Joseph Eayre. On the removal of Edward Arnold to

Leicester in 1784, Robert Taylor carried on the business, first as "Robert Taylor" then as "Robert Taylor and Sons" until 1821, when they moved to Oxford. In 1839 or 1840 the firm moved to Loughborough and formed the present firm of John Taylor and Co.

#### Section V. The Church Plate.

The Church Plate includes the following:-

1. A Silver Paten, about 1626.
2. A Silver Flagon, about 1770. This has no ornamentation, and it was made by Charles Wright, Ave Maria Lane, London.
3. A Silver Bread Holder, about 1773, made by Thomas Powell, St. Martin-le-Grand, London. This has a "rope" moulding round the edge, and the sacred initials "With Cross and Nails with Glory"; otherwise no ornamentation.
4. A Silver Chalice, about 1889, with this legend: "This Chalice was re-modelled from a former one made in 1773, additional silver being given by a parishoner E.C.B. 1889."
5. A Brass Alms Dish.

Records show that an old Pewter Plate did belong to the collection but it seems to be missing.

#### Section VI. The Parish Chest.

For hundreds of years large chests with separate compartments were used for the purpose of collecting alms. One compartment was for Peters pence - a tax once paid to the Pope

Chests were also used for keeping Parish Registers, Accounts, Wills and other records. These formed a most useful record of the Births, Deaths and activities of people living in the parish, and are still consulted by present-day historians. Some chests had three or more locks, each having a separate key kept by a different

person. This meant that each person had to be present before the chest could be opened. Such a chest can be found in Cottingham Church, and it is one of only four in existence; one is in Portsmouth City Museum; one in the Victoria and Albert Museum, one in Cottingham Church, and the fourth one is in private ownership and is unidentified. They are known as the Watford Chests, being made at Watford, Northants in or about 1520. The chest is  $62\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, 24 inches wide and  $35\frac{1}{2}$  inches high. The lid has been severely defaced, the date 1619 prominent in the defacings. The locks and ironwork are original. The four chests are documented as being a group of "four plank or joyned chests", exhibiting the characteristics of English Chip Carving (which is the special name for the rather sharp edged gouging). They all appear to have been polychromed at some time, and some have traces of red, blue or gold in their deeper cracks and crevices.

#### Section VII. The Parish Register.

The earliest Parish Register dates from 1574, during the incumbency of Rev. Gilbert Leybourne, STP. It seems that in 1574 the Ecclesiastical Authorities requested and ordered a register to be kept, in book form, which was to be authentic and official. Most of the original entries are written in Latin, the paper it is written on is of very poor quality, judging by modern standards, and the ink has faded to pink over the four centuries, so as to be almost undecipherable. It would appear that the incumbent, when for instance a death occurred, recorded the event on a scrap of paper and put it inside the cover of the register. Possibly then at the end of the year he collected his notes and compiled his register under the headings of Births, Marriages and Deaths. Several such pieces of paper were found between the pages of the register, and one wonders how many names were missed by using this procedure, and what has been the effect, if any, of any names being missed during the years.

It must be realised that the Parish Priest was often the only capable scholar in the village, with the possible exception of the Lord of the Manor, and so much depended on the Priest for the preservation of records, as well as for the spiritual welfare of the parish.

Up to the early part of the 17th Century, burials were recorded by the entry of the name of the deceased person only. An Act of Parliament, called the Wool Act of 1678, was designed to protect the Woollen Industry, which was of the greatest export importance, against foreign competition. It restricted the importation of cotton from India, and among other things ordered that woollen garments be used in burials. An entry in the register made in January 1678 reads:-

"Anne Spriggs was buried in a garment made of sheep's wool only".

The wording of subsequent entries was the same until 1707, when it became necessary for the incumbent to be more precise to comply with the Law. After the name of the deceased person he had to write, "According to the Act of Parliament for burying in woollen, this affidavit is signed by ..... (the incumbent). Also the record had to be signed and witnessed by another Parish Priest; usually it was the Rector of East Carlton who signed.

In 1754 during the incumbency of Rev. Norman Smith, M.A. there was introduced a new style Marriage Register. It was ordered by the Act of Parliament of George III, and designed for the prevention of clandestine marriages. It was printed by "Joseph Fox, Clerk to the honourable the House of Commons MDCCIV" and it had very artistic covers with lots of scroll work on it. It was in printed-book form, with the entries to be filled in by the incumbent much like the ones used today only very much more simple.

8.

For several years around 1720 there was an average of 20 Baptisms annually.

### Section VIII. Renovation of the Church.

The following is an extract from The Northampton Herald, 12th June, 1880:-

#### "Re-opening of Cottingham Church

##### Presentation of a New Organ

The Church of St. Mary Magdalene, the Parish Church of Cottingham-cum-Middleton, was re-opened for public worship on Wednesday after having undergone a complete restoration. The building is of early English style and presents many features of architectural interest. It was however, found not to satisfy modern ideas in the arrangement of the interior and as nothing had been done to the Church for a number of years, the Rector, the REV. W. YATES, determined, if possible, to effect a complete restoration.

Formerly there were the high-backed pews, galleries ranging north, south and west, and heavy furniture. The galleries however have now been removed, and the old seating has given place to open pews, and the appearance of the Church has been completely changed.

The original contract was for £2,100, but it was found necessary to make additional extensive repairs. Already extra work, costing about £400, has been executed.

The major portion of the Chancel has been rebuilt and has now the appearance of the prevailing style of architecture in that respect. Formerly it was pine-lined, but now the walls are plastered, the windows re-glazed, a new Communion Table provided and covered with a splendid cloth and frontal, the gift of MRS

BIGGE. The lower portion of the east wall is also nicely draped and on the Communion Table is a Gilt Cross, the gift of GEORGE LEWIS WATSON of ROCKINGHAM CASTLE.

The old balustrades of the front of the west gallery have been re-worked and renovated and now form part of the chancel rails. New oak choir stalls now occupy the space formerly occupied by unsightly pews, and the whole has been tiled. The carved bosses of the stalls were the work of MR. PHILLIPS of NORTHAMPTON.

The vestry was formerly at the north-west corner of the Chancel, but it is now removed to the south-west corner. The south aisle has been extended almost to the whole length of the building, and the south-west corner now forms a chancel aisle or vestry.

The Gothic arch which stood on the other side has been removed to the south side and forms an appropriate entrance to the Chancel aisle.

The north aisle has also been extended and extra seating accommodation provided so as to make up the loss occasioned by the removal of the galleries. The one Gothic arch has given place to two similar arches, one of which forms the organ chamber. The roofing of the chancel is new and the pitch raised. The whole of the roofs of the building were formerly at a much lower pitch and covered with lead, but they are now covered with Westmoreland green slates. The pulpit has been lowered and placed near the pillars at the south west corner of the Chancel.

A new lectern has been presented to the Church. The pedestal is of oak and walnut, with brass dogtooth moulding, and the panels of the top are also filled with brass tracery. The capitals of the columns supporting the nave on either side are a great feature in the Church, and on one of them is a band of figures in

Bloxhauis style of architecture representing a lady, a Bishop and two knights. The columns have been thoroughly cleaned by chemical process and the whole of the walls repaired and plastered. The windows in the clear-storied roof, which were formerly very irregular, have been made uniform, and three new ones added. The whole of the windows of the Church have been re-glazed with Cathedral-fluted glass, supplied by PEPPER & CO. of LCNDON (who secured the contract for glazing the Law Courts in London).

The roof of the nave is new, with the exception of the main oak beams, which have been repaired.

In the centre of the wall of the north side of the Church, a new Gothic arched doorway has been placed and one of the doorways at the west entrance closed. The remaining entrance at the west end of the Church has also been made to correspond.

The roofing of the aisles has also been raised and replastered, only the main timbers being now exhibited. The stone font has been removed from the south aisle to the centre of the belfry archway. This archway, which was formerly blocked up, has now been opened, and adds greatly to the appearance of the Church.

The bells, of which there are five, are now rung from a room above the archway. An opening has also been made in the wall above the archway.

350 new chairs have been provided for the congregation. The backs of these are so made as to form ledges for books, and under them protection for hats is provided.

The clock has been removed from the west front to the north side of the tower and elevated several feet. The face has been re-gilded and re-figured by MR. G. COX,

## Vicar's Churchwarden.

The copings have been repaired, and a new pathway formed of Staffordshire black brick and pebbles made to the entrance on the north side. The old buttresses have been restored and new ones placed at the south and west angles of the Chancel and north transept.

New crosses have been placed at the apices of the roofs of the nave and chancel. A singular feature of the Church is a spout on the top of which is some lead work bearing the date 1767. This leadwork has been replaced as some property was left by the RIDDELL family for the purpose of keeping that spout, and two tombs of the family facing it, in repair. The residue of the income of the property is applied in apprenticing poor boys.

The Church is situated on rising ground and is approached by a high flight of steps. The Liddington stone steps, which had been fixed over 40 years, have now been removed, and they have been replaced by tooled Yorkshire steps.

The Architect was MR. A. HARTSHORNE, of LONDON, Secretary to the Royal Archaeological Society.

The Surveyor was MR. G. EVANS, STRAND, LONDON, and the Contractor was MR. E. BARLOW, of ROTHWELL. The Clerk of the Works was MR. W. SIMPSON, Local.

The Church did not formerly possess an organ, the singing being led by an harmonium. By the generosity of MR. H. BURGESS, the new organ, valued at about £200, has been provided. Mr. Burgess has also contributed £100 to the restoration fund, and assisted in many ways to bring about the satisfactory completion of the work.

About £2,050 of the required sum for payment of the cost of the restoration was subscribed up to Wednesday,

12.

the principal donors being:-

	£
Rev. W. Yates (Rector)	500
The Hon. Mrs. Pery	200
Sir G. Palmer, Bart.	200
Brasenose College, Oxford (Patron)	150
The Copyholders of the Manor	100
Sir W. de Capell Brooke	100
G. L. Watson, Rockingham Castle	100
Rev. L. Palmer	100
Rev. H. J. and Mrs. Bigge	50
T. C. Baring, Esq., M.P.	50

- etc. - "

Section IX. List of Rectors.

Name	<u>Date</u> <u>Instituted</u>	<u>Patrons</u>
Hugh de Patteshull	1239	
Richard Amis	1239	Abbot - Convent Peterboro
Henry de Wengham	1258/9	-do-
Stephen de Sandwico	1258/9	-do-
Abaricus de Fiscamps	1265	-do-
Simon de Cambrays	1265	-do-
Henry de Stretton	1268	-do-
William de Edyngton	1315	-do-
John de Asshby	1321	-do-
John, son of Gilbert de Harwedon	1334	-do-
Alan de Crophull	1350	-do-
Ralph de Crophull	1350	-do-
John Wylliams	1396	John Tyndall and other
Henry Merston	1403	Abbot of Peterboro
John Martyn	1418	-do-
John Fylay	1452	-do-
William Bate	1475	-do-
John Cbyne LLB	1481	-do-

Henry Rudde DD	1486	Abbot of Peterboro
Thomas Rawlyns	1487	-do-
Robert Barnard AM	1501	-do-
John Blaymer	1521	-do-
Anthony Draycottes	1531	Henry VIII
Gilbert Leyborne STP	1560	Queen Elizabeth I
Richard Bancroft	1586	-do-
John Powell STP	1597	
John Owen STP	1624	Hugh Floyd STP
William Beale STP	1624	James I
Richard Ousley	1645	Oliver Cromwell
Jonathan Holled	1660	Charles II
Nathaniel Greenwood STB	1680	Brazenose College
Thomas Meare	1714	-do-
Lekh Brooke MA	1739	-do-
Norman Smith MA	1745	-do-
William Gwyn MA	1768	-do-
Henry Mayer AM	1770	-do-
William Cleaver MA	1780	-do-
James Heape MA	1786	-do-
William Sugden MA	1788	-do-
Thomas Clayton BD	1815	-do-
William Yates MA	1866	-do-
William Millington MA	1900	-do-
Earle Augustus Langston MA	1901	-do-
Alfred Edward Rubie DD	1915	-do-
Gerald W.P. Roberts	1940	-do-
Frederick G. Adams	1963	-do-
Geoffrey E. Ward	1972	-do-

The most famous of Cottingham's Rectors was Richard Bancroft, STP. He was born at Farnworth, Lancs., in 1544, son of John Bancroft Gent and Mary, daughter of John Curwyn, whose brother was Hugh, Archbishop of Dublin. He was educated at Christ's College, Cambridge, and became a Professor of Theology. He was Rector of Cottingham from 1586 to 1597, under the patronage of Queen Elizabeth I. He preached a scathing sermon against Puritanism on 9.2.1589 at Pauls Cross, London,

which brought him into prominence, and he was appointed successively Chaplain to the Vice-Chamberlain Christopher Hatton, and Archbishop John Whitgift, and in 1587 was appointed a member of the High Commission set up to oppose Puritanism. In May 1597 he was consecrated Bishop of London, and in consequence of the advanced age of Whitgift, he was virtually invested with the power of Primate. He was elected to the Primacy in November 1604 and became the Chief Overseer of the Authorized Version of the Bible. He died on 22nd of November 1610 aged 67, and was buried in the Chancel of Lambeth Parish Church.

Richard Bancroft was born at a time of bigotry and violence, when hundreds of sincere men who did not conform with the canons of the counter-reformation episcopacy were burnt as heretics. Whilst he was a child these included Bishops Latimer, Ridley and Hooper and the great reforming Archbishop Cranmer. The body of the conforming Clergy were often so ignorant and illiterate that many who had the responsibility of the cure of souls were incapable of preaching the Gospel, or even reading to the edification of their listeners, being obliged by law only to read the set service and administer the sacrament in person once in every six months. One wonders how Christianity survived. Later Bancroft was at the centre of the Puritan Episcopal controversy -- it is a strange coincidence that both John Knox and Richard Bancroft died at the age of 67. They were both fiery preachers, stubborn, strong willed and zealous.

I think Richard Bancroft was rather an unpopular primate, and a somewhat cruel persecutor of good men who thought differently from him. These satirical lines were written at the time of his death:-

"Here lies his Grace in cold clay clad,  
Who died for want of what he had."

Section X. Plaques, Memorials and Bequests.

On the Tower wall in the Belfry is a large hand-painted board as follows:-

"Will of William Downhall dated 27th Dec. 1670

I give and devise all my Copyhold land in Cottingham-cum-Middleton and Great Oakley called the Frett Meadows, after the decease of my wife, into Thomas Aldwinckle of Cottingham, baker, Bartholomew Bunckley of Cottingham and William Canham of Middleton and their heirs upon trust, the profits thereof to be hereafter disposed to the use of the following; first for the repairing of that part of the Church of Cottingham which shall be over the place or vault where my body shall be interred, and the residue of the profits of the premises to be distributed amongst the poor of Cottingham and Middleton upon every Christmas Day, yearly, and I desire my executors herein after named to see the same performed.

John Aldwinckle  
John A. Aldwinckle."

There is also a Slate Slab in the Belfry:-

"In Memory of John Stretton who died 1810 and Mary his wife who died 1833."

The East Window in stained glass is dedicated to SS Augustine, Peter, Paul and Aidan, and put in in memory of Rev. William Yates, Rector, by his family.

The Stained Glass Window Near the Vestry in the South Aisle was erected in memory of William Millington, MA. Rector of this parish, who died 3rd May, 1901, and his son Hugh, of 18th Battalion L.I.R. who died at Givinchy, France on 17th May, 1915 of wounds

received in action the previous day.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

The Oak Screen Across the Belfry Arch is in Memory of Frances Annie Coles.

The Oak Screen Into the Vestry was erected in 1952 by Polly White in Memory of her husband David White, and her sister Edna Tilley.

The Oak Seat at the back of the Central Aisle is "To the Glory of God and in memory of Harold Adcock, M.R.C.S., L.S.A. 1927.

The Vestry Table - "given to Cottingham Church in loving Memory of Harriett Annie Tilley, 1886 - 1969, by J.B. and D. Tilley."

Chair in Vestry - made and given by Horace W. Buswell, Churchwarden, from ancient roof timbers, 1970.

The Oak Screen Between Choir and Vestries. "To the Memory of Clara Astill, 1954.

Plaque on the Organ. "The Electric Power of this Organ is given in memory of Henry Burgess of Middleton and of Kate Elizabeth, his wife, by their children, 25th June, 1939."

Plaque in Chancel - "Friends gave the Altar carpet and spotlight in memory of Kathleen Stella Whitehead, our Sunday School Superintendent for many years, who died in 1968."

Plaque on Pillar - "The Aisle Carpet was given in 1966, in loving memory of Samuel Spencer Reynolds, 1896 - 1965, who worshipped here for many years."

"From a Bequest, New Hassocks were bought in 1966, in loving memory of William Omar Shrive 1891 - 1965, and his wife Mary 1895 - 1965."

On Plaque in South Aisle - "New seating was given in 1966, in loving memory of Henry Burgess 1879 - 1965, and of his wife Ruth 1882 - 1965. by their Son and Daughter."

Plaque - "In loving Memory of Eleanor Frances Richter 1876 - 1969, whose generous bequest largely restored the South Aisle."

Section XI. Roll of Honour and Processional Cross.

Inscribed on the Processional Cross is:-

"To the Glory of God and in Memory of those who  
from this parish made the Great Sacrifice in the  
War of 1914 - 1919.

Col. E. Ripley  
William Booth  
Joseph Chambers  
William Claypole  
William Coles  
Ernest Crane  
Harry Fisher  
Thomas Goode  
William Inchley  
Roland Ingram  
George Lewin  
Fred Cliver  
John Salinders  
James Simpson  
Leonard Stokes  
William Tansley  
Omar Tilley  
George Timpson  
Edward Towndrow  
Fred Vye  
John Wilden

Added for 1939 - 1945

Fl. Lt. Bertram Tomlinson  
Edward Hurst  
John Campbell  
Charles Cooper

The cross was presented by the Parish Branch of the  
Girls Friendly Society.

EASTER 1919

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M. P. & J. A. York,  
20, Main Street,  
MIDDLETON.