



Follow the footsteps of the Pilgrim Fathers



The Pilgrim Fathers UK Origins Association

Pilgrim Country Tour

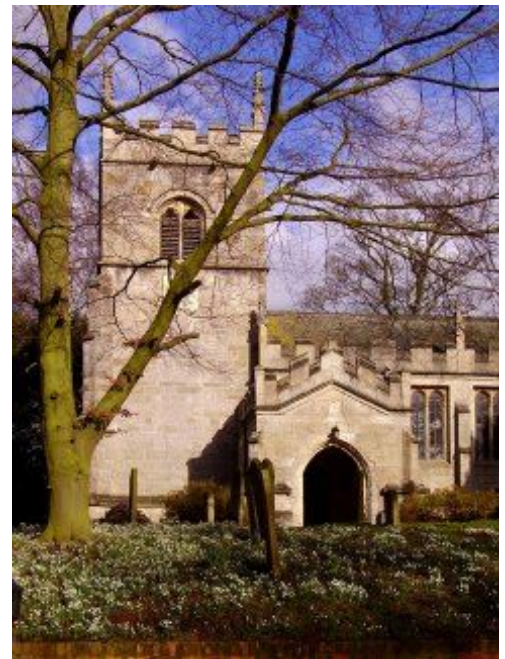
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My tour started at Babworth All Saints Church.

Since 1586 Richard Clifton's sermons here had stirred the community. Young William Bradford, from Austerfield, walked several miles on Sundays to hear Clifton preach. In 1605 Clifton was dismissed for refusing to submit to the demands that clergy observe strict conformity with the Anglican Book of Common Prayer and also that ministers wear the new white over-robe called a surplice. Such ritualism was considered a remnant of Catholic superstition by those who thought it necessary to "purify" the Anglican church. ('Popish trash' was Bradford's dismissive phrase.)

Clifton came from a family that had been prominent, locally, since the 11th-century. Cliftons were lords of the manors of Wilford and Clifton, and rectors of Clifton at various times up to the 16th-century. One had even been sheriff of Nottingham and Derby, although not at the time of Robin Hood.

Richard Clifton enjoyed local support when he defied the orders of both bishop and king. With the help of William Brewster, who lived at Scrooby Manor, Clifton became the pastor of a secret, break-away congregation. But his former parishioners did not all join him. Here and at Scrooby, those who had separated from the official church found themselves 'hunted and persecuted on every side'.



Babworth All Saints Church

Pilgrim COUNTRY

where the leaders of the Pilgrim Fathers originated

Contact the Association



Graves surround the church, where in early times local notables were buried under the floor inside the church. Bones were discovered in a vault under the north aisle at Babworth in 1951.

Dating mostly from the 15th-century, Babworth church contains several 18th-century memorials, besides 19th-century stained glass.

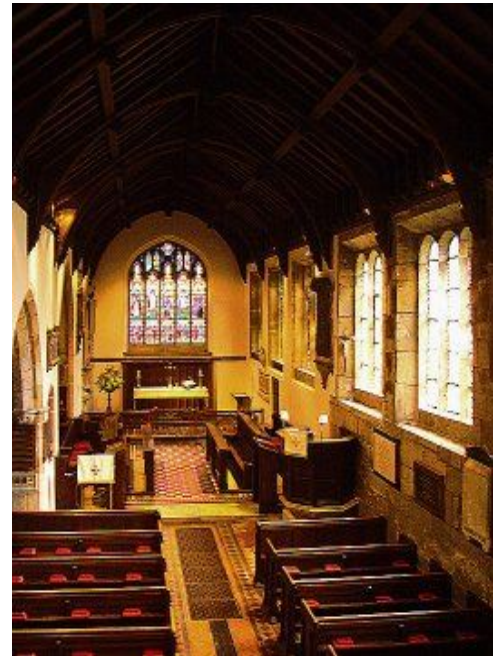
The double arches at the beginning of the chancel imply that there may still have been a choir screen here in Clifton's time, separating the priest from the people. Clifton came to believe in a non-hierarchical congregational structure.

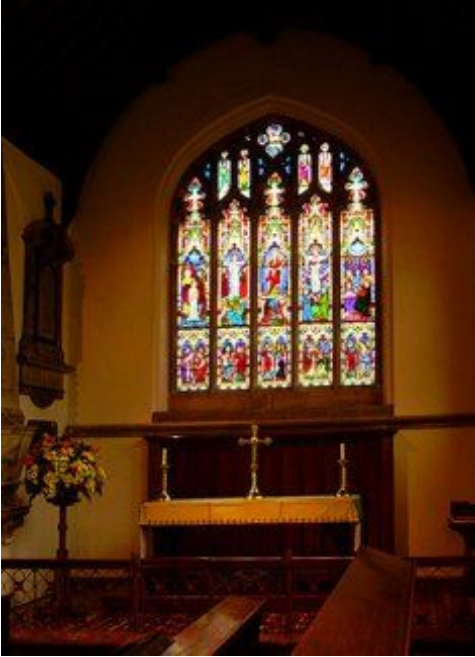
In the north isle, there's a painting of parishioners on their way to church, painted by a resident with time on his hands at nearby Ranby prison

In the early 20th-century Babworth maintained its connections with American heritage when the rector was Frank Wilberforce who was the great grandson of William Wilberforce who led the campaign to abolish slavery

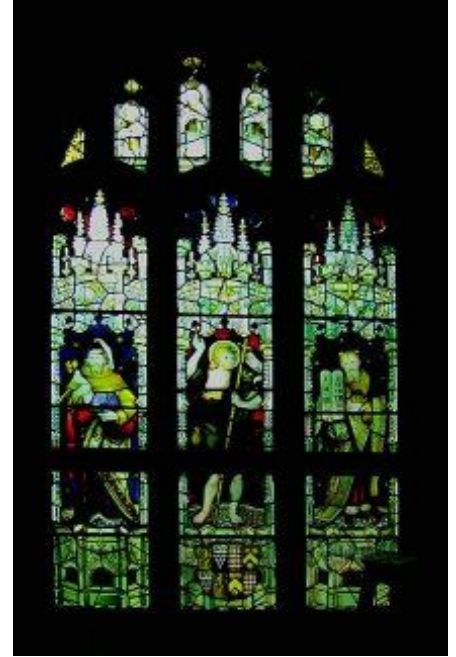


The chalice that Richard Clifton used for communion services was hidden among the bones, probably to save it from being melted down at the time of the English Civil War in the mid-17th century





The east window contains neo-gothic stained glass that looks like the work of John Hardiman, who worked from patterns by the architect and designer Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, a leader in the Gothic revival.



Under the tower at the opposite end of the church is a window (1895) by Charles Earner Kempe



A church mouse crawls along the communion rail at Babworth - the well known symbol of Yorkshire craftsman Robert Thompson. Look around there may be more.



From a corbel in the nave arches, a 15th century face looks down on the shifting patterns of history.

Outside Babworth Church one can still follow the path William Bradford took to get here from his home in Austerfield

