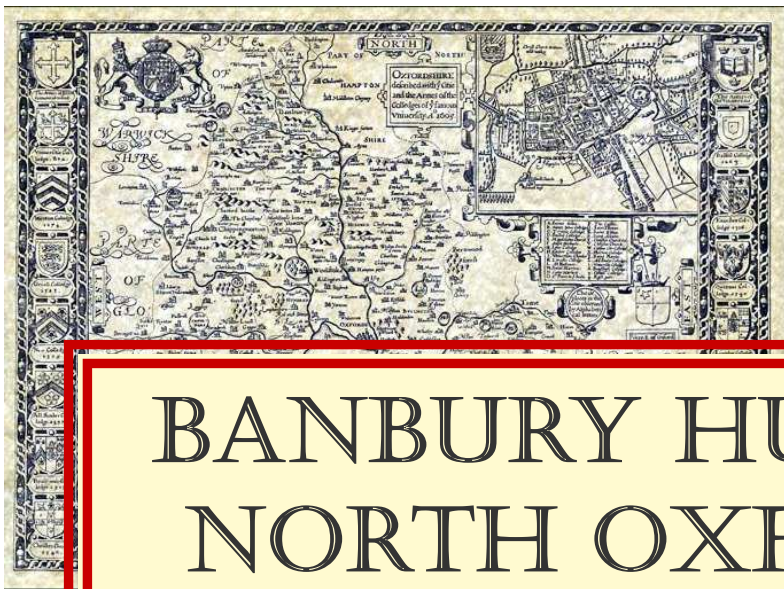


HOLY TRINITY CHURCH SIBFORD



1840 - 2015

Holy Trinity 175



BANBURY HUNDRED IN NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

**In the Middle Ages the Banbury Hundred
comprised four large parishes all of which
belonged to the Bishops of Lincoln**

Banbury : Charlbury : Cropredy : Swalcliffe

The parish of Swalcliffe, which was recorded as early as 1190, contained several small villages which were well documented because they all contained extensive estates of abbeys and colleges.

The ancient parish of Swalcliffe covered an area of 6496 acres and contained the townships of:

Swalcliffe	1679 acres
Epwell	1140 acres
Shutford West	952 acres
Shutford East	409 acres
Sibford Ferris	1000 acres
Sibford Gower	1750 acres

Burdrop, a settlement lying between
the two Sibfords

IN THE MIDDLE AGES
SWALCLIFFE PARISH
CONTAINED FOUR CHAPELS
**Sibford, Epwell, Shutford
and Swalcliffe Lea.**

BY THE 16TH CENTURY ONLY
THE CHAPELS AT
Sibford and Epwell remained

1153

The Chapel at Sibford Gower, which was independent of the mother church at Swalcliffe, was granted to the Knight's Templar by Agnes of Sibford who had paid for the priest to say mass for the soul of her dead husband. By **1338** with the demise of the Templars, the Chapel passed into the hands of the Hospitallers who paid the chaplain £3.6s.6d per year to celebrate mass three times each week and to make all necessary repairs to the Chapel.

1542

The Manors of Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower were sold to the Crown and by then the 'free' Chapel was only valued at £1.00. During the Dissolution of the Monasteries the King's Commissioners described the Chapel as
'very old and made of rough stone. The lead and timber roof was slated and badly decayed. There was little glass and two bells.'



Dissolution of the Monasteries

The Bishops of Lincoln sold the Banbury Hundred in 1547 to Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset. He then granted it to the Earl of Warwick and later to the Duke of Northumberland who sold it to the Crown in 1551. In 1595 it was leased by the Crown to the Fiennes family along with Banbury Castle.

1560

The Chapel was described as
'small and ruined and all religious services had ceased.'

The actual site of this chapel is unknown although it is suggested that pieces of stonework from the chapel may be included in some of the village properties and are still visible today.

ANGLICAN SIBFORDIANS CONTINUED TO WORSHIP AT THE MOTHER CHURCH IN SWALCLIFFE UNTIL 1840

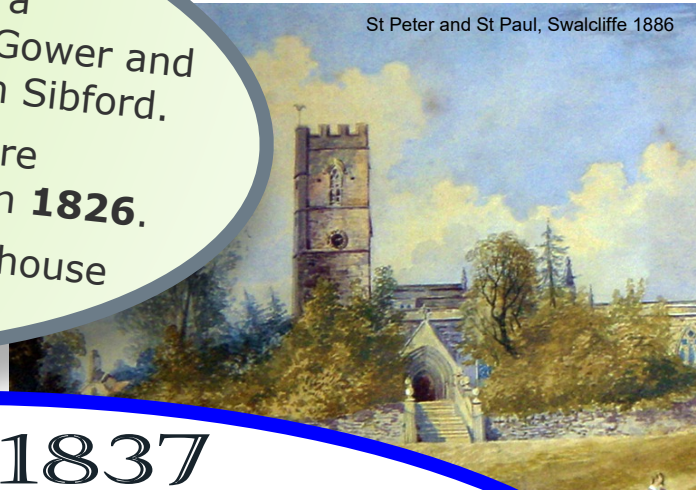
All Anglican marriages and burials were conducted in Swalcliffe. The footpath known as '**Coffin Walk**' was the route taken by mourners with the bier carrying the deceased to Swalcliffe. This path avoided the swampy areas which lay in the low ground on Hawkes Lane which is still prone to flood after heavy or prolonged rainfall. Coffins were made in the village but it is thought that poorer folk unable to afford a coffin would wrap their loved ones in sheep fleeces.

However, since **1678** there had been a **Quaker Meeting House** in Sibford Gower and this was the only place of worship in Sibford.

Some old village buildings were converted to a **Methodist Chapel** in **1826**.

Previously Methodists had met as house groups in villager's homes.

St Peter and St Paul, Swalcliffe 1886



1808-1837

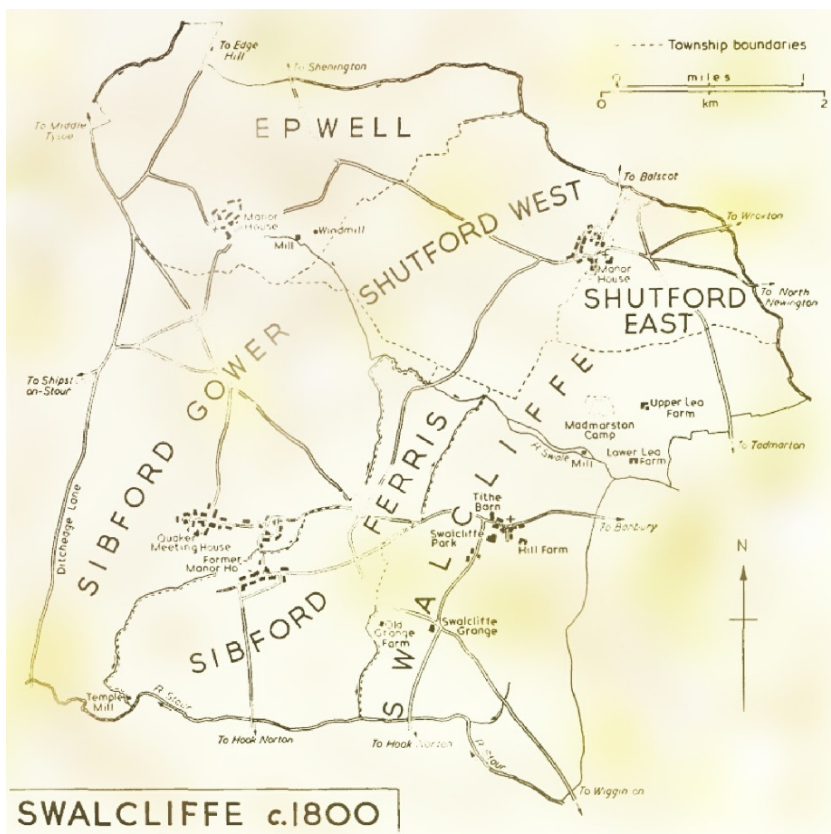
During the latter years of the incumbency of Rev John Stevens at Swalcliffe he found it increasingly difficult to serve the large parish. He had a large family to support on a relatively low income, dismissed his curate due to financial difficulty and became blind and senile. He was replaced by Rev Edward Payne in 1837 and things began to improve. The new incumbent recognised the need for the Sibfords to have their own place of worship and encouraged the villagers to build a new church.

REV EDWARD PAYNE

The Rev Edward Payne, the new Vicar of Swalcliffe, started to raise funds to build a new church in Sibford. Money was raised by private subscription and grants:

It is unusual for a church in North Oxfordshire to be built without a tower

- One quarter of an acre of land in Sibford Gower was donated by Rev William Gilkes
- £30 was raised from a rent-charge on Swalcliffe rectory
- £20 from a rent charge on Swalcliffe vicarage
- £200 from a grant by Queen Anne's Bounty
- £500 from funds raised by local and private benefaction



Building started in 1839 and was completed in 1840 at a cost of £1400.

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

Designed by H. J. Underwood
of Oxford

Holy Trinity Church was erected at Sibford Gower in 1839-40 on the land given by the Rev. William Gilkes.

It is a Swalcliffe stone building in the Early English style and consists of the nave, transepts, and a shallow chancel.

A turret at the west end of the nave contains a clock and one bell.

Bishop Wilberforce considered it aesthetically a failure, built 10 years too soon before the Victorian era when buildings were much more heavily Decorated and more ornate.

I spoke to Horsman about his coming to Church so seldom. He said the free seats were so narrow that he could not sit on them, having a lame leg. I told him I thought he could afford to pay 5/- a year for a seat in one of the pews

The Rev. Stevens Wrote

It provided 500 seatings of which 340 were 'free for ever'.

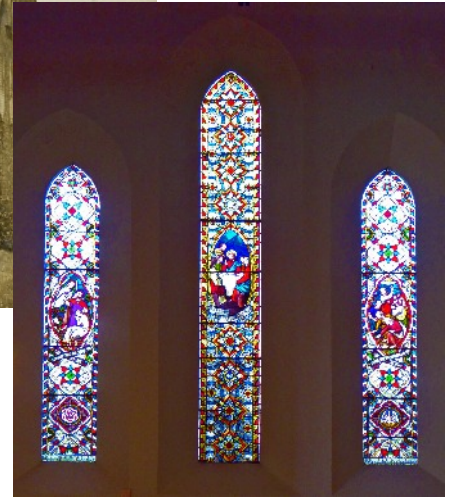
1844

A further grant of £27 was made bringing the total income of the church up to £100.



1869

A stained glass window was added in memory of the Reverends Miller and Eliot. Incumbents from 1848 to 1864



1878

A stained glass window was added in memory of Elizabeth and Joseph Pettipher who died in 1851 and 1878 respectively.



September

22 Sunday - 1878

The morning congregation was 158, the afternoon 248. I was sorry that there were not more laboring men present and it strikes me the reason is that when the harvest is over a great number of men are discharged from their work, which they look upon as a hardship; being so unreasonable as to suppose that their masters can keep them on when they have no work for them to do.

The Rev. Stevens Wrote

1897

A new porch was built in memory of Elizabeth Dix.



June 23rd 1883

Eleven years ago today Miss Sarah Dix gathered at least half a peck of strawberries in my garden for my advent to Sibford. Today, so cold has the season hitherto been, the strawberries are scarcely formed and certainly not a single ripe berry is to be seen.

The Rev. Stevens Wrote

1898

The income had increased to £223 per year which was made up from rent charges on the rectoral and vicarial estates in Swalcliffe, rent from glebe land and other emoluments.

1905

Epwell was annexed to the parish and the rectorate of Sibford and Epwell was established.



1906

New pews and choir stalls of unstained oak were presented by the parishioners. They were made by Lewis Poulton (grandfather of the Lewis Poulton who represented the Sibfords on the old Banbury Rural District Council for many years in the late 1900's).



Also in 1906 the single manual organ was also donated by public subscription. Made by Jacksons of Oxford it was dedicated by the Bishop of Oxford.



School and Church

Rev Edward Stevens attempted to get the village school, which is endowed by the Town Estate Charity designated as a Church of England school. The strong non-conformist element in the parish, mostly Quakers and Wesleyans, objected strongly at a public meeting and the Church Commissioners agreed that there was no specific requirement for the school to become a Church School but the children should be instructed in accordance with Church principles.



Bishop of Oxford visiting Holy Trinity Church -1903

William Lamb called about Quit Rents due to Mr. Sheldon of Brailes as Lord of the Manors of Sibford Gower and Sibford Ferris. The Court Leet was held last Monday at the Old House in Sibford Ferris and adjourned to the Wykham Arms for dinner. The rents have not been collected for 16 or 17 years. But he asks for only 7 years and will be content to take 6 years. The sum charged to me is 6d. per annum for a part of the Church Close. A shilling and a halfpenny is charged for the School Master's house. Thirteen shillings and fourpence per annum is charged for the Heath Farm and Allotments. I did not pay him anything, but said I would consult the Trustees at the next meeting.

The Rev. Stevens Wrote

1934

Electric lighting was introduced into the building.

1938

The organ was removed to the gallery.

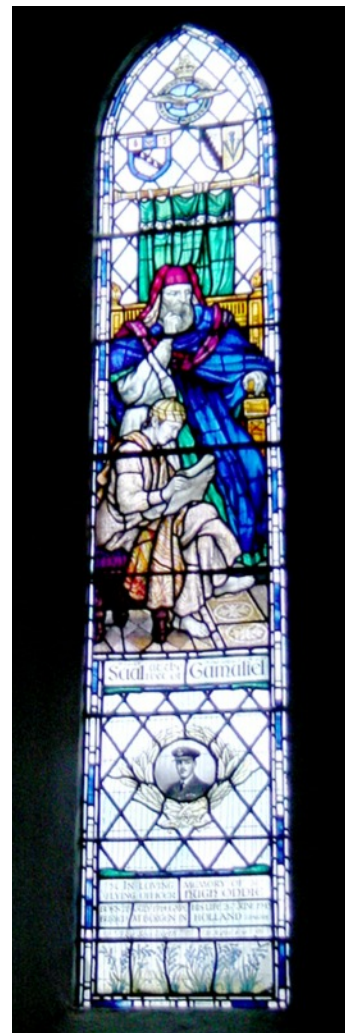
1943

A further stained glass window was added in memory of Flying Officer Hugh Oddie who gave his life during the Second World War. He is buried in Holland and was the grandson of the headmaster at Sibford School, Robert B Oddie.

2000

The church roof was restored.

The Organ was removed from the gallery to the north transept and an area was made where the choir can change into their robes.



The inscriptions on the reredos behind the altar table are of the Ten Commandments. It has been suggested that some of the stone masks behind the screen look much older than 1840 – could they have been salvaged from the fabric of the much older chapel?



The tall wooden Paschal (Easter) candleholder that was made by Ted Webb (1916–1985) a farmer who moved to Sibford Gower when he retired. The sturdy five-pillared wooden lectern was also provided by public subscription.



Baptisms are held at the west end of the Church using the stone font.

*Sunday May 27th 1877
Trinity
Baptised Elizabeth Gibbs aged 79. Her daughter, Mrs Padbury, a Roman Catholic, was present. Mrs Gibbs begged her husband, with tears, to be baptised too but he refused saying he could not believe "all Quakers were going, or had gone, to hell".*

The Rev. Stevens Wrote



On the east wall is a charming mosaic memorial with a sculptured bust to Isabella, the mother of Frank Lascelles. He was the son of Rev. Edward Stevens (Vicar of Sibford 1874-1898) and a very talented artist, sculptor, writer and Pageant Master to Queen Victoria.

The Sibford Friendly Society was formed in 1840, the same year as the Church was built. Known as Sibford Club, it was a benevolent Society to support villagers in times of hardship.



The banner, designed by Frank Lascelles, bearing a picture of a St. George style knight was paraded at the head of the procession on Sibford Club Day.

This was held annually, on the first Monday in June.

Villagers held a Club day re-enactment in June 2007.

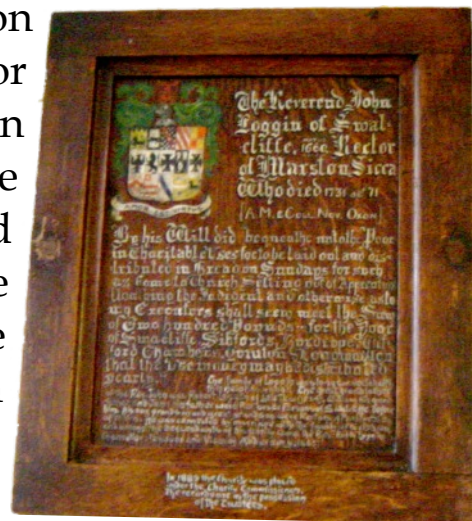


Visited Thomas Sabin. He said he was the third member enrolled in the Sibford Benefit Club, and the oldest surviving. That the club was started the same year the Church was opened. That their first meeting took place on the first Monday in June.

This inscribed wooden memorial plaque at the north end of the Church records the 88 men and two women who served in the 1914-18 war. Ten never returned to Sibford having given their lives serving in France, Bavaria and Egypt.



The wooden illuminated memorial on the west wall by the church door records the gift by the Rev John Loggin (1660 - 1731) of Swalcliffe. He was also Rector of Marston Sicca, and left £200 for bread for the poor of the Sibfords, Burdrop and Swalcliffe providing they attended church on Sundays. Disbursements are still made from this charity to date.

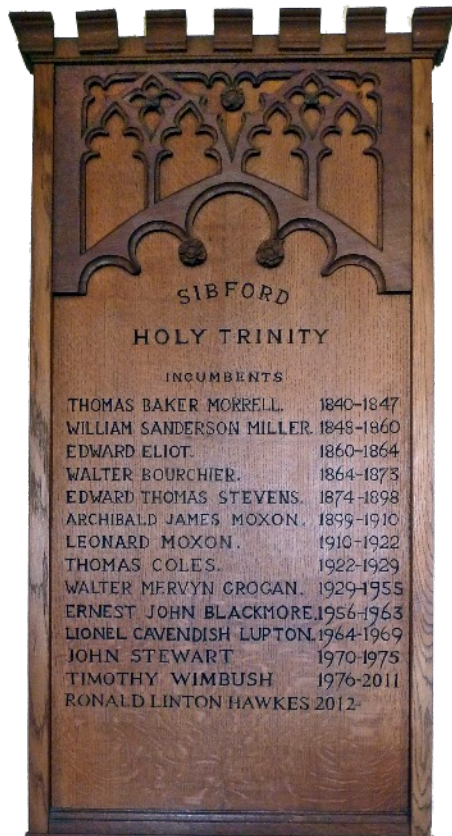


Visited the Misses Dix, who appear to think that I do wrong in not giving the Loggin Charity in loaves of bread all over the parish indiscriminately as Mr. Bourchier used to do. I explained to them that by the will of Mr. Loggin, or by the Orders of the Court of Chancery this Charity was to be given:-

- 1. in bread to the poor people at church, or*
- 2. in Apprentice fees to poor children of the parish, or*
- 3. in money or otherwise as might seem best.*

The Rev. Stevens Wrote

WYKEHAM BENEFICE



Whilst part of the Swalcliffe parish the Sibfords produced a number of long established yeoman families: Lamb, Pettipher, Sabin, Soden and Harris. The Wykehams of Swalcliffe, whose manorial home was Swalcliffe Park, were a widespread family of the gentry classes. They tried, unsuccessfully, to establish their claim to be related to Bishop William of Wykeham. During the 14th century William of Wykeham was Bishop of Winchester and Chancellor of England. He founded New College, Oxford, became Archbishop of Lincoln and was Lord Privy Seal to King Edward III.

During the late 20th century, the parishes of Swalcliffe, Sibford, Epwell, Shutford, Tadmarton and Broughton and North Newington were combined as the Wykeham Benefice within the Deddington Deanery and part of the Diocese of Oxford within the Dorchester area. All six churches are collectively administered by the Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Sibford. Each church community has its own parochial church council and church wardens.

Our current Rector, Rev. Ronald Lynton Hawkes is the fourteenth incumbent to have served the community at Holy Trinity Church, Sibford.

SIBFORD'S WAR MEMORIAL

During 2014 the nation marked the 100th anniversary year of the outbreak of the First World War. All those who died in action, or from wounds received, whilst serving in the armed forces during The Great War were remembered. The War Memorial in Holy Trinity churchyard was at the centre of the Service of Remembrance whilst the names of those men who served and did not return to their village were read out. Nine names are inscribed on the memorial and one is interred in the churchyard marked by a War Graves Commission headstone. While the community lost ten of its own those who also served and returned to their loved ones are remembered on a plaque which hangs in the rear of the church.



The War Memorial under construction

We are indebted to Eva Herbert (nee Lamb) who kept notes



The unveiling of the War Memorial in 1921

during those four war torn years so that we have a record of all those from our community who served their country. At the end of hostilities a Sibford War Memorial Fund was set up which resulted in the construction of the memorial we can see today. It was built by local men working for Poulton Builders and was officially unveiled by Sir Rhys Williams on Sunday 1st May, 1921. Sir Rhys Williams was the MP for Banbury at that time.



BRONZE STATUE STOLEN FROM SIBFORD CHURCHYARD

The angel sculpted by Frank Lascelles in memory of his mother was stolen just prior to the Millennium Pageant production staged by villagers in 2000. The opening sequences of the pageant featured the 'Spirit of Sibford' inspired by the angel. Bill Johnson, former Clerk to the Gower Parish Council, living in Hampshire recognised the angel on a local TV programme. His call to the police ensured its safe return just in time for the pageant!

Angel flies back home

A STATUE stolen from Sibford church has been restored to its rightful home.

The statue of a bronze angel, worth thousands of pounds, was lifted from the church graveyard eight months ago.

It was traced to a lock up garage in Hampshire following an appearance on a televised antiques show in the area.

The statue, known by villagers as 'the spirit of Sibford', has been in the churchyard since 1928.

It was provided by local man Frank Lascelles, to stand over the grave of his mother.

Church warden Eric Payne remembers when the statue was first placed there.

He said: "When it was unveiled it was amazing. The villagers thought it was truly wonderful."

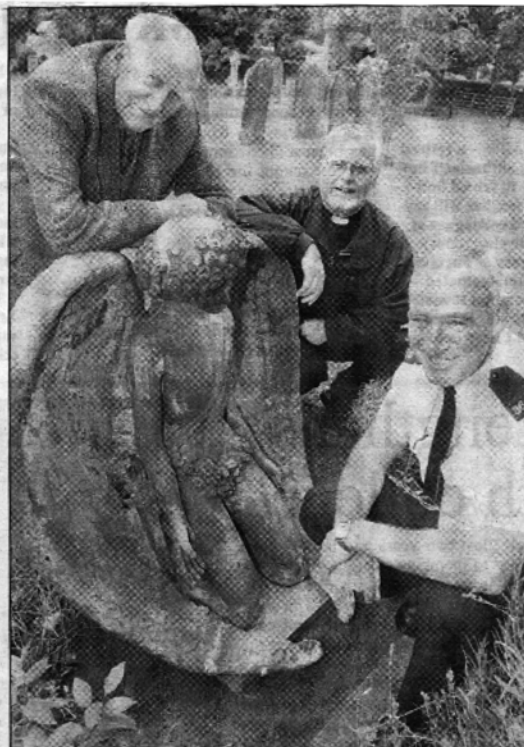
Pc Pat Macdonald said: "I am delighted for the villagers because the angel is part of their heritage."

The Rector, Canon Timothy Wimbush, is also relieved to have the angel back in Sibford.

He said: "We are very pleased to get it back and this time it is being cemented into place."

Canon Wimbush is joining with other north Oxfordshire clergy to support the new Church Watch scheme, where parishioners report anything suspicious going on near their churches.

Arrests have been made in connection with the theft of the statue.



SIBFORD 'SPIRIT': With the recovered statue are left to right, church warden Eric Payne, Canon Timothy Wimbush and Pc Pat McDonald



GONE: David Ryall with the statue that has been stolen

Sadness at theft of statue

A SEVENTY-year-old bronze statue of an angel which was to be the centrepiece of a pageant next year was stolen from the entrance to Sibford Parish Church last weekend.

The statue, known as the Spirit of Sibford, was commissioned by famous Victorian pageant master Frank Lascelles who lived in the village in the early part of this century.

Keith Hicks, chairman of the Pageant Business Committee, said the theft was a disaster.

"The police have considered the possibility that it is a collector's item and that it may have been stolen to order and could already be in someone's private collection."

"It's a disaster for the church and the Pageant because it's central to its theme."

The pageant uses the character of the angel to narrate and link 20 different scenes for the historic production next June.

Local actor and director David Ryall, who wrote the script for the pageant and will direct it, said: "A lot of villagers are very upset about it disappearing."





Sibford Club Day
outside the Church
(early 1900 &
2007)



Holy Trinity Church Choir with Rev
Leonard Moxon (1910 - 1922)



Holy Trinity Church from Sibford Ferris
(circa 1900)



Sibford Club Day
meet outside the Old
Vicarage (1910 &
2007)

Sibford Club Day Re-enactment 2007



Church and Grounds - Maintenance



Special Services



Remembrance Sunday

HOLY TRINITY
CHURCH
SIBFORD



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