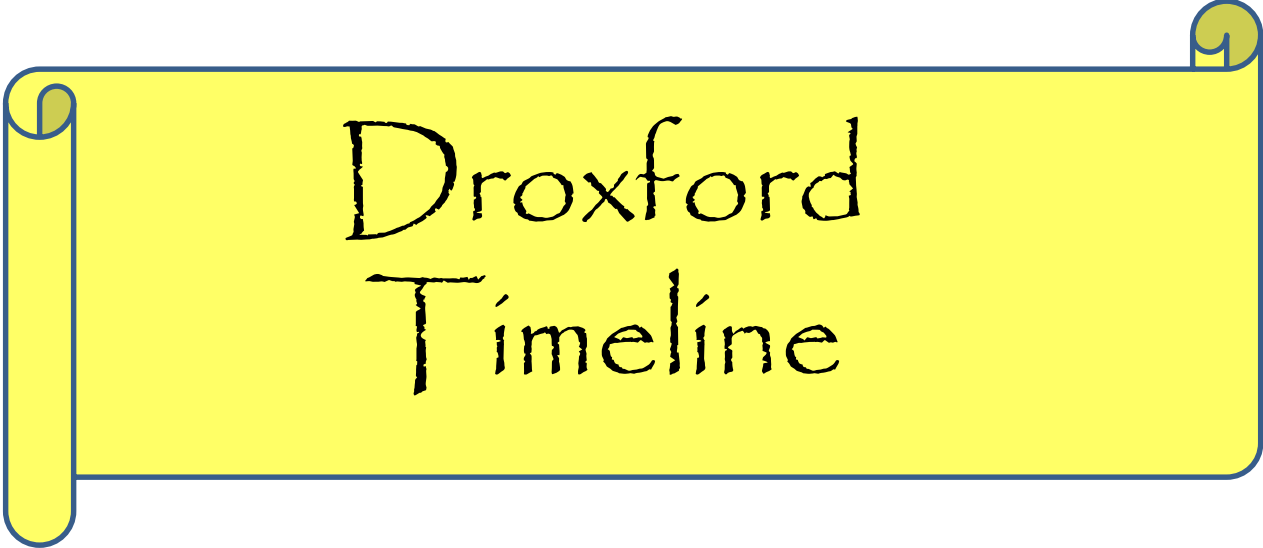


Droxford Timeline

Author: Michael Collins

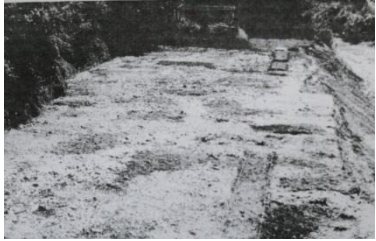
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Droxford
Timeline

Anglo-Saxon Droxford



(Photo: Mr K. Ward)

The earliest evidence of Anglo-Saxon Droxford is the cemetery near the disused railway line, which might have contained up to 300 burials, dating from about 450 to 600.



St Wilfrid, depicted in the east window of the Lady Chapel, may have established a religious community at Droxford during his mission to the Meon Valley in 681 to 686, but no evidence of this has yet been identified.

Following the Anglo - Saxon invasions of Britain from the late 5th century, Jutish people inhabited Kent, the Isle of Wight, and the mainland opposite, where they established the kingdom of the Meonwara. The first historical record of Droxford itself is not until 826, when the Manor of Droccenesford was granted by King Egbert to the Prior and Monks of the Old Monastery at Winchester. This charter set out boundaries, including the present parishes of Swanmore and Shedfield, which largely coincided with those of the parish of Droxford until the late 19th century.

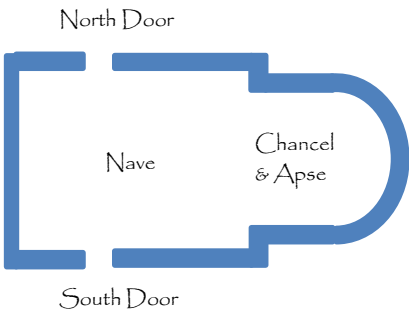
The Domesday Book of 1086 describes Droxford just after the end of the Anglo-Saxon period:

‘The Bishop of Winchester holds Drocheneford for his Monks, and it was always churchland. It was assessed in the time of King Edward at 16 hides and now at 14 hides. Here are 16 ploughlands, 2 in demesne, and 32 villeins and 13 borderers with 14 ploughlands; also 6 servants, a church of the value of 20s., two mills worth 15s. 2d.; the profit of the soil 12s. 10 acres of meadow, and woods for the pannage of 40 hogs. The value in the time of King Edward was, and is now £26, and when it came into possession £20.’

Egbert (802 - 839)

Edward the Confessor (1042 - 1066)

Norman Droxford



The original Norman church at Droxford may have consisted of a nave and chancel, with a semi-circular apse at the east end.



Segments of the original windows can be seen above the south arch of the chancel.



After the invasion of 1066, the Normans displaced the elite of English society, and replaced the Old English language with Latin and Anglo-Norman, but took over some of the existing systems of government, and most English place names survived. In a small village such as Droxford everyday life would have changed fairly slowly, but times could be hard for ordinary people. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that 1086 was 'a very heavy and toilsome year in England through plague of cattle, and corn and fruits were at a stand, and so great unpropitiousness in weather as no-one can easily think'.

The chancel arch, with its zigzag carving, dates from about 1150. It was raised by about four feet during the 19th century.



The font is from the 20th century, but to a 12th century Norman design.



The north and south Norman doorways are carved with zigzags, tooth moulding, and beaded cable moulding.



William the Conqueror (1066 – 1087)

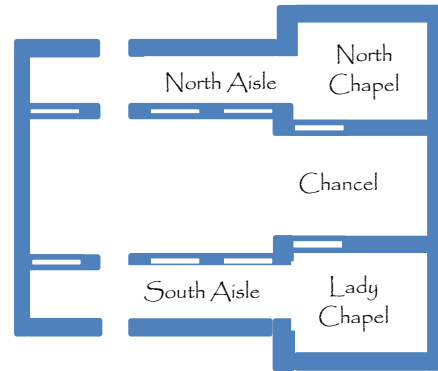
William II (1087 – 1100)

Henry I (1100 – 1135)

Stephen (1135 – 1154)

Plantagenet Droxford

From the end of the 12th century aisles and chapels were built, and the Norman walls pierced with arches. The chapels were enlarged by the early 14th century, and the apse removed, leaving a rectangular chancel.



To the left of the altar of the Lady Chapel is a stone niche, dating from the late 14th century. It would have contained a statue, probably of the Virgin Mary.



A letter of 1231 from the Pope to Master Peter Rusciniol of Drochoneford is the first reference to a Rector of the parish. Four years later Master Rusciniol appointed a vicar in his place, being too busy to reside in the parish himself. In 1284 ownership of the manor of Droxford passed from the Prior of St Swithun at Winchester to the Bishop of Winchester. When the Black Death reached England in 1348, Droxford endured its share of suffering, the sales of corn declining from £15-20 per annum to only £6 in the year 1349 due to the decline in population.

The Lady Chapel was consecrated by John de Drokensford in 1316. Son of a local squire, he became Keeper of the King's Wardrobe to Edward I, Chancellor of the Exchequer to Edward II, and Bishop of Bath & Wells. The recumbent figure of a woman to the left of the altar may have been part of a memorial erected by him to his mother. It was probably removed from the church at the time of the Puritans, but was found in a nearby field in the 19th century and restored to the church.



Henry II (1154 - 1189) Richard I (1189 - 1199) John (1199 - 1216) Henry III (1216 - 1272) Edward I (1272 - 1307)
Edward II (1307 - 1327) Edward III (1327 - 1377) Richard II (1377 - 1399)

15th Century Droxford

Canon John Vaughan, Rector of Droxford from 1902 to 1909, carried out a major programme of restoration in the church, resulting in the re-discovery of many medieval features, including a number of pre-Reformation piscinae, which were used for washing communion vessels.



There are four medieval mass dials on the south side of the church, used to indicate the time of services. Two of them are on the jambs of the south doorway.

Some of the villagers may have been caught up in turbulence of the Wars of the Roses between the houses of York and Lancaster during the 15th century, but other aspects of medieval life in Droxford would have gone on as normal. It is recorded that 'in 1467 John Bolblelydde, carpenter, erected within the curtilage of the Manor there one new wooden garner measuring 16 feet in length by 14 feet in width, and was paid for this 53s 4d (£2.67). John Carter tiled it with slates for 6d (2½ p) and 12d (5p) was paid for its two iron cross-hinge locks and a key to its great door.'

The stonework of the east window of the chancel is in the Perpendicular style prevalent in English churches at this time.



The arch from the Lady Chapel into the south aisle dates from the late 15th century, when the aisles were widened.



Henry IV (1399 - 1413) Henry V (1413 - 1422) Henry VI (1422 - 1461) Edward IV (1461 - 1470) Henry VI (1470 - 1471)
Edward IV (1471 - 1483) Edward V (1483) Richard III (1483 - 1485)

Tudor & Reformation Droxford



The north pillar of the arch between the Lady Chapel and the south aisle has extensive graffiti. Some of this may date from Tudor times.



Up to the time of the Reformation, an opening above the pulpit gave access to a medieval rood loft.

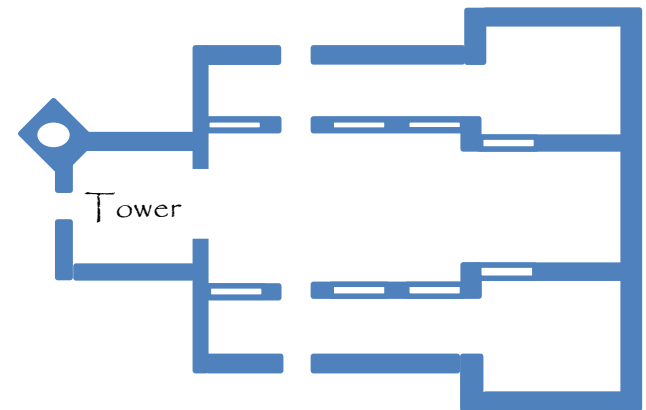


The windows of the aisles are from the late 15th or early 16th centuries.

The Reformation during the 16th century would have had a dramatic effect on the appearance and the rituals of St Mary & All Saints. The break with Rome established Henry VIII as Supreme Head of the Church of England, and brought in English versions of the Bible. During the reign of Edward VI the Book of Common Prayer appeared. The rood screen and loft would have been removed, images of the Virgin Mary destroyed, and wall paintings hidden under a coat of whitewash. Many of the traditional events of the church year that had marked out the calendar of rural life disappeared.



Above the west door is a plaque with the date AD1599. This probably refers to the construction of the present tower, although evidence suggests that there was not a west entrance here until 1789. The original stonework indicates that there may have been a window in this location before then.



Stuart & Puritan Droxford



The oldest bells now in the tower are a treble of 1606, a second from 1631 that was recast in 1899, and a third and a tenor from 1672.



The oak Jacobean altar rails were installed by Dr Preston after his reinstatement as Rector in 1660 following the Puritan interregnum, during which he had been replaced by an Independent minister.

The first church registers began in 1633. In 1642 civil war broke out between Charles I and the Parliamentarians. By March 1647 the manor of Droxford had been taken from the Bishop of Winchester by Parliament and sold to a layman, Mr Francis Allen, for £7675. It was not returned to the bishop until the restoration of Charles II in 1660. A religious census of those over 16 years of age in the whole parish taken in 1676 showed there to be 345 conforming to the Church of England, two Papists, and 20 Non-Conformists.



In 1676 Anne, daughter of the famous angler Isaak Walton, who had published *The Compleat Angler* twenty-three years earlier, was married to Dr William Hawkins, Rector of Droxford. Isaak Walton would have spent some of the remaining years of his life at the Old Rectory, and fishing in the Meon.



Near the font are three Latin memorials to members of the Morley family, who lived at the Manor House.

James I (1603 – 1625) Charles I (1625 – 1649) Interregnum (1649 – 1660) Charles II (1660 – 1685) James II (1685 – 1688)
William III (1689 – 1702) & Mary (1689 – 1694) Anne (1702 – 1714)

Georgian & Victorian Droxford



The roof of the chancel was re-built in Georgian times with projecting eaves. The ceiling of the nave would have been remodelled at the same time, with its distinctive plaster cornice.



A circular slate memorial on the south wall of the Lady Chapel commemorates Lewis Stephens, Rector of Droxford from 1722 to 1746, who founded the parish library, which is now held in the Southampton University library.

Wars against the French during the Georgian period would have had an impact on Droxford, with the strategic naval base of Portsmouth not many miles away. Legend has it that Nelson himself stayed at Fir Hill, then belonging to the Hamilton family. The agricultural revolution ongoing throughout this period resulted in an increase in production, but a workhouse built in the village in 1837 for 200 inmates is a reminder of the widespread poverty in rural areas at the time. A National School for 96 pupils was established in 1835 in what is now the Village Hall.

A photograph from the early 1900's shows the church as it was during the second half of the 19th century. There are more pews, and a painted script runs round the chancel arch. The church was very evangelical at the time.



The pulpit is a 19th century copy of a 15th century design, given to Droxford by St Matthew's, Denmark Hill where Stephen Bridge, Rector of Droxford from 1868 - 1886, had previously been minister.



George I (1714 - 1727) George II (1727 - 1760) George III (1760 - 1820) George IV (1820 - 1830) William IV (1830 - 1837)
Victoria (1837 - 1901)

20th Century Droxford



The stained glass in the east window of the chancel was installed as a memorial to members of the Hulbert family after the window suffered bomb damage during the Second World War, and includes a striking representation of the Annunciation.



The oak screen leading to the north chapel was designed by the eminent architect Sir Charles Nicholson when he was working on designs for Portsmouth Cathedral in 1935.

The railway came to Droxford in 1903. Shops and local industries were more prevalent in the first half of the 20th century than they are now, and the school moved to its present site in 1929. Droxford Boy Scouts started in 1908, and Droxford Guides in 1918. Droxford was at the centre of world affairs in the days leading up to the invasion of Normandy on 6th June 1944, when Winston Churchill and other allied leaders were based in a railway carriage at Droxford Station for four days so as to be close to General Eisenhower and the other military leaders nearby at Southwick. The railway closed in 1955.

A plaque on the south wall of the Lady Chapel is dedicated to Neville Lovett, first Bishop of Portsmouth, who retired to Droxford in 1946. Droxford became part of the Diocese of Portsmouth in 1927.



The most recent additions to the fabric of the church are the stained glass windows in the NW and SW corners. The latter, installed to mark the Millennium in 2000, shows Noah's Ark in the Flood.

