

A Brief History of Chalfont St Peter Parish Church



People have worshipped in this Parish for well over a thousand years and the church continues to be central to the life of the community today.

There has been a variety of buildings on this site. The original church building was small and of wood-frame, wattle and daub construction. As time passed by and the population grew, so the church developed with it. The original building was succeeded by a typical Buckinghamshire Church of chancel, nave, side aisles and west tower built of flint and white chalk stone. The Church is mentioned in documentation from Missenden Abbey dated 1133

Over time the fabric of the building deteriorated and by 1612 it was in a very bad state of repair, an entry in the 1612 Visitation records that there were: "holes in the walls large enough for hogs to pass through to get in", and they probably did! The tower was also reported to be in need of repair. In earlier times it is probable that very few repairs had been done, especially in this case as the Abbeys were notorious in this respect.

We now move into the 18th Century when in the year 1708 high winds and heavy rains swept through the district and much damage was caused by flooding. As already mentioned the church tower was already in need of repair and the wind and the rain had loosened the stones. On the morning of 8th

July the top part of the tower crashed through the nave roof beating down the nave and the aisles. The damage was so extensive that it was determined that the building could not be supported and must be wholly rebuilt.

The re-building was completed in 1714 in a simple and very economical Georgian style in brick with stone dressings. It had a very small chancel, a nave with no aisles and a west tower. It also had a gallery which has since been removed. Only the tower retains its original design.



The Victorian architect George Street had the Georgian windows removed in 1854 and replaced with tracery windows when the chancel was rebuilt and enlarged; also a south chapel was added and a sham hammer-beam roof was substituted for the plaster ceiling in the nave.



The present nave and tower have kept their original appearance. A great deal of work was carried out on the Church in the 20th Century. The seating was replaced and the nave roof and floor and chancel roof and tower were repaired, achieved by major fundraising and public subscription.

In the 21st Century, the Church was refurbished and the Lady Chapel re-ordered. A new welcoming area, Choir vestry and

toilet were created in the west and floodlighting installed in the Churchyard.



In the autumn of 2012 with the authority of the Archdeacon the office was moved into the church on a trial basis. This has enabled the church to be open every week day morning for visitors.

A more in-depth history of St Peter's Church is available from the Church Office at a cost of £2.00.

