

CLANDOWN

NOTES

2025

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Introduction



The church of the Holy Trinity

From the *Bath Chronicle* of Thu 28 Sep 1843 p3 reporting on a meeting of the Bath and Wells Diocesan Curates' Fund Society:

The remark of the prime minister was there truly borne out—that let the clergyman go and preach among the people, and there would soon be necessity for a church. Such was the case in the district to which he alluded, which contained a population of eight hundred persons, and was two miles from the church. He would remind the inhabitants of Bath that they were much obliged to that portion of his parish; it was a part of Clandown where twenty years ago there were only two farm houses, and now there was that large number who were engaged

in supplying the means of comfort to the inhabitants of this city. When, therefore, It should please God to move some person to set the building of a church there on foot, he pledged himself to come Bath and remind the inhabitants of their obligation to assist in the work. . . .

From the *Bath Chronicle* of Thu 25 Sep 1845 p2:

BUILDERS disposed to CONTRACT for erecting a CHURCH, CLANDOWN, near Radstock, may see the Drawings and Specification at my office, till SATURDAY the 11th Oct. next, which day the lenders (sealed, and endorsed, "Tender for Clandown Church") are to be sent to me, The lowest Tender will not necessarily be accepted.

G. P. MANNERS, Architect.

No. 1, Oxford Row. Bath; 20th Sept., 1845.

From the *Bristol Mirror* of Sat 25 Oct 1845 p10 in a report on the Church Building Society:

Towards building a new Church at Clandown in the parish of Midsomer Norton being the second new church built in that parish by the aid of the Association¹, the sum of 105l has been granted. The church is to contain room for 380 worshippers, all of them being offered free.

The same report appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* of Thu 18 Sep 1845 p6.

a chapel of ease. This Anglican parish is distinct from the Catholic Downside Abbey at nearby Stratton-on-the-Fosse.



From the *Bristol Mirror* of Sat 24 Jan 1846 p5:

MIDSOMER NORTON — His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, as Duke of Cornwall, has given the sum of 100l towards the erection of a new church at Clandown, Midsomer Norton, Somerset. The Bishop of Bath Wells, the Dowager Lady Carrington, Colonel Gore Langton M.P., T.D., Acland, Esq., M.P., W. Miles, Esq., M.P., H. Labouchere, Esq., M.P., J. A. Smith, Esq., M.P., and F. H. Dickenson, Esq., M.P. have respectively given liberal donations.

From the *Bristol Mirror* of Sat 4 Jul 1846 p8:

NEW CHURCH AT CLANDOWN — The ceremony of laying the corner stone of the proposed Church at Clandown, in the parish Midsomer Somerset, took place on

¹ The other church was that at Downside in the parish of Midsomer Norton which dates from 1838 and was originally Issue 1

Monday. The proceedings commenced with Divine Service in the room which, for twelve years, has been licensed by the Bishop; the Rev. S. Franklin (the present curate and future incumbent) officiating. A selection from the service generally used in the diocese having been read by Rev Chas Otway Mayne, the vicar, the stone was laid by W. C. James, Esq., as the representative of the coal proprietors, assisted by G. P. Manners, Esq., the architect, and Mr. John Thatcher, the builder. A suitable hymn was then sung, and an appropriate address delivered by the vicar, and the whole was concluded with prayer and benediction.

From the *Bristol Mercury* of Sat 23 Oct 1847 p4:

CLANDOWN .-The new church at Clandown, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, was consecrated on Tuesday last by the Bishop of the diocese. The day was fine, and a numerous body of the clergy attended. The sermon was preached by the Rev. - Clutterbuck, from Jer. vi. 16. After the sermon a collection was made, amounting to £41 5s. 6d. It appears that the sum of £2200 has already been expended, and that a debt of £150 r yet remains, besides £500 still required for the endowment, before the building can be made a district church. The church, which is capable of accommodating nearly 400 persons, reflects great credit on the architect, G. P. Manners, Esq., as well as on the builder, Mr. Thatcher, of Weston.

From the *Bristol Mercury* of Sat 29 Oct 1859 p8:

CLANDOWN.-The extensive alterations at the Clandown Coal Works having been completed, 'the proprietors on Friday last. gave the whole of their men (numbering over 200) an excellent substantial dinner,

prepared by Mr. George Coonbs, of the Bell Inn, Radstock. When the tables were cleared, the Chairman, the Rev. Charles James, proposed "The Queen and her Royal Consort," which was most loyally responded to. The "Health of the Proprietors"-was next proposed, and received with great enthusiasm. The Chairman then gave "The. Manager, Mr., John Cotlie and the Underground Agents,"-which was received with loud cheering. Next followed the health-of the "Mechanics and Miners," which was warmly acknowledged. The health also of "The Traders" was given, and neatly responded to by Mr. Joseph Reynolds, of Bath; and, lastly, the "Health of the respected incumbent of Clandown, the Rev. Geo. Renaud," was proposed and received with every mark of respect, the company loudly cheering him. The Chairman then addressed the men in a most appropriate and encouraging language showing that the proprietors were anxious for the welfare of those employed under them, and assuring them that everything should be done for their benefit, and, at the same time, clearly proving that what was the Interest of the masters was equally the Interest of the workmen, At a later hour in the evening Mr. Jno, Cotte addressed the men, stating that he hoped all who were employed under the Clandown Coal Company would show their gratitude for that day's proof that they were cared for, by sticking to their work, and that, if at any time they felt aggrieved, they would take their complaints to those who had the management, instead of talking them over in public houses, where no remedy could possibly be obtained, He also showed the men the utility of improving their minds. Thos. Lockwood, Esq., next addressed the

meeting on the advantages of Intellectual culture, in a very warm, affectionate, and eloquent manner. Lastly, Mr. C. Bryant spoke in a very humorous style of the events of the day. The meeting then broke up and all went home pleased. Not one of the least pleasing incidents of the evening was the appearance of the lady of John Hill, of Paulton, who took a lively interest in the happiness of the workmen.

The press report does not include the reaction of the mine workers to the speeches.



Entrance to the churchyard

From the *Somerset Guardian* of Fri 13 May 1899 p3:

THE CLANDOWN COLLIERY. The number of workmen effected by the stoppage of certain portions of the Clandown Colliery has been reduced from 120 to about 60, by the remainder finding employment elsewhere, or the leaving the district. The strike pay is, therefore, reduced to about £25 or £30; all the men receive 18s sixpence each child, and

some of the boys 5s. each. The necessity for closing the working is regrettable, but no one can question the action of the owner, who was losing upwards of £40 per week. Even the men who worked there could not see how they paid. As the new seams now being opened are developed more men will be required, and it is hoped all who cannot obtain work elsewhere will be able to be re-instated at the same pit. . . . The Clandown men who were turned out of work are finding employments fast, and of the 124 who were affected only 64 now remain to be supported by the Union. He was certain if the Writhlington employers would settle the dispute they would be sensible men. . . .

From the *Somerset Guardian* of Fri 8 Oct 1915 p1:

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH. During the week-end the church was surmounted by the flag given by Dr. Jones. of Coleford House., and this indicated that special services in thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest were being celebrated. These special meetings commenced on Thursday in last week. The sacred edifice was beautifully adorned. . . .

As referred to in the press report of 1843 (see above), Clandown was originally an agricultural hamlet with only a few inhabitants but expanded due a coal mine in the early 1800s. The pits in the area closed down progressively from the late 1920s and mining eventually ceased in 1973. As reported in the *Somerset Guardian* of Fri 11 Oct 1929 p8:

The whole of the men and boys employed at the Clandown Colliery received a week's notice on Thursday to terminate their contract of service, the notices being due to take effect on Wednesday next. Some 130 men and boys are affected. Already steps have been taken to dismantle some of the districts in the mine, which could not be profitably worked, with a view to the permanent closing of these, but, so far as one can gather in the locality, dismantling is not general as regards the whole colliery. . . .

Clandown Colliery is the oldest of all the collieries in the Somerset coalfield, and with the exception of temporary periods, occasioned by accidents or the result of industrial disputes, has, been in continuous working for about 150 years.

...
For many years Clandown Colliery was owned by Mr. J. Henry Iles, the founder and director of the great National Band Festival at the Crystal Palace, but some five or six years ago it passed into the hands of Sir Frank Beauchamp, since which time it has formed one of the groups of collieries belonging to the Somerset Collieries Ltd. whose head offices are at Radstock.

(While the press report states that Clandown Colliery was the oldest mine, other sources indicate that coal mining existed from Roman times, continued in the medieval period mainly as surface or near-surface workings before, in the 1700s, deeper mines were constructed.)

Holy Trinity church was declared redundant in 1983 and converted into a dwelling.



Previous Surveys

FindAGrave has 337 burial records and 137 images of the surviving memorials, dating from 2016.

Burial Registers

At Somerset Heritage Centre;

D/P/clan/2/1/3 Burials 1848-1921

The entries have handwritten, rather than pre-printed, numbers but these end at 483. The sequence of numbers goes awry in places and there seems to be a gap from 20-Oct-1912 and 12-Jun-1915 when moving from one register to another. There are 864 entries on 107 pages rather than the usual 800 entries on 100 pages. Three entries in 1888 have annotations of 'smallpox'.

The subsequent register, which starts in 1915, is with the parish of Midsomer Norton. In 2025 this had 475 records up to 1995, including a small number of blank entries.

Memorials with dates after 1995 which are not in the register have been found.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Pat Marriott of Midsomer Norton for bringing the burial register to my attention.

