The impact of the Georgians, Victorians and Edwardians on early parish churches

CITY OF BRIGHTON AND HOVE c. 1680–1914

By Sue Berry

In 1680, there were 12 medieval churches with parishes now wholly or partly within the boundaries of the City of Brighton and Hove. The parishes were Aldrington, Brighton, Falmer, Hangleton, Hove, Ovingdean, Patcham, Portslade, Preston, Rottingdean, Stanmer and West Blatchington (Fig. 1). The Georgians improved the condition of the ten churches that were in use in the early 18th century by undertaking modest repairs. They also added galleries and pews to some. From the mid 1830s the Victorians were far more radical. They re-ordered and extended four of these churches, heavily restored two without enlarging them, demolished and rebuilt four, and resurrected both the churches that had become ruins before 1680. The Victorians also removed much of the work undertaken by the Georgians. Further research will help us to understand the history of our medieval churches in Sussex during these periods, and clarify whether the range of approaches towards the care of churches found here is typical or not.

GEORGIAN ATTITUDES TO WORSHIP AND CHURCHES

By the 1680s, the typical Anglican church service was simple, and its focus was on the sermon and not on ritual at the modest altar or communion table in the chancel, where it was normally railed off. The chancel was not important, and might accommodate the pew of the patron of the church, although none was so located in the dozen churches studied in this paper.¹

This form of service affected the internal ordering (lay-out of pews and other furnishings) of churches. Georgians expected a long sermon from the prominent pulpit. In some churches, a large reading desk was used to conduct the service. The

Fig. 1. Map of the ancient parishes.
need for comfort during the long sermon resulted in the development of box pews in the nave and aisles, rented by families and individuals. When the congregation increased, galleries were added rather than extra aisles, and box pews were built on those too. The stairs to the galleries often went up the outside of the church so that they did not take up precious space inside. Local evidence suggests that some of the doorways into the church at the top of the staircases were simply former windows which were elongated. Rented pews gave a church income and few free seats were available for poorer worshippers. This made the parish church the domain of the better-off residents of the parish. All parishioners (including dissenters) with the means to do so were liable to pay church rate for the upkeep of all parts of the church other than the chancel, for which the owner of the rectorial land or the great tithe was responsible.

The evidence from two visitation forms is the starting point for the study of these churches (Table 1). A visitation was an inspection of a diocese undertaken on behalf of the bishop to inform him about the state of it. The bishop decided what the scope of the enquiries to the incumbent, churchwardens and sidesmen would be. These visitations were undertaken just after the appointment of the respective bishops of Chichester. They give a good impression of the state of most of the churches around the start of the Georgian period.

By 1686, ten of the churches in this study were in need of extensive repairs, and Aldrington and West Blatchington churches were ruins (Table 1). In 1724, the condition of the ten in use had improved, and most of these were maintained thereafter. In 1817, the rural deans of Sussex considered the upkeep of most of the county’s churches to be from adequate to good. The care of churches elsewhere had also improved; for example, by the later 18th century most medieval churches in use in Leicestershire and Rutland were kept well.

**GEORGIAN WORK ON THE CHURCHES**

The following survey of the condition of the churches during the Georgian period is presented parish by parish. It begins with the four churches in Brighton, Rottingdean, Patcham and Portslade. These were the most populous parishes, where the upkeep fell on groups of parishioners rather than individuals. Although Brighton was a poor town during the early 18th century, the parish tried to maintain St Nicholas of Myra. After storms in 1705 and 1706, damaged lead on the church roof was re-laid. In 1736, the churchwardens paid Joshua Kipling, a bell-founder, to recast the ‘Great Bell’.

In about 1740, the demand for pews may have risen, for the west gallery was inserted in the nave and box pews built on it. Access to the gallery was by steps from the churchyard. The owners had to agree to maintain their pews, some of which were quite substantial. Richard Tidy’s pew measured seven feet by five feet and stood at the northeast end of the gallery, opposite the east door to the church.

From the 1750s Brighton’s fortunes revived as visitors stayed to sea bathe and, as the population rose, the demand for pews increased. Drawings and prints show that by the 1780s St Nicholas had galleries on the south side of the nave. Windows were lengthened to make doors, and dormer windows were added to light the galleries (Fig. 2). Inside, box pews crowded the nave, dominated by a large pulpit (Fig. 3). During the 1850s, this church lost most of its Georgian work because it was virtually rebuilt.

In 1677 and 1686, St Margaret’s, Rottingdean needed major repairs, but by 1724 the building’s condition was far better (Table 1). In 1713, the churchwardens compiled a systematic list of the occupants of the many box pews to keep track of changes in ownership so that they could collect the pew rents, because owners treated them as personal possessions and sold or exchanged them. In 1773, William Ridge agreed to exchange his family’s pew, which he had built on the south side of the belfry, with Nathaniel and Stenning Beard of Balsdean Farm for theirs, the third in the north aisle.

By the 1750s, Rottingdean attracted visitors to sea bathe. The bathing machines stood on the beach beside the steep slope that gives access to the shore today. Wealthy local landowners such as the Gages of Firle and the Trevors of Glynde stayed there to bathe instead of going to Brighton. In 1759, there was sufficient demand for pews for local people to pay by subscription for a new gallery and a new window with which to light it. In spite of the modest prosperity of the parish in the later 18th century, the vestry was very cautious with money, and so when the church bells needed replacing in 1791 Charles Rudhall, a bell-founder who worked...
in Brighton, took all three of the old bells, two of which were broken, and in return made only one bell, big enough to be heard all over the village, and accepted the others as payment. Prints of the church in the mid 1790s and about 1800 suggest that the building was then in reasonably good repair. A round window in the west front and at least one large rectangular window in the east front were amongst the features present then and lost in the 1850s when George Gilbert Scott restored and enlarged the building.9

In 1808, the church ratepayers of Rottingdean agreed to pay by subscription for enlarging the gallery at the west end of the church and to permit additional pews in the nave, but nothing happened. When the church needed repairing in

Table 1. Visitations 1686 and 1724 – transcript of observations on upkeep only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish and church</th>
<th>Bishop Lake's visitation 1686</th>
<th>Bishop Bowers' survey 1724</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aldrington, St Leonard</td>
<td>Ruined and no-one living in the parish.</td>
<td>Only part of the old ruins left. No church or chancel. No-one living in parish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighton, St Nicholas</td>
<td></td>
<td>Church in good repair inside and out. So are the steeple and five bells. Both chancels in good repair. North chancel needs whitewash, Mr Moses' responsibility. South Chancel too, duty of parishioners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falmer, St Laurence</td>
<td>Roof needs repair, walls need plastering, floors want paving, some holes and cracks in the walls, communion table needs repair.</td>
<td>Windows darken the church due to their condition, exterior of walls in poor condition, healing by the Steeple in poor condition, pavement very poor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hangleton, St Helen</td>
<td>Defective</td>
<td>Exterior pretty good but inside needs whitewashing, never had a bell in the Steeple, communion table needs rails. Chancel roof needs some repairs and is the rector's responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hove, St Andrew</td>
<td>Church porch roof fallen, church needs repairs. Church Steeple and floors decayed, bell cracked.</td>
<td>Hove is united with Preston. The church is in tolerable order but the top of the Steeple is not, and only one of the two bells can be used. Hove does not have a chancel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ovingdean, St Wulfran</td>
<td>West end of church unpaved, seats, windows, north door need repair. Steeple floor ruined, bell not hung and plastering needed.</td>
<td>The church is adequately cared for. The Steeple is sound but the bell lies without its clapper in a house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patcham, All Saints</td>
<td>Pavements of church and chancel decayed, Steeple cracked and so is the biggest bell. North door rotten.</td>
<td>Church is well kept, one of the three bells is cracked. The chancel is sound but some of the ceiling and walls need whitewashing. Lady Dowager Abbergavenny is the impropriator and responsible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portslade, St Nicholas</td>
<td>Church and chancel need liming and repairs.</td>
<td>Church is in good repair inside and out, Steeple and the three bells too. Chancel is kept in good repair by the impropriator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston, St Peter</td>
<td>Roof needs repair, floor needs paving, chancel needs liming and glazing, church needs plastering.</td>
<td>Preston and Hove united. Preston church is in good repair except the pavement needs attention. The Steeple and the three bells are in good order. The Chancel is in good order, the impropriator Mr Tredcraft of Horsham is responsible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rottingdean, St Margaret</td>
<td>Pavement decayed, windows of church and chancel need mending, some seats too. Plastering needed to church and chancel. Steeple floor decayed and cross lost from top. Font needs repair and is missing cover.</td>
<td>Church very sound, so are the Steeple and the three bells. The chancel is also in good order and is repaired by the Vicar. Sir Richard Morley endowed the vicarage with the great tithes of the parish except Balsdean. Balsdean is an old chapel and yard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanmer, dedication unknown</td>
<td>Controlled by Archbishop of Canterbury, not included.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Blatchington, St Peter</td>
<td>Church and chancel ruined.</td>
<td>Combined with Brighton. Rectory empty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig. 2. Exterior of St Nicholas’s, Brighton before Carpenter’s rebuild. By F. Earp, dated 1845. Shows the west door in the tower and dormer windows to light the galleries. Sussex Archaeological Society (hereafter SAS) LEWSA:VR11.

Fig. 3. Box pews inside St Nicholas’s by W. T. Quartermain, 1840. SAS Collection.
1818, the gallery project was completed, too. For £414, Charles Allwork (a local builder) completed a considerable amount of work. He bought four ‘iron posts’ to support the widening of the west gallery and added extra pews under the gallery, a new pulpit and desk, and a new outside staircase for the gallery, and did some ‘flintwork’. The west door became the main entrance after Allwork had repaired it and added a porch. He stopped up the south door, brought the communion table forward and filled in the arch over it. When he had completed the changes, Allwork painted the new gallery and both old and new pews. Owners of pews then agreed that they would accept re-organisation of where they sat by the Revd Thomas Hooker (who subscribed over a quarter of the cost of the work on the church) and the two churchwardens, and that the rural dean would be the final arbiter in any disputes. The west end gallery has survived, and visitors to the church still walk past the iron posts installed by Allwork as they enter the nave from the west door.

By the late 17th century, the ceiling, steeple and walls of All Saints in Patcham needed repair. In 1724, the condition of the church had improved (Table 1). During the 18th century repairs included lead glazing, new bell ropes and in 1734 some work on the fabric which used sand and lime and lead. The church had a gallery on the south side of the nave before 1721 when Henry Farncomb had his use of two seats there confirmed (Fig. 4). In 1801, William Roe planted a yew at the west end of the church to celebrate the arrival in London of the ‘preliminaries of peace’. Roe wrote in his memorandum book:

Oct. 10. I planted a Yew Tree (there being none there before) in Patcham Church Yard. I moved it there from my Hogg Croft Plantation. It was planted on the West Side of the Church behind the Belfry by myself, an old man living at Withdean named John Lindfield and a Gardner living at Brighton named Thomas Ellis. It measured when planted five feet two inches from the Ground.

In 1825, All Saints was visited by Sir Stephen Glynne, a keen antiquarian who was very interested in early churches. Glynne noted that the interior with its new pews was neat, ancient but unremarkable; he also thought that the new stucco on the exterior was unattractive. The Revd Arthur Hussey also disliked the stucco when he visited the church in 1852.

In 1719 a new gallery for the choir of St Nicholas’s in Portslade was paid for by subscriptions.
1788, the parish contained 33 houses occupied by about 200 residents who looked after the church well, even though services were only on alternate Sundays. Sir Stephen Glynne remarked in 1826 that it was larger than many of the neighbouring churches, very well kept and with some good Early English work. By then the interior was full of box pews and galleries (Fig. 5).

The churches of all the remaining parishes depended on the goodwill of the local landowners or their tenant farmers, for they had either tiny populations or, in the case of Aldrington, no-one resident.

Although the evidence does not survive to prove this, Nathaniel Kemp who built Ovingdean Hall in 1792–3 probably maintained St Wulfran’s in Ovingdean from the 1790s, although bills paid by him survive only from the 1820s. He was very interested in church affairs and owned St James’s Chapel in Brighton, where, for a while, his controversial nephew Thomas Read Kemp preached. In 1825 part of the interior of St Wulfran’s was whitewashed. In 1826 Charles Allwork (the builder who worked at St Margaret’s in Rottingdean) repaired the floor and the gates and made and hung a new church door. Some repairs to the roof and to the exterior were done in 1826 and 1828.

The church of St Laurence at Falmer, and the church at Stanmer (for which the dedication is
were also dependent on the goodwill of their landowners. The population of both parishes was small throughout this period. By 1732, Thomas Pelham of Stanmer Place owned a substantial part of the parish of Stanmer. He probably contributed to the reroofing of Stanmer church in 1732 by James Daw (mason) and John Fuller (carpenter) of Lewes (Fig. 6). Thomas Pelham continued to buy land in the parish and in 1758 owned everything other than a small cottage, the parsonage and 18 acres of glebe when, in spite of the small number of worshippers, the Revd Edward Bland held two church services on Sundays. In 1788, the village had 14 houses and 12 cottages as well as Stanmer House and the parsonage. The rector, George Metcalfe, held only one service, on Sunday and with a sermon. In 1801, Thomas Pelham II, the first Earl of Chichester, paid for the church to be re-roofed and re-pewed and for a new ceiling. The population remained small. In 1807 Thomas Baker, the rector, thought that there were only 15 houses in the parish, for whom he held one service on Sundays.

The chancel of St Laurence at Falmer had fallen down in the 1550s when the east wall of the nave was built to keep the church in use. The building deteriorated so much that the parish rebuilt it in 1815. The vestry borrowed £300 towards the cost from the Earl of Chichester, who owned land in the parish, and he also subscribed to the work (Fig. 7).

By the early 1700s the population of the parish of Hangleton consisted of five families, of which the largest were Quakers. Neither the landowners of the two farms nor their tenants were interested in the church. St Helen’s deteriorated from 1724, and by 1825 the tower had lost its roof, floors and bells, the pews needed maintenance, and the whole of the interior was ‘ill kept’.

By 1686, St Andrew’s in Hove needed substantial repairs, but the little hamlet of Hove lacked a wealthy resident interested in the church (Table 1). By 1792 only about a third of the tower stood and the chancel had fallen down; the profile of its roofline on the east end of the nave is discernible on several prints and drawings (Fig. 8). The east wall of the nave was patched up to keep the church in use. The porch was repaired about 1800, but by then the remains of the tower had fallen down. Before 1818, a small timber bell tower stood on the west end of the nave. In 1830, the author of a guidebook for Brighton remarked: ‘Hove church is a choice morsel for the antiquary, but modern improvements have given to it a rather curious appearance’.

Fig. 6. Stanmer by Henry Petrie, undated. SAS Sharpe Collection 307a.
Fig. 7. Falmer by Henry Petrie, undated. SAS Sharpe Collection 130.

Fig. 8. Old St Andrew's, Hove by Henry Petrie, 1802. SAS Sharpe Collection 177.
Well before 1700, two medieval churches were ruins. Close to the sea, St Leonard’s in Aldrington was a ruin in 1686 when the parish had been uninhabited for at least a century. In 1767, Lambert of Lewes produced a watercolour of the substantial part of the tower and the east end, which then remained (Fig. 9). A print in the Gentleman’s Magazine in 1792 was but one of several which record the decline of this church.28

The little church of St Peter’s in West Blatchington was disused by 1556 because generations of the Scrase family had argued that the parish had so few inhabitants that the building was redundant. By 1700, it was a roofless ruin and it remained so until the 1890s (Fig. 10).29

Nothing about the care of St Peter’s at Preston before 1830 has been found. A watercolour in the Sharpe Collection in the ownership of the Sussex Archaeological Society shows the building before the Victorian north porch and the southern vestry disguised the fact that the respective doorways are directly in line across the nave of the church, a feature of the medieval building that has also survived at Hangleton and Ovingdean. The only evidence that the church had box pews during the Georgian period is in a print of about 1850 by Nibbs.30

VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN RESTORATIONS c. 1830–1914

VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN RITUAL AND ITS INFLUENCE

Churches were re-ordered before 1830 to ensure that the altar was visible to the congregation by placing the pulpit and reading desk to the north and south sides of the chancel. These changes became more common when the Incorporated Church Building Society and the Church Commissioners, both of which were established by an Act of Parliament in 1818, made clear that they disapproved of...
pulpits which blocked the congregation’s view of the chancel. From 1839, the Cambridge Camden Society (which became the Ecclesiological Society) campaigned effectively to influence both architects’ and incumbents’ decisions about restoration and alterations to old churches, and the choice of style and architecture for new ones. This group of enthusiasts also encouraged the return of the chancel as the focus of a church.31

Between 1830 and 1914, every medieval church now within the City was either substantially altered or rebuilt; most of the work was paid for by subscriptions from parishioners. The scale of the work made a professional approach essential, and from the 1830s most vestries or patrons conducted major works by appointing an architect, who advertised the building work for tenders, recommended which tender to choose and appointed a clerk of works.

The Victorian enthusiasm for restoration resulted in the loss of early fabric. Some churches in Sussex were so pared back in the search for Gothic work that little of the earlier fabric remained. For example, at St Margaret’s, Angmering, S. S. Teulon left the old tower, some of the internal arcades and the wall of the chancel.32 Drawings by W. T. Quatermain, of which Fig. 11 is an example, show that R. C. Carpenter (a great supporter of the ideas of the Ecclesiological Society) employed, with the approval of the vicar, the Revd Henry Wagner, a similar approach to St Nicholas at Brighton. During the 1860s, G. M. Hills claimed to have improved the rude Elizabethan chancel and undertaken other enhancements of St Andrew’s Church in Steyning, but he destroyed early fabric. Local opposition to such alterations was rare. In 1869 The Builder (a national journal) described the Sussex Archaeological Society as more interested in outings and dinners than in saving these rare buildings from such damage.33 By the late 1800s, the approach to church restoration was more scholarly, which is reflected in the work on Aldrington and West Blatchington churches and in the decision not to extend Preston church.

**VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN WORK ON THE CHURCHES 1830–1914**

The populations of Brighton, Hove, Patcham, Portslade, Preston and Rottingdean increased during this period. Vestries in these urban and
suburban parishes managed to raise most of the money they needed by subscriptions. The churches in small rural communities or empty parishes still depended mainly on the interest of the landowners and major tenants.

The rebuilding of three churches during the 1830s at Hove, Stanmer and Falmer predated the impact of ecclesiology. However, they do reflect the desire to return to early architectural forms in preference to the classical style used at Glynde (East Sussex) in the 1760s and for chapels of ease in Brighton and Hove between 1800 and 1840.34

Hove church was rebuilt by prosperous residents, mainly of the suburb of Brunswick Town on the eastern side of the parish. The major landowner rebuilt Stanmer and Falmer churches.

In 1833, the vicar and the vestry decided to rebuild St Andrew’s, Hove with all its seats free. They wanted a cheap church, and appointed George Basevi, whose parents owned a house in Brunswick Town, to design it. Basevi’s father offered to pay his fees. Due to the tight budget, the vestry agreed that the pews would not be painted. The parish also refused to pay for work on the chancel. That was the responsibility of Mr William Stanford of Preston Manor, a substantial landowner in Hove. After much negotiation, the final plan was agreed in April 1833, when Basevi estimated the cost of the new church as £2185.35

In June 1834, Robert Upperton of Brunswick Town (which was in the south-eastern corner of the parish and some distance from the old church) published his objections to the rebuilding of the church on its old site in a circular to the parishioners of Hove. He thought that the building was poorly located because only about 200 residents lived at the west end of the parish near the church, but about 2300 lived in and around Brunswick Town.
There the chapel of ease (also called St Andrew's) had only 200 free sittings. Upperton questioned whether most parishioners from Brunswick Town would bother attending the old church because of the inconvenience arising from the lack of a direct route to it; they had to travel west along the coast to Hove Street and then turn inland to reach it.36

Upperton also took a strong interest in how the money was to be raised. Three-quarters of the sum was raised by subscription to which residents of Brunswick Town contributed. In 1834, he criticised the St Andrew's Building Committee for not managing to raise more by subscription, and pressed for more information about how the balance of the cost of the church was to be paid. When the vestry advertised for loans, Samuel Preston Child, of Clapton in Middlesex, lent £546 5s., a quarter of the sum needed to rebuild the church, to be repaid with interest at 5%. In a meeting of all payers of church rate, the vestry agreed to repay a 20th each year until this debt was cleared, the cost to be met from the church rate.37

The bishop refused to intervene on Upperton's behalf. He believed that the vicar and vestry had followed the correct process of obtaining a faculty, and that his powers did not extend to the other issues raised by Upperton. After having made his objections clear to all, Upperton then became a very effective churchwarden.38

Basevi drew up a detailed specification for the work on St Andrew's which reveals that most of the old church was demolished. The wall at the east end, built when the chancel had fallen down, and the bell turret at the west end, were to be pulled down so that the church could be returned to its original length. The old walls of the tower had to be dug out to six inches below the level of the church pavement and new stone laid. The south wall and the new aisle walls had to have new foundations. The east and west walls were built on the foundations of the old walls after these had been repaired and the old buttress foundations enlarged.39

By 1835 the relationship between Davis, the clerk of works, and the contractor, Butler of Chichester, was fractious. Basevi told the Church Building Committee that he had not heard about Butler's complaints. He supported Davis's view that Butler was over-reacting to additional work, which both men expected to be free.40 Basevi acknowledged that he had asked for two changes, but the accounts support Butler's claim that there were more.41 Butler finally accepted £2390 7s. 7d., less than he claimed. A considerable amount of the over-spend was on the churchyard and walls, work which did not end until 1837.42

The new church was soon too small, and so in 1838 the Revd Walter Kelly applied to the Incorporated Church Building Society (ICBS) for a grant for a new gallery at the west end of the church to accommodate 50 children from the school. In his application, Kelly said that 451 people sat on benches in this church and that all the seating was free. Kelly received a grant of £100, but he then told the Society that Basevi thought that 200 could be fitted into the gallery if a section of the wall of the tower was cut away to open it for the new gallery, and received a bigger grant.43

In 1881, a subscription paid for re-seating St Andrew's with benches which replaced high pews, for stalls in the chancel for the clergy and the choir, and for repairs. J. T. Chappell of Lupus Street in Pimlico (London), who was building houses on the Stanford Estate nearby, completed the work for £650.44

Stanmer church seated about 130 people in 1838 when the 2nd Earl of Chichester demolished and rebuilt it on the same site as the old one, the earl's bigger church accommodated 245 people. The architect was either Butler or Joanes. A simple ground plan of the church and of the enlarged graveyard survives, signed by Butler of Chichester (the contractor at Hove), who described himself as an architect and builder, a common combination in the later 18th and early 19th centuries.45

Joanes acted as the clerk of works, and when he signed off the account he described himself as an architect and a resident of Lansdowne Place, Lewes. Some minor architects acted as clerks for others, and the role was used in larger practices to train architects, so his presence does not prove that Joanes, rather than Butler, was the architect. Most of the work was by Parsons and Son, stonemasons, who used stone from a Pelham estate quarry at Lindfield. The stained glass was by William Miller of Silver Street, Golden Square, in London. The Archbishop of Canterbury consecrated the new church and the burial ground in October 1839. Stanmer was rebuilt for £3638 3s. 0¾d. and has been little touched since.46

In 1840–41, St Laurence, Falmer was rebuilt in a Saxo-Norman style not unlike that of 'Old'
St Andrew’s in Hove. The 2nd Earl of Chichester, owner of most of the land in the parish, paid for the work possibly undertaken by Joseph Davey, a Lewes builder who drew a plan of the graveyard and the church in 1840. A draft contract between the earl and Davey plus two of his relatives survives. In 1892, the 4th Earl of Chichester paid for a new communion table and pulpit and other small changes. The church was restored in 1912 when the nave was re-seated, the roof repaired and paintwork refreshed, but the exterior has remained untouched since 1841.

By the late 1840s, Brighton was a large seaside resort contained within one parish served by five churches, St Nicholas (the medieval church), St Peter’s (built in the 1820s), and All Souls, Christ Church and St Johns (built in the 1830s). Several privately owned chapels of ease such as St George’s in Kemp Town accommodated affluent worshippers.

From the 1820s, a substantial number of the non-conformists who lived in Brighton challenged their payment of church rate. All residents who were eligible for church rate could attend open meetings of the vestry, which often ended without agreement to a rate. In 1846, the Revd Henry Wagner commissioned a plan to restore and to enlarge St Nicholas from R. C. Carpenter, the architect of All Saints in Compton Road and St Paul’s in West Street, both also commissioned by Wagner. The ratepayers rejected the proposal for St Nicholas due to the cost of £4305. George Maynard, the parish surveyor, produced a short report on this church recommending a general clean and overhaul, and the re-roofing of the north aisle for just over £278. Meanwhile Wagner waited until he saw an opportunity for extensive modernisation of the church when the Duke of Wellington died in September 1852. To avoid more battles over the raising of a church rate, Wagner suggested that the project could be paid for by subscriptions as a memorial to the duke. The ratepayers rejected the proposal for St Nicholas due to the cost of £4305. The idea was received enthusiastically by a full vestry, and it appointed to raise the money and to supervise the work a committee of which Lawrence Peel, William Catt and the Revd Henry Elliott were active members. Wagner resurrected Carpenter’s scheme and by January 1853 the subscriptions towards it amounted to £4834. Meanwhile, Wagner and the churchwardens applied to the Bishop of Chichester for a faculty to rebuild the church. The bishop thought that there might be objections to the ‘taking down’ of the church, he did not approve of Carpenter’s proposed screen and was unhappy with the proportions of the chancel and the nave. The bishop expected 108 free sittings to be provided before he finally agreed that the old church could be rebuilt. Meanwhile Wagner asked Carpenter to refine the plans within a budget of £4600. His revised design excluded the clerestory windows we see today, with the consequence that some commentators thought that the new nave was dark inside.

Keen to progress, Wagner and Carpenter advertised the building contract. Robert Bushby of Littlehampton contracted to demolish the church and to build the shell for £2985. The committee appointed George Corbin the clerk of works. Drawings by Quartermain and others show the roofless church stripped back to the arcades inside the nave, and during this work the tower was found to be cracked and so it too was rebuilt (Fig. 11). In 1854, John Philip completed the Wellington Memorial to Carpenter’s design. Meanwhile, the committee raised more money to re-turf the graveyard and to rail the paths. The whole project was on time and within budget and to show this, Wagner and the committee published detailed accounts.

During the later 1870s, Somers Clarke the younger supervised some changes, adding a vestry to the northern side of the chancel, to which it was linked by a passage. Minton tiles on the side walls of the chancel were replaced by wood panelling. In 1877–78, the interior was enriched, mainly by gifts. E. L. Blackburne designed the reredos of Caen stone, executed by J. W. Seale. More stained glass windows were installed. Hedgeland restored and enlarged the organ. Lord Leconfield donated the Sussex marble for a new font, designed by Somers Clarke the younger and executed by Bennett, whose work was paid for by Henry Wagner’s widow. Oak sedilia were fixed to the south side of the chancel wall. The cost of all this work was estimated at £4200. More stained glass was added in 1881 and 1882 and the church was lit with gas chandeliers, and in 1886 new windows were inserted to try to lighten the interior. In 1892, the vestry decided to insert clerestory windows to make the church lighter, and employed Somers Clarke the younger and
J. T. Micklethwaite to do the work. Further additions included a mural painted by C. E. Kempe to Clarke’s design, stained glass designed by Kempe, and work on the chancel and on the south chapel in 1900 by Micklethwaite.61

In August 1863, the vestry agreed to repair and re-roof the tower of All Saints, Patcham for which a church rate of 3d. in the pound was agreed, levied on the eligible residents of the prospering parish. In 1864, the vestry bought a new stove and accepted a new font carved by Bennett, a stonemason who lived in the Lewes Road, in return for his removal of the old one.62 In 1869, the stonework surrounding the east window was restored before the glass, by A. and W. Connor of Berners Street in London, was installed.63

In 1876, having recently added a new reredos, the vestry applied to take down the screen and gallery at the west end of the church. They wanted to spend £50 on exposing the tower arch, opening up the belfry arch in order to accommodate the choir and the organ, boarding the floor of the tower and wainscoting the walls.64 Above the chancel arch are the remains of a painting of the Last Judgement, re-discovered during some repair work in 1879, the details of which do not survive.65

In 1883 the church was re-seated with open oak benches, having been paved with Minton tiles, and ornaments for the altar such as candlesticks were bought. The building work by Lynn and Son under the supervision of Richard Nevill cost £500.66 Henry Woodyer supervised restoration work in 1887–88 on which £2000 was spent, but no details of it have been traced.67

In 1847 repair work on St Nicholas’s, Portslade exposed some wall paintings on the south wall of the nave. An impression of the frescoes is in the first volume of the Sussex Archaeological Collections. The main theme was the Day of Judgement, and on the wall of the southern aisle the mutilated images included the Adoration of the Magi.70

St Nicholas’s was enlarged in 1858, to meet the needs of an increasing population, caused partly by the development of Shoreham Harbour along the southern end of the parish. A new north aisle was part of a plan to re-organise the interior to provide 160 extra sittings. The scheme also included replacing some of the box pews with benches, and the removal of the gallery on the south side of the nave. The unsigned plans for the north aisle show that the north wall of the church was replaced by the four pillars now standing inside the church on the north side of the nave. The aisle required tombstones to be moved in the northern part of the graveyard and access to the vaults altered. The funds were raised by voluntary subscriptions and a church rate.71

In 1867, more alterations were proposed, but the scheme, drawn up by George Gilbert Scott, was outvoted at the meeting of the vestry on 3rd December 1867. He proposed the removal of the remaining pews (which had their backs to the altar), the addition of 70 seats and some repairs to the nave for about £1000.72 The Borrer, Hall and Hodson families were amongst those who had opposed changes because they believed that their family memorials in the church would be removed. After a hearing, the work was permitted, but the faculty required that the manor pew was left for the Borrer family and that the memorials were touched as little as possible. The screens and gallery in the tower were removed and old pews there replaced with seating which could accommodate more people. As part of the work, the vestry room and a new organ chamber were built, the pulpit and the communion table replaced and floors and other areas repaired. In 1871, Scott recommended raising the roof of the nave but this scheme was not implemented.73

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners purchased the right to the chancel in 1869 and in 1872 George Miles of Portslade did the repair work recommended to the commissioners by Ewan Christian for £275. The elaborate Brackenbury mortuary chapel was designed by E.E. Scott of Brighton (not a relation
of G. G. Scott) and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1869. Hannah Brackenbury was the last of her wealthy family and used her fortune to pay for local needs such as a school named after the family. She was also a major donor to Balliol College, Oxford, and is included in its donors’ prayer.

In 1830, when it stood beside the little hamlet of Preston, north of the suburban development which engulfed the area from the 1870s, some work on the tiny church of St Peter’s, Preston resulted in the rediscovery of frescoes, some of which have survived. The Revd Charles Townshend ensured that the *Gentleman’s Magazine* received a brief report and a drawing of them by William Twopenny. The report said that:

They represent two larger subjects, the murder of Beckett, and St Michael weighing souls; and six smaller — the unbelief of St Thomas; Christ appearing in the garden to Mary Magdalen; St Catherine treading on the Emperor Maximinus; St Michael; a saint with a crozier; and St James the pilgrim.

There was some debate about which saint was depicted weighing the souls. A writer in another journal believed that it was St Paul.

In February 1841, the Sunday afternoon service was halted when two passers-by spotted a fire in the roof. Some railway workers who were building the line from London to Brighton extinguished the blaze. Working with local people, they pulled tiles off the roof to douse the flames with buckets of water from local ponds and wells. The roof did not fall in, nor were the wall paintings damaged. They were on the east wall of the nave and so the fire must have been at the west end. A ‘bursting of the flue’ for the heating boiler probably caused the fire.

In the late 1860s and early 1870s, this little church was still some distance from most of the residents of the parish who lived in the new houses built towards its southern end on the Stanford estate, which subscribed most of the £1200 needed for the restoration of the nave and the purchase of a new organ. Supervised by John Woodman and undertaken by Bruton and Co., the work was completed in September 1874. The extensive work included replacement of the roof with oak beams and red tiles, removal of whitewash from the walls and brickwork in the lower parts of the windows, tiling of the floor, replacement of the box pews with chairs, removal of the large pulpit, and installation of a smaller one and a matching reading desk. The south door, aligned directly with the north door, became the entrance to a new vestry and the new north porch was covered with Horsham stone recycled from the roof. Recycled oak from the roof was used to make the new vestry and porch doors. A ‘Clark’s Patent Multitubular Heater’ heated by a furnace beneath the building was also installed. Was this device the cause of the fire of 1906 discussed below?

Mannington’s new organ and two new stained-glass windows, one by Hughes (probably Ward and Hughes) and the other by O’Connor, embellished the interior.

The vestry could not afford to restore the chancel, which was not their responsibility. In 1877 Vere and Ellen Bennett-Stanford (the principal landowners in the parish and liable for the upkeep of the chancel) repaired and refurbished it ready for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to take it over. Ewan Christian estimated the cost as £1130 and provided plans, which were closely followed. The chancel was re-roofed, the walls and windows repaired and re-glazed, the floor recovered with Minton tiles and the walls decorated. This work survived the fire in 1906.

By the 1890s, most of Preston was developed and the church was too small. In 1899 the vestry commissioned a report from Sir Arthur Blomfield, who was asked to consider whether to enlarge St Peter’s or to build a new church. He thought that a well-designed enlargement of St Peter’s would be cheaper and more atmospheric than a new church. Yet he did not seem enthusiastic about the idea of extending the old church, and pointed out that gravestones would have to be moved. The parishioners of this prosperous area felt that enlarging St Peter’s would destroy the historical and archaeological interest of the church and voted against it at a public vestry meeting in May 1899. Blomfield designed St John the Evangelist to the north of St Peter’s. When the new church was opened, the vestry decided that St Peter’s was suitable only for weddings and funerals.

In 1906, fire damaged St Peter’s sufficiently badly that postcards were sold showing the devastated west end. The fire began below the organ gallery and spread along the roof of the nave and into the tower; the interior of the chancel was badly affected by smoke and by the water used to extinguish it. P. M. Johnston, a local architect, supervised the restoration by H. J. Penfold and Co. New stained glass windows by N. H. J. Westlake
replaced those irreparably damaged by heat. Salvaged marble tablets and memorial stones were remounted on the walls. The floor was re-covered in wood blocks and a new reredos erected. Page and Miles of Brighton installed electric lighting. The old organ was not replaced, because the parish hoped to install a new organ by Morgan and Smith of Brighton. Declared redundant in 1997, the church is now cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust.

Rottingdean was prospering by the late 1840s. In March 1851, the Revd Arthur Thomas and the churchwardens proposed to enlarge St Margaret’s by building a new south aisle to a design by George Gilbert Scott where, they believed, one had stood in the past. In December 1851, Thomas applied to the ICBS for a grant. His replies on the detailed application form for the grant provide insight into both a prosperous rural seaside parish with a mixed economy and the scale of the work.

Thomas told the ICBS that the church had been repaired in 1832, paid for by a church rate of £95 and by subscriptions of £487. The building was still in good repair but not large enough, although there were 295 seats of which 140 were free. Thomas hoped to add another 190 seats, of which 79 would be free, so raising the capacity of the church from 295 to 485.

In 1851, the population was 1059, the parish was about 3146 acres and the rateable value £3890. The parish had levied two poor rates in 1851 at 3s. 6d. which resulted in a collection of £680. It seemed prosperous enough to raise money by subscription for the work on the church.

The bishop did not expect a faculty to be sought, for the Earl of Abergavenny as the patron agreed to the work. This was the only example that has been found where such an arrangement was agreed, and it saved the parish the cost of the fees for the faculty. The estimate for the new aisle was £600 and for repairs to the church roof and walls, £100. Of the £700, Thomas said that £325 was promised as subscriptions, and he believed that a further £150 could be raised. The Diocese of Chichester gave £27 and Thomas asked the ICBS for £200 but received £105.

In 1875–76 the nave was re-seated, children’s seats provided and some minor repairs undertaken. After this work, more modest changes were made. The lych-gate and the stained glass in two chancel windows are a memorial to Thomas. A marble plaque and a stained-glass window were installed as memorials to Edward Burne-Jones, a resident of the village famous as an artist and for his stained glass.

In 1908, St Margaret’s was damaged by a fire which began in the gallery below the organ, at the west end of the nave. In July 1908 the damaged timber staircase was replaced with one of York stone with oak wainscot partitions and doors. In February 1917 P. M. Johnston supervised more work, including lowering the level of the floor in the chancel, which was done by infilling the vaults below it and removing the ceiling to expose the timber in the roof. The removal of a tiled dado in the chancel exposed an ancient piscina and aumbry and the 13th-century double-chamfered plinth on the eastern arch of the tower.

The remaining churches still depended on the interest of a few people. Nathaniel Kemp continued to pay for whitewashing and small repairs at St Wulfran’s, Ovingdean until 1842. Kemp died in 1843, and for a while Stenning Beard, a churchwarden, paid the smaller bills such as the one from Patching and Wood for new crimson cloth for covering the communion table, the pulpit, the reading desk and the clerk’s desk, but he does not appear to have paid for work on the fabric.

Subscriptions paid for a major restoration of this church. In 1866–67 G. M. Hills was ‘simply re-arranging the internal fittings of the church, adding a porch to the south side and a sacristy to the north.’

The accounts reveal that the work cost £1020 and that only £892 was raised (mainly from local people) before work commenced, so the Revd Alfred Stead borrowed the balance from a bank. C. E. Kempe was paid nearly £93 for painting the ceiling of the chancel and for the stained glass that he designed and installed. The designer’s name for some of the stained glass is not in the accounts.
In 1852, Hussey described the church of St Helen’s in rural Hangleton as in a ‘melancholy condition’. He believed that some of the windows were of the Norman period but badly repaired. The building was probably saved by Sir George Cockayne, who paid for repairs in 1876 after his eldest son, Borlase, was buried in the churchyard when he died in March 1875 after a year’s illness. The tomb of Borlase survives in the churchyard, south of the nave.

In 1909 Walter Tapper of St John’s Wood, London, enlarged the east window for the installation of stained glass in memory of Sophia Courtney Boyle, the wife of the incumbent. The glass, by W. Bainbridge Reynolds, has St Helen to the left and St Nicholas to the right, with Jesus in the centre.

Of St Leonard’s, Aldrington, Hussey remarked in 1852 that:

Some portion of the outer walls of this church remains in the fields westward of Brighton, beyond Hove, the house at the turnpike and a cottage being all the parish contains. The name is retained in the [Clergy] List as a rectory, but without inhabitants.

In 1875, the Ingram family, the major landowners in the parish, decided to build on their land after the extraction of clay for brick making. H. M. Ingram wrote to the Bishop of Chichester to seek advice on the best way to approach the absentee rector, the Revd Edward Warler (who was liable for the chancel), about rebuilding the ruined church. Ingram explained that both he and his mother (who had a life interest in the land) were
keen to have the church rebuilt as soon as possible. He included a copy of the proposed design (since lost). He remarked that R. H. Carpenter (son of R. C. Carpenter) had not included in his estimates removal of old rubble or investigation of the foundations to see whether they were suitable to be re-used. The bishop was keen on the project and, as he saw Aldrington developing into a second Hove, hoped that the rebuilt church would be enlarged easily (Fig. 12).102

Ingram discovered that neither the patron nor the incumbent could be compelled to build the church. The latter might be forced to rebuild the chancel if someone else decided to rebuild the rest of the church and obtained a faculty to do so. He also learned that parishioners could not be compelled to contribute, but could make a voluntary rate towards the cost.103

The Revd Edward Warler pointed out that the current population did not exceed 34 and lived on the outer edges of the parish, and that there was a chapel at Copperas Gap with a minister in charge with Warler's consent. He pointed out that Ingram would need to show that the parishioners were deprived of the sacrament due to the lack of the parish church. Warler added that Ingram's scheme should include a parish school and a residence for the clergyman. He noted that the parish lacked churchwardens and other church officials, whose support he believed was obligatory for a faculty. Nevertheless, Ingram went ahead.104 The bishop may have intervened at this point, for Warler, having received the plans from Ingram, wrote to him from Shropshire stating that he would not oppose the rebuilding because he did not wish to oppose the bishop.105

The Ingrams paid for the building of Carpenter's small church (which he designed whilst in partnership with Benjamin Ingelow), in the style of the 13th century. Carpenter incorporated as much as he could of the old walls and tower. His work can still be seen, although the church has since been enlarged.106 The builder was G. Miles of Portslade.107

In June 1878, the *Brighton and Hove Herald* remarked that:

"Another indication of the growth of the suburbs of Brighton was given on Saturday last by the re-dedication of Aldrington Church, now re-erected on the site of the ruins which for so many years formed an object of interest on the sea shore between Brighton and Portslade."108

The Ingrams did not benefit from suburban development house building took off only in the 1890s, after they had sold the land. Then development was so rapid that in 1902 discussions with J. Oldrid Scott took place about plans to enlarge the church, but nothing was done. The old chancel became the Lady Chapel when the church was enlarged in the 1930s.109

In 1852, Hussey did not believe that St Peter's, West Blatchington had ever had a tower. He saw a simple, ruined building about 50 feet long and 21 feet wide with a round-headed door on the south side. In 1855 Henry Wagner, who held the living jointly with the parish of Brighton, tried to persuade the Abergavenny family to give land for a church for which he would pay. He had already commissioned G. F. Bodley to design the building when the Abergavennys refused.110

By the 1890s, most people who worked on the repair and restoration of churches favoured keeping as much of the old fabric as possible. This was the case at St Peter's when the church was rebuilt in 1890–91 for more than £2000, with a legacy from Miss Harriet Hodson, a descendant of the Scrase family. Somers Clarke and Micklethwaite supervised the work by Lynn and Sons. Mr Shelmerdine, who was also working at St Nicholas's in Brighton, acted as the clerk of works.111 The surviving foundations and walls of St Peter's were retained wherever that was practical, and strengthened. Windows by C. E. Kempe were inserted into the restored openings. St Peter's was re-dedicated on 29 June 1891 by the Bishop of Chichester.112 The population of the parish grew after the Abergavenny Estate sold most of the parish for development, which took off after 1918. As a consequence, the church was greatly enlarged in 1961–2 by J. L. Denman. The remnants of the medieval building and the late Victorian work are on the south side of the 1960s extension.

**CONCLUSION**

The charm of these churches during the later Georgian period is reflected in the watercolours and prints, especially those in the collection of the Sussex Archaeological Society, but the archival evidence reflects a piecemeal approach to upkeep. From the 1830s, when prosperous supporters of the church and incumbents were prepared to
finance changes to modernise their churches, they unintentionally became a threat to the older fabric to a degree that the piecemeal approach of the Georgian period probably was not. The addition of aisles removed old walls, and pews and big pulpits, a part of church life from the 16th century, disappeared. That so much from the period between c. 1680 and c. 1830 was lost is regrettable, but without the enthusiasm of the Victorians and Edwardians more early churches might have been lost, and the legacy of the period is now very much part of the history of these churches and other old parish churches, and defended by organisations such as the Victorian Society. Some of the interior decoration of these churches undertaken between 1830 and 1914 is now important in its own right, especially in St Nicholas in Brighton. The old parishes now wholly or partly within the boundaries of the city do not include a single medieval place of worship which reflects the practices and the taste of the period between c. 1700 and c. 1830 with which the impact of later alterations to churches such as the removal of box pews and large pulpits can be compared. The legacy of the 1830s is interesting because all three of the rebuilt churches of that period show the desire to reflect the increased interest in antiquarianism during this period, and the determination not to use the classical styles which had been deployed elsewhere in earlier rebuilds such as that at Glynde. The later rebuilds of Brighton and of West Blatchington reflect how much attitudes to design and conservation had altered in the intervening period.

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