

MIDDLETON AND  
SON,  
ARCHITECTS.

*Brian E Torode*

## JOHN MIDDLETON – FOREWORD

I have lived in Cheltenham for nearly forty years and for at least three quarters of that time I have worshipped at St Stephen's Church, Tivoli. The church was designed in the 1870s by the architect, **John Middleton**.

When co-writing the history of that church in 1973 I was intrigued by the lack of information that was available about this man, especially prior to establishing himself in Cheltenham. There were parish histories of two of his Cheltenham churches and a reasonable amount of archive material for St Stephen's but nothing about the man himself. I soon became familiar with legends surrounding his reasons for coming to Cheltenham, legends, which with the passing of time had become accepted as fact. Mention of any of his churches and sure enough, people knew that they were 'by Middleton' but little else.

What was known locally about Middleton and his work had its origin in a book written in 1949 by L W Barnard, FRIBA, '*Ninety Years Past, A History of the Office of L W Barnard and Partners.*' This firm was the successor to that which had been started in Cheltenham by John Middleton in the early 1860s.

At the time I was researching the St Stephen's Parish History, the colleague with whom I was working arranged to borrow the Middleton archives – ledgers, cash books, contract books and one or two petty account books. We pored over these at great length but of course at that time, anything that did not relate specifically to St Stephen's seemed irrelevant. There was nothing that gave any clues to Middleton's background. On completion of the parish history, the archive material was returned and this has since been deposited at the Gloucestershire Record Office together with an extensive collection of plans and drawings. My interest then waned for a while. Nevertheless whenever I saw Middleton's name in print, or heard his name mentioned, I made note of it and gradually built up a miscellaneous collection of Middleton references. Pressure of work meant that there was little time to pursue this interest further. It was not until I ceased full time employment in 1995 that I was able to devote considerable time to pursuing the life and work of the man who has become almost 'one of the family'.

Some sources were obvious – the Pevsner Architectural Guides, Blue Guides, the Library of the RIBA, local libraries and the Gloucestershire Record Office. Others were not so obvious and came about by chance. One major breakthrough was a faded signature on a letter in the Darlington Local Studies Centre which put me in touch with Dr W Fawcett who was at the time researching the Stockton and Darlington Railway. The letter which he had written had casually mentioned John Middleton. Another breakthrough came via a Methodist Church Magazine for the same area of the County of Durham which contained an article about the diary of two architectural students who had been articulated to John Middleton, 'a local architect'. Finally, a reference to John Middleton in the catalogue of the Medals Collection at the British Museum really motivated me to find out more about this man who had made such an impression on the Victorian skyline of Cheltenham, but who appeared to be without recognition in the Northeast.

Little did I realise that during the next few years I would be travelling hundreds of miles in search of Middleton's work; meeting countless people who had heard of him but knew nothing **about** him; helping to bring together pockets of information about his Practice in the Northeast of England, the Midlands - Gloucestershire in particular - and Wales; and helping to raise awareness of this unassuming man.

The results of my research are in no way intended to provide an architectural appraisal of Middleton's work and most of the architectural descriptions and comments have been taken

from contemporary sources. I am happy to leave the architectural merits or defects of his work to be assessed by those who are qualified to do so. My sole intention has been to help people to become more aware of the vast amount of work for which he was responsible, to give a taste of his architectural style and I hope, to put flesh and bones onto what has so far been little more than a shadow.

To have designed five Gothic Victorian Churches in one town is no mean achievement. If you enjoy the trail through the pages of this book, my hope is that you will be encouraged to take up the challenge as I have done, and visit these and the many other extant memorials to someone whom Sir Hugh Casson had been misled into describing as “an obscure provincial architect.”\*

It is my privilege at this point to acknowledge the tremendous help I have received from Christopher Bishop, Thomas Lloyd and Bill Fawcett, all of whom have willingly shared their research and knowledge of Middleton with me. Also without the patient and encouraging assistance given to me by Richard Barton in so many ways, from driving and navigating, through to editing, note taking and proof reading, my task would have indeed been much harder and perhaps never completed.

Brian Torode, Cheltenham 2003.

\*Sir Hugh lived in Cheltenham during the Second World War and had seen the Speech Hall at Cheltenham Ladies' College. He made enquiries through the RIBA about John Middleton, whom he had been wrongly informed was responsible for designing the Hall.

**Abbreviations used in the Text:**

BGAS	Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society.
FRIBA	Fellow, Royal Institute of British Architects.
GA	Gloucestershire Record Office.
ICBS	Incorporated Church Building Society.
NLW	National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.
PRONI	Public Record Office, Northern Ireland.
RCAHM Wales	Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales.
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects.

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## CHAPTER 1

### *Middleton's early years and education; his family circumstances; the background to his architectural training in the office of JP Pritchett in York.*

Very little has been written about the life and career of John Middleton, although in recent times there has been an interest in his work particularly in the Cheltenham area. He has received recognition in *Pevsner's The Buildings of England* series but little has been published about his early years, private life and architectural training or the variety of work which he accomplished in the north of England, the Midlands and Wales. His career, including training, spanned the years 1840-1885, the latter date being the year in which he died while supervising a contract in Wales. This account of his life will, I hope, not only paint a picture of the background against which his career developed but also introduce the reader to most of his known architectural work in the areas mentioned above.

Contemporary newspaper accounts do provide information about some of the buildings with which Middleton was involved and the descriptions vary in length from the very detailed to the cursory. However parish records are the main source for information about his early years in the City of York, and it with these that we begin.

John Middleton's marriage certificate provides the essential clues to an understanding of his roots and this, together with archival material available in the Borthwick Institute, York, makes it possible to compile a fairly comprehensive picture of Middleton's parentage and family connections.

The marriage certificate provides the following information:

Married at Lendal Chapel York, 10<sup>th</sup> July 1844  
John Middleton full age bachelor, architect of Bondgate, Darlington, son of Thomas Middleton, flour dealer.  
Maria Margaret Pritchett, full age spinster, of Lendal in the City of York, daughter of James Pigott Pritchett, architect.  
According to the rites of the Protestant Independent Dissenters, by Richard Pritchett, Independent Minister, in the presence of Caleb Williams and JP Pritchett, witnesses. (1)

We know from the many obituaries published at the time of his death, that John Middleton was born in the City of York in 1820, the exact date, 27<sup>th</sup> August, appearing on his gravestone in Cheltenham Cemetery. A search of York Parish Registers was successful in finding his baptism details:

Thomas and Hannah Middleton of Lower Goodramgate, fellmonger, a son John, baptised by James Dallin, 5<sup>th</sup> September 1820, Holy Trinity, Goodramgate. (2)

Further searches showed that a Thomas Middleton was baptised in the same church on January 20<sup>th</sup> 1774, ‘the son of George and Catherine Middleton of Delpike Parish.’

*Baines Yorkshire Directory* for 1823 lists a George Middleton at 90, Goodramgate and the 1830 *Pearson and White Directory* gives the same address for Thomas Middleton. It seems reasonable to assume that this was the family home of John’s grandparents and of his own parents after their marriage in 1806:

Thomas Middleton of this parish, and Hannah Sowersby, parish of Sculcotes, Hull: married by banns by WN at St Cuthbert’s Church, York, 24<sup>th</sup> May 1806.

Witnesses George Middleton and John Thompson. (3)

In the light of this evidence it is safe to say that it was at 90 Goodramgate that John Middleton was born, in August 1820, fourteen years after his parents’ marriage. These assumptions are substantiated by Middleton’s inheritance settlement which will be looked at in detail later.

90 Goodramgate still stands today, in one of the oldest parts of York. It retains the distinctive features so easily recognisable in an 1893 photograph. (4). The house was next to a shop, which in 1893 was a general store and in 2001 a shop for the National Trust, Middleton’s house providing the Trust’s Tea Rooms. The house still has its original door and window light, above which is a projecting square bay, which may originally have had a pitched roof. The shop and the house stand in the shadow of the Minster and this proximity was made even more noticeable in 1903 when neighbouring shops were demolished and Deangate was cut through. One can easily imagine the young ten-year old Middleton, walking to and from school, listening to the Minster bells, as though they were being rung in his back yard. Perhaps as he admired the sheer enormity of the Minster and compared it to the compactness of number 90, he was filled with the ambition to become an architect in later life. However his early years were not totally without challenge and sorrow.

*The Yorkshire Gazette* of 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1833 carried the news that Thomas Middleton of Goodramgate in the City of York had ‘died after a severe illness which he bore with great resolution.’ He was described as ‘a shopkeeper, an active parishioner and a good neighbour, an affectionate husband and a tender parent, respected by all who knew him.’ (5) Thomas was also a Freeman of the City of York, admitted 1<sup>st</sup> February 1798 as a skinner, having served a seven years apprenticeship under an indenture of 24<sup>th</sup> December 1789, to Marmaduke Buckle. Skinner is appropriate to his trade as a fellmonger at the time of John’s birth. His death after twenty-seven years of marriage left his wife Hannah a widow, with a thirteen-year old son. Hannah and John were not left without means however. In August 1833, just three months before his death, Thomas had made a will witnessed by Robert Hudson, Richard Bell and R Henry Anderson, in which he nominated as his executors his brother-in-law John Sowersby, gentleman of Goodramgate, (6) and Caleb Williams of Micklegate in the city, surgeon. The whole of his estate, ‘property, real estate, goods, chattels, monies, securities for money and personal estate’ was left in trust through his executors, for his ‘dear wife Hannah Middleton’, who was to receive rent, interest and proceeds for her own use and benefit during her natural life. The will added that out of these proceeds she was to ‘maintain, clothe and educate my only son John Middleton



until he attain the age of twenty-one years.’ Provision was made should Hannah die before he reached the age of twenty-one, which did in fact happen. In such an event, all proceeds were to be used by the executors to clothe maintain and educate young John. Should Hannah and John die before John’s majority, everything was to pass to the said John Sowersby and his sister Ann, young John’s maternal uncle and aunt.

The executors were authorised to transfer or alter stocks or securities as they saw appropriate and to appoint new trustees should either become incapable. Probate was granted on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1834, the value of the estate being under £800.

Thomas Middleton was only fifty-nine when he died and John continued to live with his mother and possibly his uncle John, in Goodramgate. However, further tragedy was less than a year away. An announcement appeared in *The Yorkshire Gazette* that on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1834, ‘Mrs Middleton, relict of the late Thomas, flour dealer,’ had died. (7) The Burial Register for Holy Trinity records her interment on 30<sup>th</sup> October. (8) At the young age of fourteen, John Middleton was orphaned, and his mother’s brother, John Sowersby, became his guardian. It would seem that there was no other family apart perhaps from the above mentioned Ann, for when John Sowersby died in 1860, he left everything to ‘John Middleton, my only nephew, architect,’ apart from two small bequests of £19 each.

The other executor of his father’s will, Caleb Williams, was a surgeon who was also a Quaker. His son Isaac attended Bootham School in York, a Quaker school for the more affluent members of the Society of Friends. (9) It seems strange that Caleb and not John Sowersby was a co-witness to the marriage between John Middleton and Maria Pritchett in 1844. When Caleb Williams died in 1871, his estate was valued at £35,000, a considerable sum in those days, but John Middleton was not one of the beneficiaries.

The years immediately after the death of his parents must have been extremely hard for young John. It would appear that his uncle and guardian carried out the wishes of his parents in ensuring the upbringing for John that they had envisaged. Up to the age of fifteen he was a pupil at Mr Monkman’s School in College Street, almost behind his home and near the east end of the Minster. The school was a private preparatory school, and as there were then so few houses in the street, it is probable that the school formed part of St William’s College buildings. Thus John’s journey to school would have taken him only minutes in the direction of the Minster.

On 8<sup>th</sup> February 1836 at the age of fifteen, John Middleton transferred to the York Collegiate School. The Register for this period records:

Middleton, John, (15) Ref 1/214  
8 February 1836 – Midsummer 1838  
Lives with Mr Sowerby (sic) Goodramgate, York.  
Previously at Mr Monkman’s School, York.

The fees were £10 per annum and the hours were from 9 am until noon, and from 2 pm until 5 pm. Until February 1838, the school was at 5 New Street after which it moved to a new site at Clifton on land once owned by Guy Fawkes. The new building continued the name ‘The Collegiate School’ but shortly afterwards it was changed to

'The Proprietary School'. The boys were notorious for smoking and fighting. John Middleton spent only two terms at the new site leaving at the age of 18 in Midsummer 1838 (10)

It would seem that immediately upon leaving school, Middleton entered the office of James Pigott Pritchett, as a pupil architect. The office was only a short distance from Goodramgate and the usual apprenticeship was for five years. Whether Middleton continued to live with his uncle John is not known, but one must remember that from 1841 he would have inherited the benefits of the Trust set up by his father and would therefore have been able to pay his own pupilage premium from that time. (11) Architects at that period received no formal training and did not have to work towards examinations for recognised qualifications. (12) The Institute of British Architects had only been founded in 1834, becoming 'Royal' in 1837 and in the early years at least, one was nominated and hopefully elected a member. (13)

James Pigott Pritchett was not a native of York although it is in that area that his work is best known. He was born at St Petrox, Pembrokeshire, in 1789 where his father was Rector and a Prebendary of St David's Cathedral. (14) How or why James became interested in architecture is not clear, but we know that by 1808 he was articled to the architect James Medland, in Southwark. He later spent two years with the 'brilliant and successful architect' Daniel Asher Alexander. (15) He became a student at the Royal Academy where he exhibited in 1808 and 1809, before beginning practice in London in 1812. (16) After only two or three commissions he moved to York where for eighteen years he worked in partnership with Charles Watson at what was 11, Blossom Street, just outside Micklegate Bar. (17) The partnership was dissolved in 1830, when at the age of forty-two Pritchett opened his own office at 13, Lendal, York. (18)

Whilst working and studying in London James had become a non-conformist and attached himself to the ultra-Calvinist Independent Congregation. Within a short while of settling in York, he had become a leading layman amongst the Independent Congregation in that city. (19) Although they claimed to adhere to the doctrines of the Church of England, the Independent Dissenters were entirely self-governing. Their church at Lendal was designed by Pritchett during his partnership with Watson and was formally opened in November 1816. (20) James and his wife Peggy were Founder Members of the Congregation in the city and at that time their address was Micklegate Bar on the other side of the river from Lendal.

James and Peggy were blessed with three sons and a daughter, who became adult members of Lendal Chapel. Their daughter Maria, the future Mrs Middleton, was formally admitted in 1837 and remained an active member until her marriage and move to Darlington in 1844. (21)

James' wife Peggy died in 1827 and James re-married two years later. His second wife was Caroline Benson and by her he added three more sons and two daughters to his family. The eldest of these sons was born on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1830 and was named James Pigott Pritchett after his father. This James was to play a significant part in the early architectural career of John Middleton.

James Pritchett senior became a Deacon in the Lendal Chapel Sunday School and was its superintendent until 1850. As a Christian he used his architectural talents to affirm his Protestant Faith whenever possible and this can be easily recognised even in his Anglican churches. He maintained a liking for Ionic or Corinthian columns but also developed a penchant for Tudor and Gothic design which he employed in building Huddersfield and Cheadle (Staffordshire) Anglican churches. (22) His practice in York was extensive and his many contacts through his religious and social interests helped in promoting his reputation among potential clients.

James did not enter into another partnership after leaving Watson, until he was joined by two of his own sons, Charles and James, whom he accepted as pupils. Others whom Pritchett engaged as pupils and encouraged in their profession were Walter Blackett, JC Gilbert, Samuel Whitfield Daukes, James Medland junior and John Middleton. (23) Of these, three came south and worked in the Cheltenham–Gloucester area. Daukes was working there as early as 1834, and Medland joined him as his chief assistant remaining with him until Daukes departed for London in 1846. (24) The third pupil was John Middleton who came to Cheltenham in 1859, perhaps at the suggestion of Medland or Daukes. Pritchett’s son Charles, Middleton’s brother-in-law, was also working in Gloucestershire by 1860, at Wotton-under-Edge, and was still there in the mid 1870s.

Many of the architectural practices at the time were small family affairs with a few assistants, pupils and clerks. The pupils worked closely together, the older ones being expected to encourage the younger ones, and relationships thus built up often continued well into later life. (25) Successful and socially admired practices attracted ambitious pupils and a successful apprenticeship pedigree was an excellent recommendation. Young, newly professed architects entered design competitions which appeared in building journals of the 1840s and even if they were not successful at least their name was brought to the attention of those in circles where it mattered most. *The Builder* recorded the details of the major competitions, commented on the quality of the plans and in some cases reproduced them. (26)

No doubt Middleton and other pupils would have accompanied Pritchett on visits to his many projects in the counties of northern England. Likewise Pritchett would have supervised his pupils to comment and advise upon the work which he had entrusted to them in the early years of their professional training. Eventually the time came for John Middleton to take advantage of all that he had learnt, to leave the security of the Pritchett Practice and to set up as an architect in his own right.

### ***References, Chapter 1.***

- 1 *Borthwick Texts & Calendars 18; York.*
- 2 *ibid.*
- 3 *ibid.*
- 4 York City Archives.
- 5 York Reference Library. The reference to Freeman is in the Freeman’s Register in York Archives, kindly brought to my attention by W Fawcett.
- 6 In his own will, John wrote ‘Sowerby’.
- 7 York Reference Library.
- 8 The burial register records her age as 57 years.
- 9 Mr G Wakeman, Archivist, Bootham School, York.

10 For information about Middleton's school days I am indebted to Mr JV Mitchell, Hon  
 Archivist of St Peter's School, Clifton, York. The Collegiate School/Proprietary School  
 amalgamated with St Peter's School, in 1844 and adopted the name St Peter's School.

11 In the 1841 Census, he is not listed as living with his mentor, James Pigott Pritchett.

12 Potts.

13 James Medland, a contemporary of Middleton, became a member of the RIBA in 1837 at  
 the age of twenty-nine.

14 Colvin.

15 Broadbent. Mr Graham Potts brought my attention to the fact that Alexander was architect  
 to the London Dock Company.

16 Colvin.

17 Royal Commission on Historic Monuments, *Inventory of the City of York*, Vol III. Number  
 11 referred to here is currently number 26, Blossom Street.

18 Broadbent. The *Yorkshire Gazette* of January 1<sup>st</sup> 1831 carried an advertisement inviting  
 applications for the position as articled clerk with James Pigott Pritchett at 13, Lendal.  
 Pritchett was still living at this address 1851 but he died at his retirement address at St  
 Mary's, Bootham, in 1868.

19 *Borthwick Texts and Calendars* 18.

20 The Chapel was registered in the Consistory Court of the Archdiocese of York on 4<sup>th</sup>  
 November 1816 as a place of worship for Protestant Dissenters. *Borthwick Texts* op cit.

21 *ibid.*

22 *ibid.* Colvin gives a comprehensive list of Pritchett's work during his time with Watson and  
 afterwards.

23 Of Pritchett's pupils who came to Gloucestershire, Daukes, 1811-1880, designed many  
 houses including his own home, Tudor Lodge, The Park, Cheltenham. The house was  
 demolished in 1968. Further work in Cheltenham included Lansdown Railway Station,  
 while he was architect for the Birmingham & Gloucester Railway 1839-1842; St Peter's  
 Church, Tewkesbury Road and St Paul's Teacher Training College, now Francis Close Hall  
 and part of the University of Gloucestershire. He also designed the Register Office,  
 Tewkesbury, which was completed in 1839 when he was only 28. It was at this time that  
 he formed a partnership with JR Hamilton in Gloucester and in 1845 he designed St  
 Saviour's Church Tetbury, 'a little church for the poor' for the Reverend Charles Lowder.  
 This has been described as a model Tractarian Church. He moved to London c1848 but  
 completed the church at Edge as late as 1865.

24 James Medland, another former pupil who came to Gloucestershire was the son of the  
 James Medland to whom Pritchett himself had been articled in 1808. James junior, 1808-  
 1894 came as chief assistant to Daukes according to Medland's obituary in the Gloucester  
 Journal. Upon Daukes' departure to London, Medland went into partnership with Hamilton.  
 He later formed a partnership with William Maberley a former pupil of Daukes. The old  
 Gloucester Cemetery was designed by this partnership 1856-1857. Medland was County  
 Surveyor from 1857-1889 but due to deafness most of the site work was supervised by his  
 son whom he took into the practice to form the firm of Medland, Maberley and Medland.  
 James' most notable works which survive in the County of Gloucester today are the front  
 of Tewkesbury Town Hall, the entrance to Cirencester's Corn Hall and the entrance to  
 Gloucester's Eastgate Market. Christopher Bishop MA, RIBA remarked on the striking  
 similarity between the Corn Hall and some of Pritchett's work while Medland was his pupil.  
 The 1841 Census for the Parish of St Wilfrid, York, includes Charles Gilbert and William  
 Jackson, clerks, both aged 15, living with Pritchett at 13, Lendal.

25 Dixon & Muthesius

26 Harper.

## CHAPTER II

### *Early years in Bondgate, Darlington; Cleveland Lodge and Ayton Quaker School.*

Darlington will be remembered by most people as a railway centre for it was there that the locally born Edward Pease, the Quaker industrialist, gave considerable support to George Stephenson's steam locomotive project. With Stephenson he was responsible for what has been called 'the world's first public railway', the Stockton and Darlington, which until 1833 used steam for coal traffic and horse-drawn carriages for passengers. In 1841 the Great North of England Railway Company opened to passengers and brought the main-line railway to Darlington. A station was built at Bank Top to serve the town and neighbourhood. With the large number of construction workers and labourers seeking employment on the railways, the town's population increased dramatically. (1)

In the local directories up to 1829 hardly any architects are listed although there were several in the neighbouring towns and cities such as York, Durham and Newcastle. This lack of local professionals may have motivated Middleton to choose Darlington as the place in which to begin practice as an architect in 1843/44. However he may equally have been drawn by the potential he saw in the expansion of the railway system. On the other hand, he may have been encouraged by his future brother-in-law, Richard Charles Pritchett, who was Minister to the Protestant Dissenters in the town from 1840 and who officiated at the marriage between John and Maria in York in July 1844. (2) But having considered all these options, what was probably the most likely reason for his move to Darlington is that his mentor, James Pigott Pritchett helped to set him up in business to mark that impending marriage. Whether Middleton was acting as Pritchett's agent in the town but working under his own name, or whether he was the owner of the practice is unclear, and the explanation is not made easier by the terms of James Pigott Pritchett's will made in 1861. There he states that upon his death, he wishes his son James Pigott Pritchett to receive 'all the furniture, professional books, paper and instruments in the offices at York, Darlington and Huddersfield.' The inferences to be drawn from this statement will become clearer – or perhaps more tantalising – when we consider later, Middleton's move from Darlington upon relinquishing his involvement with the practice.

Whatever the reasons surrounding Middleton's move from York to Darlington, it is very likely that the influence of his former guardian, the surgeon Caleb Williams of Micklegate Bar, York, may have contributed towards Middleton obtaining what might be his first commission. On 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1844 *The Newcastle Chronicle* carried an advertisement for tradesmen to complete the following building contract:

Workmen desirous of giving tenders for various works required in building a RESIDENCE etc at Ayton near Stokesley, for Thomas Richardson esq. may see PLANS and SPECIFICATIONS at the Gas House Office, Middlesbrough, from Tuesday morning 5<sup>th</sup> to Saturday evening 9<sup>th</sup> March; and at my office from Tuesday morning 12<sup>th</sup> to Saturday evening 16<sup>th</sup> March. J Middleton, Architect, Darlington. February 27<sup>th</sup> 1844

The client, Thomas Richardson, was born in Darlington in September 1771 (3) His aunt Mary married Joseph Pease and their son Edward, Thomas' cousin, became the great railway developer. The parents of Thomas were not wealthy and he received little schooling. In his early teens he was apprenticed to a Quaker grocer in Sunderland but when the apprenticeship was completed he felt the call of the big city. Edward Pease, his cousin, paid his fare to London and gave him one guinea and a letter of introduction to a firm of Quaker Bankers in Lombard Street. Pease's confidence in Thomas' potential proved well founded and Richardson soon repaid that trust. Before long he became self-supporting and was able to send money to assist his parents. He married Martha Beilby (4) in 1799 and within a short while he had teamed up with his brother-in-law, a Yorkshire Quaker by the name of John Overend. They set themselves up as bill brokers, to be joined later by another Quaker, Samuel Gurney of Norwich and together they founded the firm of Richardson, Overend and Gurney. So successful were they that in 1830 Richardson was able to retire from the firm, and return north to pursue new interests. Long before this he had settled his parents in Ayton where his paternal grandmother had once lived. (5) Both his parents had died in the 1820s, but in view of the poor health of his wife Martha, he felt sufficiently drawn to the village to take the lease on Ayton House. He still had cousins living there – the Hasletons – and he got on well with them. He had invested money in the Stockton and Darlington Railway, was one of the original directors and partnered George and Robert Stephenson and Edward Pease in the former's locomotive works in Newcastle. One of his other interests was a philanthropic concern for Quaker schooling.

During his time at Ayton House, Richardson cut down some trees without consulting the owner. Legal proceedings were threatened but Richardson prevented this being taken further by paying out-of-court damages. However, the lease on the house which expired in 1842 was not renewed and he determined to build his own house and began the search for a suitable site in the village. One was eventually found and from 4<sup>th</sup> June 1844 he took possession of Sand Hill Field with two adjoining fields. Caleb Williams, one of the executors of Middleton's father's will and a Quaker, served on the Ayton School Committee with Richardson and may have suggested young and newly qualified Middleton to him. By early 1844 plans had been prepared for a new house and contracts had been signed. (6) Preparations began at once and foundations were dug. In the meanwhile, Richardson, now a widower, rented furnished accommodation in the village - the former home of the late doctor - and stored furniture in the village school. (7) Middleton supervised the work and in less than a year, the house was adequately habitable and the roof was in place. A party was held for the workmen and in order that Richardson could vacate his rented accommodation a few rooms in the house were hurriedly completed and furnished. Naming the house did present a problem as the word 'Ayton' was already used in several house names in the area. Eventually 'Cleveland Lodge' was decided upon.

Later on, his niece and brother-in-law came to stay with him, and remained until his death in April 1853. This took place at Redcar where he was holidaying for the benefit of his health. In his will, he left the house to his cousins Sophia and John Pease, who had been frequent guests at the house. While he was alive it had always been his hope that after his death they would make their home at Cleveland Lodge. This they did and after their respective deaths, their daughter Mary Anna and her husband, Jonathan Backhouse Hodgkin, moved from Darlington to live there. (8)

Cleveland Lodge is a country villa built on high ground east of the town of Ayton. It comprises two storeys and five bays and is of sandstone ashlar. There is a two-storey wing to the east for the servants, but this was probably added to Middleton's original house at a later date. The house has a hipped roof, good classical detailing and a solid porch with square columns. The three-bay garden front has a large central one-storey bow window and the north return has a small bellcote which is still in working order. (9) Internally the house is centrally planned around square halls on the ground and first floors which continue as a light well in the centre of the roof. The two central halls have broad shallow elliptical arches opening from each side. On the north these give access to the staircase which rises one flight to the half landing and then branches into two flights which return either side of the lower one to the first floor. On the upper floor the other arches lead into shallow vestibules providing corridor access to the bedrooms. On the ground floor the three principal rooms are the drawing room in the south-west corner, the dining room to the south-east and between these is a smaller room which ends in the bow window. This room is called the library but is no wider than the bow window. The two main rooms have chunky fireplaces in English marble, white in the drawing room and dark veined in the dining room. The stable and garden range to the east may be Middleton's but are more likely to be remainders from an earlier property on the site. (10)

This was quite an important undertaking for a newly qualified architect and it probably served as a testimonial for his second commission in Ayton. This was for alterations and additions to the Quaker Ayton School, with which Middleton was involved from 1846.

Up to 1854 members of the Society of Friends were deprived of their membership of the Society if they married out. This obviously made a considerable impact upon membership, but also denied Quakers who did marry out, the right to obtain sound Quaker instruction for their offspring. However, before this date, the Society gradually became more tolerant especially after a school had been successfully opened in Northern Ireland for the education of the children of such unions. Two Ayton members, Jonathan Backhouse and his wife, travelled to Ireland to visit the school with the view to establishing a similar institution in the Durham/Yorkshire area. They were impressed but asked a Quaker schoolmaster also to visit the school and report back with his professional opinion. His report was very complimentary and a special committee of influential families – Backhouse, Holmes, Pease and Richardson – was formed to take the matter further. They were much encouraged in 1841 when it was announced that Thomas Richardson had promised to contribute £5000 towards the purchase of a suitable estate in the Ayton area on which to build a school. The only proviso was that it had to provide an education which was in accordance with the Christian ethos of the Society of Friends. The offer was of course readily and eagerly accepted and George Dixon was appointed the first Headmaster of the proposed Quaker Agricultural School for the North of England. (11)

The chosen Ayton property belonged to Thomas Richardson's cousins, the Hasletons who were also members of the Society of Friends. The property consisted of a handsome Georgian house, a mill, and several cottages adjoining the Friends' Meeting House. As would be expected, alterations had to be made to the property and the committee employed Mr William Holmes of Newcastle to produce the plans and

superintend the conversion. (12) While all this was happening Thomas Richardson was renting Ayton House, and was therefore able to make regular visits to see the progress on the conversion of the school building. By November 1841 the new school's premises – the conversion of the Hasleton house and the rebuilding of the cottages next door – was complete. However Richardson was not entirely happy with boys and girls sharing facilities, apart from meals, and in 1846 shortly after the completion of Cleveland Lodge, Middleton was asked to undertake work at the school. It would seem that Holmes, the original architect, had retired from the project. Middleton was shown draft plans of the committee's proposals and asked to take them on. He produced his own detailed plans from these drafts early in the same year and work began immediately.

The instructions which Middleton received were that 'the farm accommodation adjoining the boys' playgrounds might be eligibly removed across the way and a school, playroom and shop erected on the scite. (sic).' The minutes agreeing to Middleton's actual plans referred to 'the new buildings for all the necessary purposes connected with kitchen, laundry and new dormitory for the boys to be erected under the superintendence of Mr Middleton, architect.' (13)

Thomas Richardson continued to give the school his support right up to the time of his death. In 1846 he contributed £1000 towards the work that Middleton was supervising, 'for the purpose of promoting better training of girls in domestic duties and a schoolroom to remove the boys further from the premises occupied by the girls.' The work had been originally estimated at £2000 but the building committee, when considering the plans, was informed that 'our friend Thomas Richardson has kindly intimated his wish that the work should not in any matter be curtailed to the prejudice of the future accommodation of the institution.' The school's annual report for 1846 also refers to Middleton's provision of amply commodious accommodation allotted to the culinary and laundry operations and various other improvements. The 1847 annual report refers to the gift of an entirely new schoolroom and some adjoining cottages with very material improvements to the main building, which were completed in 1848 according to that year's report. (14)

Two letters signed by Middleton are in the school's archive and these confirm the minutes of the building committee for 1847 when Middleton had reported 'a considerable deflexion (sic) in the beams under the girls' schoolroom and it appears almost impracticable to restore them to their original state, further proposing to substitute new ones.' The committee suggested iron columns be placed under each beam as an effectual and proper way of securing the floor. This suggestion was accepted by Middleton for the schoolroom but not for the dining room. The letters also suggest some of the day to day problems with which Middleton had to deal, on behalf of his clients. He had examined the charges made by one contractor, which had been challenged by the building committee and had 'found a series of false and mischarges. Half the amount would be ample remuneration for the work done....but I will meet the contractor to give his explanation.'

Middleton's main work for the school however was the large block in dressed stone which looks very institutional indeed. The belfry which surmounts this building has an inscribed date of 1846. (15) Dr W. Fawcett commenting on the structure said, "I am pleased to see a stylistic idiosyncrasy which also appears in some of Middleton's



more modest buildings for the Wear and Derwent Junction Railway. This is the use of very deep monolithic stone lintels which have a pronounced segmental arch cut out of the soffit. This is a peculiar thing to do rather than using just a flat lintel. The same motif appears in the low block further east along the road to Little Ayton.” (16)

To celebrate the school’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1891, a bronze medal was struck showing the original Ayton School in the centre and the Middleton block of 1846 to the left. The Richardson Bridge over the River Leven is in the foreground. (17) It was a great delight when visiting Ayton in 2000 to meet a former matron of the school who possessed one of these medals and to be able to talk to her about the school and its development. (18) The Friends’ Meeting House alongside the school contains the gravestone of Thomas Richardson as well as a wall mounted memorial stone. Many of the older residents of Ayton hold very happy memories of the school and its contribution to the community, but since its closure in 1997 the buildings have undergone an extensive conversion into domestic accommodation and now form the nucleus of a most attractive private estate set in ornamental grounds.

## ***References, Chapter II***

### ***Bondgate***

- 1 Fawcett
- 2 *Borthwick Texts and Calendars 18*

### ***Cleveland Lodge***

- 3 The life of Richardson is taken mainly from *The Centenary History of Ayton School 1941*.
- 4 Beilby or Beelby
- 5 Dixon, George. Jubilee History of Ayton School 1891
- 6 Perhaps Williams recommended him to Richardson as both were Quakers.
- 7 Dixon, op cit.
- 8 ibid
- 9 Listed Buildings description Grade II 2/78 and 12/78. The Gate Lodge and the Almshouses were designed at a later date by Ross and Richardson of Darlington. (Drawings Collection .
- .. at Darlington Library, Centre for Local Studies.)
- 10 Fawcett.

### ***Ayton School***

- 11 *Centenary History*. op cit and George Dixon op cit...
12. A William Holmes is recorded in Colvin as having died in 1847 aged 86. This may be the Holmes referred to here as no other references have been found.
- 13 *Centenary History* and School Minutes. The shop = workshop
- 14 School Minutes and correspondence at North Yorkshire County Record Office, North Allerton, Ayton School Records Ref ZFA.
- 15 The *Centenary History* dates the clock 1861.
- 16 He used a similar technique on the lintels of the Central Hall Darlington.
- 17 Taylor.
- 18 Miss Cumbor very kindly showed me her copy of the medal and also gave me valuable .....suggestions as to sources for information on Ayton School and the life of Thomas .....Richardson. She is very proud of her original cartoon of Richardson-‘A Friend in Lombard .....Street.’

## CHAPTER III

### *Darlington and the railways; railway architecture; the Durham Moors; Middlesbrough and Redcar; St John's Church, Central Hall and High Row Bank, Darlington.*

Returning to the expanding town of Darlington in the 1840s one can appreciate the developing career of John Middleton as one becomes familiar with his railway commissions, ecclesiastical and commercial contracts and the provision of social amenities for the town. He established himself in the part of the town named Bondgate and the premises, number 85, provided a home for himself and later, his wife and son, as well as being his business address. In the early days, he probably worked without assistants other than clerks of works and much of his time would have been taken up with travelling to sites, sometimes involving overnight absence from home. His first local work would appear to be that for the Stockton and Darlington Railway Board. On 16<sup>th</sup> August 1844 the Board minuted their wish to 'seek the assistance of a reputable architect in the neighbourhood in connection with the building of a new station at Stockton.' At the next meeting of the Board it is recorded that John Middleton's assistance was being harnessed in the conversion of a warehouse for the Company. This contract was presumably successfully accomplished for in October he was again employed to 'render his professional assistance to the Company.' This involved undertaking any work which it might put his way and for which he would receive an annual retainer - 50 guineas in the first year - plus expenses and free rail travel. (1)

It is well known that the enthusiasm for the railway came from the Pease family which owned woollen mills in the town of Darlington, and the family's wealth ensured that it played a significant part in the Railway Company's management. (2) As the Company grew it sponsored other companies to build new lines and these eventually amalgamated with the Stockton and Darlington. This was of course good news for Middleton who between 1845 and 1849 became architect to:

The Wear and Derwent Junction Railway, opened in 1845

The Middlesbrough and Redcar Railway, opened in 1846

The Wear Valley Railway, opened 1847

For a newly established practice, his contract, which lasted until 1849, must have seemed very attractive providing as it did an assured annual income, small though it might seem by today's standards. Much of the work would have been routine additions, repairs, alterations and the solving of structural problems. (3) The Company engineer would have decided the requirements and layout for any new projects and the architect - in this case Middleton - would bring them to reality. He would also have worked very closely with the engineer when planning the more specialised buildings.

The Wear and Derwent Railway crossed a high, exposed stretch of the Durham Moors and a new railway village was planned and built on the line at what became known as Waskerley. Middleton designed homes for the several dozen railway workers and their families as well as some social amenities. He also designed engine sheds and

repair sheds. A report in *The North East Journal* in August 1957 recalled the days when most of the inhabitants were busy in the engine sheds and repair shops, and about fifty houses provided homes for the 200 or so inhabitants. The railway has long gone, and in the year 2000 the village appeared more isolated than it had ever done. Sadly, only two or three of Middleton's railway buildings were still standing and these were in a very poor state of repair.

Not far from Darlington is the town of Middlesbrough which in Middleton's time was a reasonably new and developing town. It had been developed by Joseph Pease and a group of speculative Quaker businessmen who purchased just over 500 acres of land in 1831. The Stockton and Darlington Railway needed a coal-shipping place on the Tees downstream of some navigational hazards which made river traffic from their original shipping place at Stockton, both slow and hazardous. The Middlesbrough Owners as they were called, saw the need for a small town to accompany this and developed it as a commercial venture. (4) To promote this developing industry a dock was opened in the new town in 1842 specifically to handle coal traffic (5) To serve the dock, the Owners built a branch line from the Stockton and Darlington line. One of Middleton's contributions to the development was the design of the clock tower and the supervision of its erection in 1847. It was used as a reservoir for maintaining hydraulic pressure for the operation of the lock gates and later, dockside cranes. (6) Among the Middlesbrough Owners was the Thomas Richardson for whom Middleton was to work later at Ayton.

His second and more impressive project was the design of the railway station itself. This was a passenger station at the foot of Sussex Street which replaced an earlier one on a site near the riverbank. The foundation stone was laid in June 1846 and the station was opened in July 1847. It was built of stone and brick with a portico with a pair of arches flanking the main entrance which is framed by a pair of Ionic columns. John Pease's father was so irate when he saw the new station that he challenged his son to explain what had induced him to allow such a large building so far from the town, an opinion shared by many of the local inhabitants who also thought it was rather pretentious. (7)

The Middlesbrough to Redcar Line was opened on 4th June 1846 and ran along the banks of the River Tees, for a distance of eight miles. The line had been requested by the residents of Redcar who saw it as essential to maintaining and increasing the popularity of the town as a resort. It would also add to the commercial benefits of the town, especially in the transport of fish to the main market towns. (8) The work took eight months and cost £36,000. Middleton was responsible for designing the elegant terminus and the office buildings. A contemporary visitors' guide described the station as a large handsome building,

'designed by Mr Middleton of Darlington, which will not only be an ornament but of great public utility to the place, particularly by providing a large room eighty feet long, thirty feet wide, an accommodation which has hitherto been much required as a promenade and place of public resort. Refreshment rooms are attached, and a capacious stone balcony will enable the invalid and the loungeur to inhale the fresh sea breeze and to enjoy the prospect over the estuary

of the Tees towards Hartlepool and the southern part of the County of Durham on the one hand, and over a boundless expanse of ocean studded with busy sails on the other.’

The station was neo-classical in design and constructed almost entirely of stone, with a hipped roof and elegant tripartite windows. (9)

*The Newcastle Courant* of January 21<sup>st</sup> 1848 carried the following advertisement:

To Builders: persons desirous of giving tenders for the erection of an hotel and Promenade Room at Redcar may see the plans and specifications at my office from Monday 24<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> January and at Redcar Station from Monday 31<sup>st</sup> to Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 1848. J Middleton, Architect, Darlington. December 29<sup>th</sup> 1847.

This obviously refers to the large promenade room mentioned in the Guide Book quoted above, and again contemporary descriptions of the building also confirm its fate: ‘The Railway Station is at the west end of the village which is not only useful for the purpose for which it was built, but exceedingly ornamental. A large building was erected near to the station intended for a Promenade Room for visitors, but unfortunately was destroyed by fire before it was finished. It is now used as a warehouse.’

The hotel referred to did not materialise. This was a time of recession and there was a dramatic fall in share prices. Middleton was ‘paid off’ with £75 for his plans and the Company did not employ an architect again until 1853. (10)

The inaugural train and the opening of the line was a momentous occasion and hopefully Middleton was mentioned in speeches. The procession left Darlington with Stephenson’s locomotive at the head pulling fourteen trucks of coal and lime. Behind this came an engine of the GNE Railway Company pulling a passenger train of twenty carriages. Both engines sported Union Jacks and on arrival at the docks all the ships were decked with flags. Large crowds lined the route cheering and waving banners. The journey from Darlington to Redcar took two hours and on arrival the formal laying of the foundation stone of the station took place. (11)

None of Middleton’s stations survive on this line, but at Kirkleatham one can still admire a small terrace of railway cottages which he designed for Redcar in 1847. They originally stood alongside the new line at Coatham near the junction of the present Queen Street and Henry Street. When the line was re routed and the original station closed in 1861 the cottages were dismantled and re-erected just west of Kirkleatham Church, in the small estate village just outside Redcar. (12) The cottages are still occupied and are of yellow brick with sandstone dressings. The terrace bears a date shield for 1847 and is very similar in style to his Wear Valley work. With their extensive and beautifully maintained front gardens, the houses form a most appropriate memorial to his railway contract in this area.

The Wear Valley Railway was authorised in July 1845 to extend the Stockton and Darlington network westwards from the Wear Valley Junction to Frosterley. This

opened in August of that year. Middleton's stations on this line are all very similar. Major shareholders were, as could have been predicted, Thomas Richardson and members of the Pease family. *The Newcastle Courant* of 30<sup>th</sup> April 1847 carried the following advertisement:

To Builders; Persons desirous of giving in Tenders for the erection of various stations along the Wear Valley Railway may see plans and specifications at my office, from Monday 10<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>, and at Mrs Clarke's, innkeeper, Witton, from Monday 17<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May. J Middleton, Architect, Darlington, April 26<sup>th</sup> 1847.

Three of his stations still exist although not serving the purpose for which they were built. Wolsingham was in 2000 a private home. It bears a date shield for 1847 and is a listed building. The *Listed Buildings* description gives a detailed picture of the 'station.' 'It is of H plan design in gothic style, the main building being of two storeys with three bays. The centre bay is very wide, the outer two are gabled. The main door with its elaborate hinges and handle is very Tudor in style with arched surround and integral hood mould. All the windows are stone mullioned with sloping sills. The steeply pitched roof carries polygonal brick chimneys on ashlar plinths. They are arranged in pairs on the main ridge and in groups of three on the end ridge. The rear of the building has a platform canopy underlying the outer gables. The interior retains the gothic style chimney pieces and the first floor has one room with the original stucco cornice. The right hand wing at the front of the building has a ground floor bay window while at the rear there is a square bay at first floor level on a terraced plinth.'

(13)

Frosterley Station, was also in the Tudor gothic style. The entrance front has a central projecting bay of two storeys with a steeply pitched gable, flanked by a pair of gabled dormer windows, each originally decorated with ornate bargeboards. The main door is under a steep gable and almost identical to the one at Wolsingham. The side of the building continues as a one-story range which formerly housed the waiting room and booking office. It has a ground floor bay window with tiered stone roof, surmounted by a two-light sash window under a steep gable. The rear of the building had a single storey addition with a pitched roof and ornate decorated barge boards. Unfortunately the main building has had its roof trimmed back, the bargeboards have been removed, the brickwork has been painted white, and the window dressings green. The door however does retain its original ironwork. Above the door two shields have been retained-one bearing the legend J11, a Stockton and Darlington ceramic house number plate used to identify railway property, and above it is another bearing the date 1847.

Another of Middleton's stations on this line is at Witton-le-Wear where it stands in spacious grounds and is in good condition. (14) Built on two storeys and of yellow brick, it bears a striking resemblance to Frosterley, but the similarity has been somewhat marred by an addition of about 1858 to the right of the main door, thus completely hiding the right hand bay. (15) The main door is very similar to those described above and has the familiar shield and date, 1847, above it. The side of the house facing the track remains very much like Frosterley with a similar bay window, and the former ticket office in a one story range (with a later attic dormer) whose roof is swept down to shelter an open waiting area, carried on chunky timber brackets.

Not all of Middleton's railway work consisted of station houses and repair sheds however. He must have shown great delight when asked to design something which allowed more imaginative expression of his artistic skills. The building which he knew would serve the needs of the community for which it was built as well as being admired by the inhabitants of Darlington itself, was his first church.

The increasing number of railway workers in the area around the Bank Top Station presented many challenges to the local authorities as well as to the railway company itself. Matters of concern ranged from the provision of housing and public services to providing accommodation for worship. The latter concern was first addressed by the Company Directors through the provision of a warehouse which could be used for divine worship, until such time as a church could be provided. (16) Representation was then made to the Lord Bishop of Durham and a request sent to the Incorporated Church Building Society for help with the financing of a place of worship. (17) A new ecclesiastical district was created by Order in Council on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1845 and included all that part of the Parish of St Cuthbert, Darlington, to the east of the River Skerne. (18) A lampoon written by Dr Bedoes Peacock describes the state of the area at the time:

At the skirts of the town thus begins my narration,  
Where the railway had raised up a new population,  
Of smiths, stokers, plate-layers, engine men wary,  
And poor reckless navvies, ferocious and hairy.  
Where hucksters and butchers and beer shops abound,  
But not one sacred edifice rose from the ground.  
Some well meaning Christians not thinking it right  
That folk should remain in so Godless a plight,  
Their welfare eternal thus left in the lurch,  
Conceived it their duty to build them a church. (19)

The poem continues with the story that one omission had been made, namely a site for the church. The poem then develops into a humorous account of how John Pease of North Lodge outwitted John Pease of East Mount in the sale of land on which the church was eventually built. Legend or fact we shall never know, but the newly appointed incumbent, the Reverend George Brown, set about raising funds in earnest. He was enthusiastically supported by the 'railway king,' George Hudson who was adamant that the proposed church should be 'conspicuous and attractive.' Further support came from a committee consisting of four local clergy, six laymen, a treasurer and a secretary. Subscriptions were invited by means of a broadsheet which explained that the warehouse used for worship was full to overflowing every Sunday and that a purpose-built church was essential. (20)

In 1838, Darlington had seen the consecration of the new Church of the Holy Trinity, designed by Anthony Salvin. It was built to seat over 1,000 people and became a Parish Church in 1843. It was soon to be joined by The Church of St John the Evangelist, for which the architect was John Middleton. (21)

In *The Newcastle Courant* of 4<sup>th</sup> June, the following advertisement appeared:

Persons desirous of contracting for the erection of a church to be built at Bank Top, Darlington, may inspect the drawings and specifications at my office, Monday 7<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June next.  
J Middleton, Architect, Darlington. May 17<sup>th</sup> 1847.

The foundation stone was formally laid on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> September of that same year but work had in fact started much earlier. At the laying of the foundation stone, by George Hudson, Lord Mayor of York, the local press reported that the walls were considerably above ground, and proceeding rapidly. Amongst the assembled well-wishers, 'all highly respectable', were the clergy from Darlington's two other churches, the Reverend JA Howell, Vicar of St Cuthbert, and the Reverend TW Minton, incumbent of Holy Trinity. The Vicar of Coniscliffe, the Reverend J Cundill and John Middleton esq. were also listed among the invited guests. In his speech, Hudson revealed that the total cost was in the region of £3,200, of which £2,500 had already been raised. He hoped that the church would be opened without debt, and emphasised that "no female will feel that she is performing her duty either to herself or to her family or to her husband if she is not seen in a place of worship on a Sunday."

In 1849 St John's Church Darlington was reported as having been completed for some time, but funds were still insufficient to clear the debt, due in no small part to several promises not having been honoured. One of the reasons for this was that Hudson had persuaded some of his fellow railway directors to subscribe as individuals to the new church. In 1849, his financial manoeuvrings were exposed and this led to his fall from power. In that same year too, railway shares were badly depressed so that some of the directors who had promised to support the new church were unable or unwilling to honour their promises. Consequently it was not until January 1850 that the official opening of the church took place. *The Darlington and Stockton Times* in reporting the occasion heaped praise upon their local architect: 'The credit of the architectural department is due to J Middleton esq. to whose untiring attention much of the elegance of the building is owing.' Urgent appeals for financial support continued until April 1853. The Reverend J Eade, Vicar of Aycliffe, representing the Archdeacon of Durham and the Diocesan Church Building Society, reminded potential subscribers that the church had been built "in a poor and populous district of the town of Darlington, and has stood unconsecrated for five years owing to the insufficiency of funds amounting to £1,517. During the last few months four individuals in the town, members of the committee for building the church, have contributed £750 and there is need to find £700. Donations have been received from the Diocesan Church Building Society, £50; Rev H Liddell, £20 and Rev W Eade, £1.0.0." (22) The outstanding amount had to be raised before the church could be consecrated. Obviously this was achieved and the final cost of building St John's was published at £4,000. In addition to this amount £80 was donated for Communion Plate by RH Allen of Blackwell Hall and George Hudson's wife paid for the coloured east window. Middleton's plans provided seating for over 630 people made up as follows:

	Appropriated	Free
Adults-Nave	180	28
Aisles	52	204
Chancel	14	14
Child-aisles		143

The style of the church is Early English and it makes an impressive contribution to the Darlington skyline, standing as it does on a prominent elevation overlooking the town. The strong square tower was built to support a broach spire of 160 feet but like four of Middleton's later churches in Cheltenham the money was not available, although according to G Flynn in *Darlington in Old Postcards*, rumour has it that the foundations were not strong enough to support the extra weight of a spire. The clock face intended for three sides of the tower was abandoned, probably due to lack of funds.

A description of St John's almost contemporary with its opening, gives a vivid picture of this first church to be completely designed by John Middleton. (23) 'The tower opens into the nave by a lofty arch beneath which is a stone screen for the support of the organ. The roofs are all open, those of the nave are arched and those of the chancel are canted. The seating is on open stalls throughout with richly carved poppy head light standards and according to Middleton's plans moveable benches in the aisles and the chancel. The reading desk and pulpit are placed at opposite sides near the chancel arch, the pulpit being richly arcaded and carved from Caen stone. This was the personal gift of the architect. (24) The font at the centre west end is inscribed 'The offering of Charles Thorpe DD Archdeacon. Anno Domini 1849.' The church also proudly boasts a peal of bells.'

The tessellated pavement within the sanctuary was provided by Herbert Minton, esq. (the brother of the incumbent of Trinity Church, Darlington). 'It is a very rich running and circle pattern in blue, red and yellowish, the symbols of the evangelists being introduced. The chancel floor is similarly adorned. The stained glass in the east window is arranged in circular and visica (sic) formed medallions on which are represented Moses; the raising of the impotent man; St Matthew; the Nativity; the symbol of the Trinity; the Saviour's monogram, IHS; St John, the Patron Saint of the church together with the winged serpent in the chalice, which is his emblem; the Last Supper; St Mark; the Ascension; St Luke; the Crucifixion. Under the window is a delicate reredos in stone of seven trefoiled arches. The side windows in the chancel and the clerestory lights are filled with various quarried patterns and the east windows in the aisles contain representations of St Peter and St Paul.'(25)

Fortunately, the church remains largely unaltered. The altar has been sympathetically brought forward from the arcading under the east window. The font is the original one of 1848, but sadly Middleton's pulpit was replaced in 1890. (26) The glass in the east window and the north aisle has also been replaced. A visitor to the church in 1998 rightly enthused about the roof and provided additional details of the chancel flooring. (27) The church was opened for worship on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1850 but was not consecrated until September 1853, by which time all costs had been met. (28)

Provision of a Vicarage would have been an essential part of the scheme for the parish and one was indeed built behind St John's but was demolished in 1950. (29) It was of



gothic design with polychrome brickwork and scalloped slate pattern on the roof. *Whellan's Directory* of 1894 says that the Vicarage was completed in 1856 at a cost of £1,000 (30) It is generally assumed that Middleton's partner, his brother-in-law JP Pritchett junior, was responsible for its design. However the contract for the parsonage, 'agreeable to the 15 drawings prepared by Middleton and Pritchett of Darlington' was 'approved subject to adoption of the recommendations contained in the report of Mr Christian, 10<sup>th</sup> May 1855, of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England.' (31)

The witness to the signature of the builder in this agreement was William Livesey, 85, Bondgate, Darlington, presumably Middleton's Clerk of Works. In all there were seven separate parts to the contract signed 'Middleton and Pritchett 1855.' It is more than probable, as we shall see later, that Pritchett completed a commission originally started by the senior partner, John Middleton. To refer once more to *Whellan's Directory*, this time for the year 1865, we read that St John's National Schools for boys, girls and infants, were erected in 1859 at a cost of £2,000. By this time, Middleton was in Cheltenham.

Although this work for the railway workers was a major contribution to Darlington's skyline St John's was not Middleton's first contribution to the town's architectural heritage. During the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Darlington's cultural centre was a large Assembly Room at the Sun Inn in Prospect Place. It was not an ideal place for public meetings and the Quakers disliked it even more because of its association with alcohol. Their influence in the town was considerable and they used it to press for a centre that would provide for the cultural needs of the town and at the same time be alcohol free. Middleton at this time was Darlington's only resident professional architect, as opposed to those who would be better described as architect/builder. Having been successfully employed by Richardson on his house at Ayton, it may have seemed appropriate for the Quaker promoters of the scheme to choose him to design a new alcohol-free cultural centre. He was asked to find a suitable site and he found one in the middle of Darlington, which, ironically, had previously been used as a garden for the growing of vines and apricots and also as a malt floor for the old brewery off the Bull Wynd. (32) *The Newcastle Courant* of 27<sup>th</sup> February 1846 once again carried an advertisement for contractors to carry out work for John Middleton:

Persons desirous of contracting for the erection of  
Public Buildings in Darlington, are invited to see  
the specifications in my office, Wednesday 11th to  
Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March 1846.

J Middleton, Architect, Darlington, 24<sup>th</sup> February 1846.

This town centre, Italianate, pinkish brick Central Hall was officially opened on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1847 just three months before the laying of the foundation stone of St John's Church. The internal planning was described as being superior to any building currently in the town. A contemporary description of this desirable amenity emphasised the size of the main hall or assembly room, which was 82 feet long and 44 feet wide, with a platform at one end and a 200 seat gallery at the other end. (33) During daytime the room was lit from above by opaque glass. There were also committee rooms, offices, kitchens and a basement library and classrooms for the Mechanics Institute. From the very beginnings of the Hall, a Temperance Meeting

was held fortnightly, and provision was made for social needs through the opening of a dispensary, a savings' bank, a Bible Society repository, and offices for the Gas Company. The overall cost was £6,000 funded by the consortium of Quaker shareholders.

*The Durham Advertiser* of 4<sup>th</sup> June 1847 described the formal opening at which a tea party and soiree organised by the Mechanics Institute was the focus of the celebration. Over 600 tickets were sold 'and the tables groaned beneath the profusion of good things and presented to the eye of the veriest (sic) epicure in existence, a sight of the most inviting and satisfactory nature, while the cheerful and happy faces of the fair ones who presided at the urns, gave an additional zest to the entertainment, and offered another irresistible inducement to full enjoyment.'

Among the important guests were Mr J C Backhouse, Henry Pease and Middleton's brother-in-law, the Reverend RC Pritchett, but no mention is made of Middleton himself. This official opening set in the context of a meeting of the Mechanics Institute, in a new building placed at their disposal by the promoters of the Hall, is unusual in that one would have expected a much grander and more civic celebration on an occasion of such importance to the town. The lintel over the remodelled window at the side of the building bears the legend, ERECTED MD CCCXLVI, (1846). (34)

Such prominent architectural additions in the town where he lived and worked were good advertisements for Middleton's practice. As he became more established as an architect, he was able to develop his financial interests and become more involved with the life of the area. In 1845 he acquired a twenty-fourth share in the West Auckland Brewery Company and later became a shareholder in the North Bitchburn Coal Company. (35). In May 1850 he was one of thirteen local businessmen who offered themselves as surety for the provision and development of the proposed first park and recreation ground for the town (36) and he was one of the first subscribers to *Darlington, Its Annals and Characteristics*, an early history-cum-guide of the town. In 1851 there was on show in the Central Hall, a model of York Minster, made by John Middleton, prior to its being taken to the Crystal Palace for display at the Great Exhibition. The model was almost three feet in length on a scale of fifteen feet to the inch and the windows were decorated to represent stained glass. The model could also be illuminated from the inside. *The Darlington and Stockton Times* of 5th April 1851 described the model in glowing terms. 'We have been much gratified by a view of a beautiful model of this structure (York Minster) executed by Mr Middleton, architect of this town, which was sent off to the Great Exhibition on Thursday. The model is made of white cardboard. The work has cost immense labour and is in all its parts, a faithful representation of the noble original and of which it is difficult to determine whether force or delicacy is the more prominent feature. It presents however an exquisite combination of both these elements of art.' *The Ecclesiologist*, the journal of the Cambridge Camden Society, also reported that 'A model of York Minster, exterior only, by Mr Middleton of Darlington, is to be found in the English Department of the Great Exhibition, Ecclesiological Aspects.' (37) This model may well have been an expression of Middleton's nostalgia for the city in which he was brought up, and for the building which provided the backdrop to all his early years activities. It is frustrating not to have any further details as to the eventual destination and whereabouts of the model.

Links with York would not have been difficult to maintain, as Middleton's father-in-law still lived and practised in the city. No doubt visits were frequently made there with his wife Maria and their young son, John Henry. Middleton's brother-in-law Richard Charles Pritchett also lived in Darlington. He had been ordained into the Congregational Church at Bethel Chapel, Darlington in 1840 and ministered in the town until 1850 when he moved to Derby. No doubt before he moved, he would have been part of Middleton's social circle. It would seem therefore that Middleton was well settled in the town both professionally and socially by the late 1840s and this must have provided many introductions to new commissions.

In 1836, the National Provincial Bank of England took over a Stockton Bank, with a branch in High Row, Darlington. A decision was made in 1849 to upgrade this branch and Middleton was awarded the commission for its rebuilding. This must have been an exciting challenge, the bank being part of a national chain and this particular branch being situated in such a prominent position in the town. *The Civil Engineer and Architects' Journal* for December 1850 reminded its readers of the wonderful opportunities open to architects at that time, offering unimagined scope in street architecture - 'banks, clubs, assurance offices, colleges, schools, county courts and many more classes of public buildings.' It introduced its evaluation of Middleton's bank design by stating that although it was not one of the more ambitious of its class, it was nevertheless 'a very good example of the application of moderate resources and we are happy to have this opportunity of giving proof to his successful application.' The article acknowledged the difficulties presented by the narrowness of the site between two existing buildings, and the restricted financial resources at his disposal but he had appropriately and successfully addressed these.

(The) building, .....without pretention, is effective...and we are very fond of columns when properly applied but we are much better pleased in a composition of this kind to see that their employment is not attempted. It is too often the case that columns and pilasters are stuck on, by their ostentation to hide the architect's poverty of labour and resources, whereas when such adventitious aid is rejected, there is always the hope of careful treatment. This we consider has been the result in Mr Middleton's case. The management of the ground floor is very good, and by attending to the breaking of the joints, the line of composition is carried up to the first floor windows.

The treatment of the cornice without being expensive is rich and the boldness of the proportion affords shadow and relief. The finish of the middle range of windows is likewise in good keeping. Whether the masques on the ground floor keystones may not have been supplanted by emblems more significant, we leave to the architect to settle. Some local or commercial association might have had its meaning expressed.

The building is stone from the neighbourhood, and was erected this year. The internal arrangements afford the usual accommodation of a banking establishment and for the domestic requirements of the resident manager, Mr McLachlan'.

*The Darlington and Stockton Times* in August 1850 had in fact admired the masques which *The Civil Engineer and Architects' Journal* had criticised. It also placed

additional emphasis on the provision within the Bank of fireproof safes. The Bank was officially opened on 1<sup>st</sup> August in that year.

*The Builder* however was less complimentary about the building and even rude about Darlington itself. (38) ‘The National Provincial Bank of England building at Darlington, has been rebuilt and it appears to be rather a stylish sort of edifice for such a place as Darlington. Its site is a conspicuous one in High Row. The exterior is an Astylar (sic) composition of the Italian Palazzo style faced with stone and consisting of three storeys above a sunk basement.’

It is good to find examples of Middleton’s work in the commercial sector and to be able to read contemporary evaluations of his designs in view of the direction which his career was to follow during his second phase, in Cheltenham.

### **References, Chapter III**

I am deeply indebted to Dr W Fawcett for most of the information about Middleton’s work with the Stockton and Darlington Railways. His extensive research and knowledge has been brought together in ‘*A History of North Eastern Railway Architecture. Vol 1. The Pioneers.*’ North Eastern Railway Association, 2001. ISBN 1873513 34 8.

#### **The Railways**

- 1 Fawcett
- 2 Fawcett
- 3 *Jubilee Memorial of the Railway System. The History of the S&D Railway 1875*  
Stockton-on-Tees Public Library.
- 4 Fawcett
- 5 Fawcett
- 6 The Clock Tower: Fawcett says that Middleton’s tower was in fact the one that was demolished and replaced in 1901.
- 7 Leaflet on Middlesbrough Railway Station, in Darlington Library Centre for Local Studies, U441 J 190 Lc.  
Middlesbrough Local History Collection MM1712.5 The Opening of Albert Park  
1868 contains a reference to Middleton’s station suitably decorated for the occasion.  
..... ‘(Middleton’s) station platform and columns were decorated with flags and garlands of  
..... evergreen. The whole of the fence and the large area in front of the station was .....  
..... decorated with flags on poles. All the decorations were done by the Company’s  
..... workmen under the direction of their architect, Mr William Peachey of Darlington.’  
..... Peachey, who had been born in Cheltenham, was the architect for the station at  
..... Middlesbrough which replaced Middleton’s in 1877 on a different site.,It is still  
..... Middlesbrough’s station today.
- 8 Cockcroft.
- 9 Fawcett
- 10 I am again indebted to Dr Fawcett for this information. See also *Redcar Visitors Guide*; J Walbran 1848 Darlington Library, Centre for Local Studies U4440 Red a 33LC(RB) 11676
- 11 Cockcroft op cit.
- 12 Langbaugh Borough Council ‘*Kirkleatham*’ n.d.
- 13 At Wolsingham there is a small two bay structure to the right of the house similar in style to, and linked to the main building. In an early postcard this is identified as a toilet block. In addition to the dated shield there are three similar blank shields at first floor level on the exterior gable ends, two on each end wall and possibly one on the entrance front.
- 14 *Newcastle Courant* 30th April 1847.
- 15 . Offices of the North Bitchburn Colliery Company c1858. Middleton’s Will confirms

..... that he had bought a seventeenth share in the Company. One of the founder  
 .....shareholders in the Weardale Railway was John Castell Hopkins and it was he who  
 ..... also formed the North Bitchburn Colliery Company. Hopkins' son William was  
 ..... apprenticed to Middleton in Darlington – see note 37 below.

**Darlington**

- 16 Plummer.
- 17 ICBS 3945
- 18 Whellan 1894
- 19 From 'Diaries of Edward Pease,' courtesy Fawcett to whom I am grateful for bringing this to my attention.
- 20 Broadsheet, Darlington Library, Centre for Local Studies, September 15<sup>th</sup> 1847 - St John the Evangelist.
- 21 The plans are signed 'John Middleton, Darlington, Architect, 1847.' GRO,D2970 1/50.
- 22 Durham County Record Office, County Hall, EP/Da SJ 2/27
- 23 Langstaffe. Langstaffe was Appeal Secretary.
- 24 John Middleton gave the pulpit, font or another major furnishing to most of the churches he built or rebuilt
- 25 *York Advertiser* 23 September 1853.
- 26 Notes available in the church.
- 27 Wheeler: The nave roof is one of the most striking features of the internal structure. The intermediate braces which come above the clerestory windows are attached to the principal rafters. The roof is longitudinally braced by similar arched braces which land on the wall in line with the main braces. The pointed apex of the cross braces connect with a series of collar beams above which are smaller timbers visually extending the main braces into asymmetrical X shapes. All the roof braces are chamfered, but otherwise quite unadorned in the best Puginian functional manner. The whole is an extremely elegant rationalist design clearly derived from Pugin's practice and theory. The sanctuary steps and the floor bands are all Frosterley marble in very good condition  
 The Cambridge Camden Society had been formed in 1839 and St John's shows a strong sympathy with the Society's aims. Pugin was not a member however but the Society agreed with his aims and admired his influence.
- 28 *Darlington and Stockton Times*
- 29 To make way for Pembroke Court Flats. *Kelly's Directory 1921*: 'The Vicarage which adjoins the Church was erected 1855 and is of red brick.'
- 30 Middleton's estimate had been £750
- 31 Durham University Library CCP A1/5 (Temp) University of Durham Library.
- 32 Darlington Library, Centre for Local Studies *Northern Dispatch* 1<sup>st</sup> December 1962 CB1960-1963 p263.
- 33 *Durham Advertiser* 4<sup>th</sup> June 1847  
*Aspects of Darlington* WEA p53  
 Listed Building Description, Grade II Listing 1972
- 34 The date stone was found at the Houndgate entrance to the Central Hall in 1895. The *County of Durham Directory* for 1851 gives a description and costs:  
 A seven-bay structure of pinkish brick with stone dressings. Very tall first floor. Windows at either side with projecting bay. These windows are two-storey with round arched recesses with stone architraves.  
 Ground floor windows have shouldered stone lintels; first floor windows have radial heads with pivoted sashes and glazing bars. The two left bays are blank. The attic storey has sunk brick panels. Slated roof of moderately low pitch with end chimneys. The centre bay is blank above a narrow doorway with stone pilasters.
- 35. Assignment by William O'Brien, gentleman late of Darlington but now of 4, Charles .....Street, Westbourne Terrace, Middlesex, to John Middleton of Darlington, architect, .....one twenty fourth share in the West Auckland Brewery Company. 15<sup>th</sup> April 1845.  
 .....Durham County Record Office, County Hall, Archives DX 164/1 and Bitchburn .....D/NBCC
- 36 Darlington Park 1850-1851. A committee of the Town's Commissioners decided to ..... lease a farm from the Poor Howden's Trust to be used as a Public Recreation Ground.

... In April 1850 a meeting was called to enlist those with sufficient interest in the health,  
..... happiness and comfort of the peoples of the town, to ensure 'ample means of  
.....supplying walks, seats, and other accommodation and in addition an annual  
.....subscription to ensure the keeping of the greater part of the land open to the public.'

On 13<sup>th</sup> May thirteen men offered themselves s surety - the names of Pease and  
.....Backhouse featuring more than once as well as those of McLachlan, Manager of the  
.....National Provincial Bank, and John Middleton. Eleven designs were submitted -  
.....awarded to B Wilson of London. '*Aspects of Darlington*' op cit.

37 *The Ecclesiologist* Vol 12 p179. 'Ecclesiological Aspects of the Great Exhibition  
.....Architectural Models.' Middleton's model is not in the York Minster archive. It is  
.....interesting to add that William Hopkins who had been apprenticed to Middleton in  
.....Darlington moved to London to work for Digby Wyatt, planning the 1851 Great  
.....Exhibition.

38 *The Builder* 7<sup>th</sup> September 1850 p425.

Fawcett addresses these comments: Back in the eighteen twenties Greek revival had  
.....been all the rage. Then Sir Charles Barry popularised a more flexible/adaptable  
.....Italian Renaissance style – Middleton's Bank being indebted in that respect to  
.....Barry's palazzi. Neo-classicism was now dead in England, - for the time being, hence  
... the newspaper comments about columns and pilasters.

## CHAPTER IV

*Coniscliffe; Hartlepool; Manfield; Neasham; Hurworth; Witton-le-Wear; Cockermouth; FRN Haswel and RJ Johnson; Piercebridge; Greatham.*

Most of the contracts carried out by Middleton that we have looked at so far have been for new buildings – Cleveland Lodge, St John’s Church, and railway stations for example. However, as his reputation as an architect became firmly established, the call on his professional initiative increased. Some contracts in the early 1850s were quite small in comparison with Cleveland Lodge and the Central Hall, but in most cases, more archive material has come to light for these than has been the case with the larger buildings. It is also interesting to see in some of the smaller contracts, how much attention to detail Middleton paid even where the contract was not terribly valuable. One such contract, which he accepted in the early 1850s, was for work at the Vicarage at Coniscliffe, a short distance from Darlington. The house is in a very dramatic setting, squeezed as it is between the grounds surrounding the church and the steep cliff face overlooking a deep valley below. The Reverend Henry Algernon Baumgartner had accepted the living in 1849, and found that negligence on the part of his predecessor had allowed the Vicarage to fall into a dreadful state of repair. He received a compensation payment from him of £32 which he immediately spent on urgent renovations. This he swore to in the presence of two Bishop’s assessors in June 1851 and ten days later he made formal application to Queen Ann’s Bounty for a loan to enable him to carry out further work. He was granted £250 with interest spread over 35 years. (1)

Middleton had been engaged by the Reverend Henry Baumgartner to examine the building in May of that year with a view to carrying out further work, and he compiled a report of his findings:

In compliance with your request I have examined the kitchen-wing, stables and outbuildings at your vicarage and found as regards the latter, the walls are very much cracked and out of perpendicular. The roof is very much decayed and would require considerable repair. The doors etc. are also broken and dilapidated. With respect to the kitchen, and back kitchen with the bedrooms over, I find the wall on the churchyard side very much out of perpendicular, the roof decayed and the floors of the bedrooms very defective. The kitchen floor is much broken and all the doors are in a dilapidated state, and the whole in such a condition that nothing short of rebuilding would be effectual. (2)

The report is endorsed ‘This is the paper writing marked ‘A’ referred to in the Affidavit of John Middleton, before me, 19<sup>th</sup> May 1851. Signed Edward Backhouse JP.’ The Affidavit was in respect of the application for the grant aid towards the work to be done and it mentions other work by Middleton as yet unidentified. (3)

A Faculty was applied for ‘to enable the Reverend Algernon Baumgartner to take down, remove and rebuild certain premises belonging to the said Vicarage.’(4) The work was to include a new coach house and the rebuilding of the wing at the west side of the house as described in the examination report of May 7<sup>th</sup>. Two tenders were

invited, one for the building work, and another for the woodwork, glazing, plumbing and painting. The specification stipulated that the work was to be completed within three months of starting:

Pulling down the old and rebuilding the coach house and stables

£109

Rebuilding the kitchen and back of the house

80

Building a water closet

20

Sinking a well

26

Boundary wall and coping stones

15

The plans are endorsed ‘J Middleton, Darlington 1851’ (5) The drawings show the proposed basement provision for coal storage and larder with the side elevation of the house above it; the proposed ground plan and entrance porch, kitchen, scullery and passageways; the additional large bedroom, boys’ bedroom, and closet on the first floor, and finally the stable, coach house, piggery and manure shed. The very detailed specification gives some idea of Middleton’s meticulous attention to detail which was mentioned earlier. The rebuilding was to the west side of the main house, clearly visible on a postcard of 1907, which also shows later additions by the architect SS Teulon in 1860, by which time Middleton was in Cheltenham. Middleton’s part of the house was demolished in 1967 and the site is now the parking area for the private house which the former vicarage has become

The pre-1960 *Listed Buildings Description* of the house, makes mention of Middleton’s addition of ‘snicked sandstone with Welsh slate roof and stone chimney stacks to the west of the main building’ but wrongly ascribes it to c1840. The current owners are keenly interested in the history and development of the house and are lovingly concerned for its restoration and it is sad that little of Middleton’s work remains today (6)

Further afield the town of Hartlepool was at that same period developing and expanding into a coal-shipping port, and a rapid increase in the population made extra church accommodation a necessity.

A committee had been formed in 1848 to put into effect suggestions for the building of a place of worship according to the tradition of the Established Church. A site was provided by the Trustees of the late Duke of Cleveland and donations towards a new building were made with remarkable speed. John Middleton submitted designs for a church to be built on the western part of the Headland, the oldest part of nineteenth century Hartlepool. (7) The committee, having been assured of the popularity and desirability of the project, approved of the design by Middleton and once this had been accepted, Mr Edward Young of Hartlepool was awarded the building contract. (8)

The Mayor of Hartlepool laid the foundation stone on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1850 in the presence of the committee and ‘a numerous assemblage of the inhabitants with the



clergymen of the town and neighbourhood.’ The chosen dedication was ‘Holy Trinity’ and the church was designed in the Decorated or Middle Pointed style. It consisted of a chancel, nave, north and south aisles, and north and south porches. A vestry and organ chamber were included to the north of the chancel, the organ chamber being separated from the chancel by means of a traceried oak parclose.

The roof, like St John’s Darlington, was open with collars and curved braces of bold but simple design producing a most beautiful effect. The nave and aisles had open seats with no apparent distinction between the paid and free ones. The pulpit was of carved Caen stone, and the font near the south porch, was like that at St John’s, the gift of Archdeacon Thorpe. The chancel was furnished with oak stalls with deeply panelled fronts. Carved poppy head candle standards, again similar to those at St John’s, provided the lighting. Minton tiles covered the sanctuary floor. The church measured 106 feet from east to west and 37 feet 6 inches from north to south, excluding the porches. A tower, 110 feet high was planned for the west end but was put on hold due to lack of immediate funding. In its place a small bell gable was erected to accommodate two bells. (9)

Holy Trinity Church was opened for worship in March 1852. It had cost in the region of £2,350 to which had to be added the architect’s 5% fee plus additional costs for heating, lighting, and railings. Although Pevsner described the church as ‘towerless and rather mean with Decorated east window,’ a lithograph of the proposed church shows a rather neat, attractive and ecclesiologically correct building. The lithograph is of the south-west angle of the church and is dedicated to ‘Mr Sedgwick of Hartlepool, by John Middleton, Arch’t, Darlington.’ The church was demolished in 1950 as it was suffering from major structural faults.

As well as donating the site for the church, the Trustees provided an adjoining plot for a parsonage house. (10). The plans are signed and also stamped with Middleton’s name and address as well as the date, 2 Sept. 1853. Tenders were invited ‘to undertake the work on the Parsonage to be built at Hartlepool for Rev. L Paige, agreeable to the plans and specifications of Mr Middleton.’ Building was to commence as soon as possible after the contracts had been signed, the whole of the actual house to be ready for the roof after three and a half months. The project was to be finished within nine months of commencement. This specification was signed, not stamped, by JP Pritchett and J Middleton, Architects, Darlington, March 25<sup>th</sup> 1854. (11)

Middleton had prepared 33 plans in all and they were approved ‘subject to the adoption of the alterations suggested by the report of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners’ architect.’ Tenders were submitted and contracts agreed and signed - seven in all - between March 1854 (installation of the servants’ bell system) and 21<sup>st</sup> May 1855. Five agreements were signed jointly by Pritchett and Middleton but two, the slater’s and the plasterer’s contracts, were signed solely by Middleton. One plan - number xv - of the back and side elevations shows once again, a shield on the chimney stack to which would be added the date upon completion. A letter from Pritchett dated 1855 does in fact suggest that the Parsonage was still not built at that time and in 2001 no memories of it survive locally. (12)

Before pursuing details of this partnership between Middleton and his brother-in-law, James Pigott Pritchett junior, it might be appropriate to look first at a major

restoration undertaken by Middleton, between 1850 and 1855, on the church of All Saints, Manfield. Manfield, south west of Darlington, is just over the County Durham border, in Yorkshire. The church dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century and has a tower, (sixteenth century), nave, aisles and chancel. The Lord of the Manor and sole landowner in the 1850s was Richard Bassett Wilson of Cliffe Hall, Piercebridge, the family seat only a mile and a half away from the church. It was he who commissioned the restoration and re ordering of the church by Middleton and it is fortunate that much of the correspondence between Wilson and the incumbent, the Reverend Mr Swire, has been preserved. It is from this source that most of the following background to the lengthy saga has been assembled. The first drawings, for the clerestory windows (13) and for the proposed south elevation are dated 1850. Subsequent detailed plans and drawings have recently come to light amongst the parish archives at Manfield and these with the Wilson/Swire correspondence provide an interesting and colourful account of the development of the project. (14)

Middleton's drawings of the church before restoration show a flat roofed chancel with north and south walls pierced with pairs of two-light gothic windows. At the southwest corner of the chancel was a Romanesque door with, to the west, a single-light window. The restoration drawings provided for a steep pitched roof, a repositioned doorway minus its moulding, to contain double doors, and the filling in of the single-light window. The nave restoration was to be far more dramatic as the numerous extant plans show. The formerly flat roof was replaced by a steeply-pitched roof, reaching the third level of the western tower and the former Perpendicular two-light clerestories, four above each of the north and south arcades, were replaced by roundels, the tracery of each being of individual design. The aisle roofs were likewise raised to slope away from beneath the new clerestory. (15) A new gothic, south porch was provided and the two windows in the south aisle were replaced with three-light Early English windows each with different patterned tracery. A new two-light window was inserted between the tower and this new porch. On the north side, the Perpendicular windows were replaced by four two-light ones, and the west door of the tower was filled in. A vestry was built to the north of the chancel.

Re-ordering of the interior involved repositioning the pulpit outside the chancel and the positioning of the priest's stall on the south side. The font was relocated near to the south porch having previously been near the north aisle. Additional seating was also provided in the south side of the nave, made possible by the repositioning of the priest's stall and the pulpit. New seating for the congregation was also installed. The ancient sedilia and piscina in the sanctuary were retained and delicate traceried stencilling decorated the sanctuary walls.

As indicated above, correspondence about the restoration was lengthy and involved. Middleton had obviously been consulted before 1849 and delay in commencing the work was caused by the insistence of the Archdeacon and the diocesan authorities that oak and lead and nothing else had to be used for the roof, a principle which was supported by the Bishop of Ripon. The Reverend Mr Swire was reluctant to remonstrate further with the Bishop and immediately consulted Middleton with a view to complying with his directive. At the same time, he informed Middleton that it would mean drastically curtailing his internal plans. Middleton produced a new specification in accordance with the requirements of the Bishop and the Archdeacon, including some of the previously agreed repairs and alterations and omitting others.

He left out for example, encaustic tiles, and stalls in the chancel, new flooring and open seats. Other things which the Squire, Mr Wilson, thought could be omitted or put on hold were the new stone pulpit and East window. Mr Wilson was however very concerned that the diocesan requirements were the reasons for this abandonment of the overall project. He questioned how far the diocese could dictate what had to be done provided that the building was not damaged in any way. He re-examined Middleton's plans and drawings "which are so well calculated to give us not only a neat, but also a substantial building," but felt that it was time to confine themselves to the necessary repairs and cleaning that the diocese had agreed to. In the event he also stated that as the diocese had rejected the plans, he would not be honouring the financial contribution which he had promised.

Further correspondence between the parish and the diocese took place which has not survived. However by the end of May 1849, there had been a big change of heart. The Bishop wrote to The Reverend Mr Swire informing him that he had reconsidered the matter and now agreed to slates and other wood being substituted for lead and oak. A faculty was granted giving them full powers to proceed. Wilson was delighted and agreed to honour his original promise of financial support but at the same time suggested that some of Middleton's later proposals might be dispensed with. Mr Swire attempted to visit Middleton in Darlington but he was away at the time, so he wrote to Wilson asking what he thought of Middleton's suggestion about the pews and the new floor. "He (Middleton) says, the whole of the nave's present floor and that in the aisles is to be taken up and the earth excavated so when the new floor has been formed, below the present level, there will be one foot six inches clear of the joists with vents in the walls." Mr Swire agreed that this was desirable so as to help with drying out the church, but was naturally concerned about the cost, as he wanted to proceed as soon as possible. Further correspondence between Mr Swire and Mr Wilson concentrated on details about seating etc. and by 1850 the work was in hand.

The May 1849 estimates amounted to nearly £300 for the roof work if lead and oak were to be used and a further £659 for new glass in windows, cementing the walls with Intonica, a new type of cement or plaster which prevented damp coming through; new clerestory windows with new tracery to the east window; new porch, and vestry; new doors and ironwork; a new reading desk, £15; the Caen stone pulpit, £20; altar rails £10 and sundries including the font, £20, amounting in total to just under £1,000. Builders estimates received in May 1850 came to £938 minus £200 for the old lead. A revised specification in 1850 included a Rood Screen, stalls in the chancel, stained glass for the east window and tessellated pavement in the chancel. (16)

With the exception of the Rood Screen, most of the planned work was completed. This was a heavy restoration and re ordering of a very ancient church and must have aroused much interest and even controversy among the locals who fondly remembered their old church. It is strange that no mention of the work is to be found in the journal of the Ecclesiological Society but further research in local newspapers may throw light on the opinion of the local population.

Pevsner thought the church was much over-restored and was suspicious about the east window in the south aisle which he believed could be thirteenth century. He recognised the late Perpendicular bell openings in the tower but questioned the date of

the west window. He did however, seem impressed by the High Victorian font, but this is post-Middleton.

During the period 1844 to 1855 Middleton must have been involved with many other projects some of which have still to be identified. Invitations to tender for an Inn at Witton-le-Wear (1846), alterations to Neasham Hill near Darlington (1847) and alterations to Cockermouth Church all appear in *The Newcastle Courant*. These small contracts were eagerly sought as they provided the income on which to live while perhaps awaiting payment for the larger commissions. Two of the smaller contracts with which Middleton was involved at this period date from 1847 and 1853 and are both in the neighbouring villages of Hurworth and Neasham, near Darlington.

Neasham Hill is a large house east of the village on the banks of the river Tees and was built in 1757. An advertisement in *The Newcastle Courant* for 16<sup>th</sup> April 1847 invited tenders for alterations and additions at Neasham Hill. Plans and specifications were on view at Middleton's office in Darlington and at Neasham Hill until the end of the month. The *Listed Buildings* description of the house refers to early and late nineteenth century additions, but so far no definite identification of Middleton's work, has been possible. It may well be that Pritchett took over the project at a later date for he certainly was responsible for the restoration of the church in 1876 for the Chapman-Ward family, who were the owners of Neasham Hill. The churchyard of St John the Baptist contains several memorial stones to this family who owned the property for most of the nineteenth century.

The National School, at Hurworth was erected in 1831 and Middleton was consulted by the Chairman of the Committee in 1848 with a view to extending the school and enclosing the grounds. (17) One of Middleton's letters suggests, 'Our design proposes merely a stone wall at the back of which a hedge would be planted; in addition to the wall a slight iron railing. If you will be kind enough to inform me which you prefer, I will obtain from the mason as to the cost.' (26<sup>th</sup> August 1848.) A plan shows the site layout, elevation, and section of the boundary wall to Hurworth School. A drawing shows the design for the gates for the school. Both are signed 'J Middleton.' He also sent the chairman two designs for weather vanes. "Several gentlemen complain there is none in Hurworth and that one would be a great advantage. If you agree it might be desirable to have an ornate bell gable under it to give it elevation and to be grouped in with the rest of the building, which has been proceeded with very rapidly and will soon be finished." The estimate for the bell gable and the weather vane was between £8 and £9 and for the weathercock to top it, not more than £2. He asked for confirmation of his proposal and apologised for his tardiness in supplying the details "but I have been extremely engaged." No scale is given on this drawing dated 1848, which shows a single arched bellcote with a cockerel weather vane considerably raised above it. No further correspondence is available to throw light on whether the project was completed or not but a bellcote survives. The school closed in 1960 and the property has been converted into domestic dwellings.

Other incidental references to Middleton occur in *The Newcastle Courant*. (18) One is for building an inn already mentioned, at Witton-le-Wear for the West Auckland Brewery Company in which Middleton owned shares. This was in 1846 and it has not been possible to make a definite identification of that property. Another project in which he was interested was reported in *The Newcastle Courant* in January 1852. It

was recorded that three designs had been received for the rebuilding of Cockermouth Church - quite some distance from Darlington. One design was by John Middleton but on this occasion he was definitely unsuccessful. At a Consistory Court hearing in Richmond,

‘Archdeacon Headlam gave a very clear and able judgement in favour of Messrs Steel and other applicants for the faculty for rebuilding Cockermouth Church in accordance with the plans of Mr Clarke of London. The judge spoke favourably of the plans made by Mr Middleton of Darlington, but disapproved of those made by Mr Hay of Liverpool. Mr Addison of Darlington supported Mr Clarke’s plan. Mr Tomlin of Richmond supported Mr Middleton’s plan.’

During this period Middleton may have been accompanied on site visits and delegated some of the less technical aspects of the project to pupils who had come to him for training. It is no secret that an architect’s reputation and success can dictate the type and number of pupils he might attract and if the success of these pupils owes anything to their early training then Middleton must have been a good teacher. Although his office records are not available we do know from other sources something about two of his former pupils at the time. (19)

FRN Haswell (1834-1912) was the son of a Methodist minister who spent most of his ministry in the north of England. Francis Robert Newton Haswell was educated at Taunton College and at the age of 15, in 1849/50, he became a pupil in the office of John Middleton in Darlington where he remained until 1854. Why Middleton was chosen is not clear, but he was not Middleton’s first or only pupil. On arrival Haswell found that another pupil, Robert James Johnson, (1832-1892) was about to begin his third year with Middleton, having arrived in 1846. Johnson and Haswell became good friends as well as student colleagues. Johnson remained with Middleton until 1853, moved to London and spent some time in the office of Gilbert Scott and was openly known as Scott’s favourite pupil. Haswell, on completion of his training with Middleton, stayed on as his chief assistant and managing clerk, until he teamed up again with Johnson in 1857 or thereabouts. They spent four years in partnership in North Shields before each going his own way in 1862. Johnson is today certainly considered to be one of the best of the late nineteenth century Newcastle architects.

In 1853 nearing the end of his apprenticeship, Haswell kept a diary which mentions Middleton, although no indication is given as to who ‘JM’ was or what Haswell was doing in Darlington, and it is frustrating not to have access to any of his earlier diaries.

His diary records the obvious delight he found in old buildings, churches in particular, and in the liturgy of the Church. Accompanied by Johnson, he made frequent visits to medieval sites partly for professional training in drawing and observation, and partly for personal pleasure. It is not unlikely that both he and Johnson accompanied Middleton on site visits to ancient buildings as well as current projects and similarly Middleton may have accompanied them on some of their professional training visits. Haswell’s diary certainly included visits to Wolsingham, Coniscliffe and Manfield. Such practical experiences would be an essential part of their training, and Haswell’s influence will be seen later in some of Middleton’s commissions in the 1850s.

Only a mile or two from Coniscliffe and Manfield is the village of Piercebridge which provided the setting for a new school with which Middleton was involved. It would appear however that although he drew up the plans, signed and dated 1853, (20) he delegated the superintendence of the project to his pupil Francis Haswell who by the time the work was in hand, had become the managing clerk in the practice. The incumbent of Piercebridge, the Reverend Mr McFarlane was the client and Haswell wrote to him in 1853 apologising for the fact that the tenders far exceeded the original quote. Labour costs, he explained, were very high and if the project had been undertaken the previous year it would have cost about 25% less. As it was, the estimate was £220.2.4. and McFarlane insisted that this be reduced by £100 to which Haswell replied that he “could not possibly retain anything of an architectural character for £120. Cannot more money be raised?”

One tender received was £25 less ‘provided all the materials were led (sic) for him as he has neither cart nor horse.’ Haswell confirmed that Mr Middleton had used this method at a church he had built with startling results. Another tender proposed using 5,400 bricks for internal lining of the exterior stone walls. Mr McFarlane suggested that it might be profitable to increase the width of the school by one foot and do away with the porch, but Haswell put him off the idea. None of these initiatives would however have reduced the cost by the amount the Mr McFarlane wanted.

Eventually Haswell suggested new plans to retain the porch, but to roof the building with tiles for “in the area of £118 - a considerable saving”. He added, “I will get the plans prepared as speedily as I can in order that tenders may be properly and finally accepted.” This letter was signed FRN Haswell, Architect. Plans did soon follow for the school, railings, and pillars with gates as at Hurworth. Later Haswell wrote to Mr McFarlane, “I have done away with the pillars you objected to on my sketch and I hope it will meet with your approval.” Mr McFarlane was evidently content with this new design and on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1854 Haswell was able to send him the various accounts for the erection of Piercebridge School. All completion certificates were signed by Haswell, ‘per pro John Middleton’ as was the abstract of the cost of the building-£150.3.9. The school has now closed and the building is used as the Village Hall. Part of the boundary wall remains and above the door of a much later small extension is a stone lintel bearing the date MDCCCLIV (1854).

Considerable space has been devoted to this small project because although the school was not Middleton’s responsibility as far as supervision of the project is concerned, it does show how one of his pupils put his training into practice.

It may have been while Johnson and Haswell were with Middleton, that he was joined in the practice by his brother-in-law, James Pigott Pritchett, his wife’s half-brother. He was ten years younger than Middleton, and had been educated at St Peter’s School, York. His obituary in the Builder, 29<sup>th</sup> September 1911, informs us that he was articled to his father in York, entering into partnership with him for a short while in 1853 before moving to join Middleton in Darlington. (21) Pritchett senior had a branch office in Huddersfield and we know that young James was a member of the Independent Chapel there until at least 1850. (22) His Huddersfield experience must therefore have been part of his training and preparation for independence. We have confirmation of his presence in Darlington in March 1854 when he signed with Middleton, the specifications for the parsonage at Hartlepool. Possibly Pritchett senior

had first of all set up his son in practice in Huddersfield on the understanding that he would join Middleton in Darlington as a partner when the time was right. This would seem probable if, as has been suggested earlier, Pritchett senior had financed Middleton's practice as part of a marriage settlement. *Whellan's Durham Directory* lists 'Middleton and Pritchett, 85 Bondgate, Architects' in 1856, whereas *Slater's Directory* for 1854-1856 lists only Middleton. (23) *The Newcastle Courant* for July 25<sup>th</sup> 1855 carried the following advertisement:

Tenders invited for the erection of two Chapels and entrance lodge for the United Burial Board of Saint Andrews and Township of Jesmond.  
Apply Middleton and Pritchett, 85 Bondgate, Darlington.

This would confirm that by mid 1855 at the latest Middleton and Pritchett were officially in partnership. However the Hartlepool archives suggest an even earlier date for the partnership as we saw earlier.

The importance of architectural competitions has already been addressed and in attempting to further establish some background to the Middleton-Pritchett partnership, it is worth noting that the earliest available reference to a 'first premium' awarded to Middleton and Pritchett of Darlington was for St Nicholas Church, Durham in 1854, a year earlier than the Jesmond date. Having acknowledged this, it must be stated that the work at Durham was not actually begun until 1857 and completed in 1858. It is generally accepted that this work was done by Pritchett and there are roof beams in the porch which carry symbols representing Pritchett as the architect. Pritchett senior also made a considerable donation towards the restoration. (24)

Further premiums were awarded to Messrs Middleton and Pritchett in 1855 for Newcastle Cemetery and for Saffron Walden Cemetery, both 'first premiums'. Once again the designs are generally credited to Pritchett who alone was awarded the first premium by Darlington Burial Board in 1856 for his design for the town's cemetery. This may give some clue to the time of Middleton's departure from Darlington for there is an almost total lack of evidence as to his whereabouts between 1855 and 1859 when he arrived in Cheltenham. Pritchett's statement with reference to the Hartlepool Parsonage contract, in an Affidavit sworn on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1855, only adds to the confusion:

"Hartlepool Vicarage. I James Pigott Pitchett of Darlington do certify .....and that my *late* partner, Mr Middleton has drawn the plans and made the specifications and estimates." (25)

This suggests that by September 1855 Middleton's partnership with Pritchett had been dissolved. The Darlington and Stockton Times recording Pritchett's death in 1911 reported that 'in 1854 he succeeded to the practice in Darlington of his brother-in-law, the late John Middleton.' Did Middleton continue as consultant or as a sleeping partner or did he continue only until outstanding contracts which he had started had been completed? Answers to these questions are further complicated by work done between 1855 and 1856 at the church of St John the Baptist, Greatham. This work was

an enlargement of the existing church orchestrated by Pritchett but to the designs of Middleton.

As early as 1850 Middleton had been consulted by the Vicar of Greatham, the Reverend Mr Brewster, with a view to enlarging the church. (26) Sir Stephen Glynne visited the church in the early 1850s and wrote that the building was derelict in 1792 and had been rebuilt. "Three pillars on the aisles of each side are all that remain of the original." He gave a brief description of the church as he saw it, describing the elliptical arch which separated the nave from the chancel, and there were three windows on each side of the chancel, with a modern East window. There was a gallery at the west end on metal pillars and the church could seat 250. He reported that the church was currently undergoing repairs and additions to add 60 more seats and handsome windows elsewhere in the church. Glynne's observations omit the fact that the church was of Saxon origin and had been rebuilt in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

The Reverend J Eade of Aycliffe, a member of the Diocesan Church Building Society wrote to Mr Brewster, the incumbent, on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1850 drawing his attention to the current high costs of labour in the building trade and the need therefore to budget accordingly. He added, however, that he was glad that Middleton had agreed to attend to the work, although he gave no indication as to what the work entailed. Middleton's plans were ready by February 1851 but the only clue to what was proposed is contained in a letter from a Mr Augustus Millington from London, who sent the incumbent a donation. His covering letter included the following comments:

"I quite agree. The tower must not be taken down on any account. I hope the architect will not allow it. Without interfering with the tower, I do not see how the building can be well lengthened, and therefore, respecting that proposition, seems to conclude the question."

It would thus seem that the initial intention was to demolish the west tower and to extend the church westwards. Millington returned sketches of the proposed revised plans direct to Middleton in July 1851 and assured him that any difficulties which might arise during the execution of the work should be addressed to the Vicar. What these difficulties might have been is not clear, but matters appear to have progressed rapidly and two months later Millington, in a letter to the Vicar, commented on the drawings of the improved building "of which I need scarcely say I greatly approve. You will be much better satisfied with such a church than you would with that at first proposed to you and so will Mr Middleton. Still regretting the gallery which spoils the seats beneath."

Middleton's revised drawings achieved the enlargement without disturbing the tower, but fundraising was a lengthy business and labour costs were indeed high. Grant applications to the Diocesan Church Building Society in 1854 only raised £10 and donated funds were almost exhausted. At this point it was argued that two projects be considered separately - alterations and repairs to the Chancel should be carried out separately from the restoration of the church.

During the Middleton/Pritchett restoration and enlargement, the whole proportion and construction of the nave and chancel was 'confused'. (27) The Victoria County History



informs us that in 1855 the church was extended one bay eastward necessitating the destruction of the chancel arch and a new chancel was erected. What in fact transpired was that in order to increase seating capacity, the rather long chancel was rebuilt but shortened at its west end. The nave was likewise lengthened into this newly created space by the addition of a pair of Romanesque piers and arches to the existing arcades. The interesting Norman chancel arch was pulled down and replaced by a weak Early English one, four paces eastward of the original. Thus the chancel became shorter, the nave longer and one can still discern where the major alterations took place by looking at the external repositioning of the buttresses and at the roof joins.

By September 1855 the Reverend Mr Eade was complimenting Mr Brewster on the way the alterations were progressing and hinting that a further grant from the Diocesan Church Building Society might be possible on completion. "I trust the chancel is covered (roofed) by this time, but workmen nowadays are bad to manage." A further letter to Mr Brewster in December 1855 contained the comments, "We enjoyed the opening of your church in March, and we are much indebted to your kind hospitality." What then followed in the nine months up to December 1855 must have been cosmetic work to the interior of the chancel.

How far Middleton supervised the work we cannot say for certain. If his partnership with Pritchett had indeed been dissolved in 1854 as Pritchett's obituary later claimed, then perhaps the view that Greatham was to Middleton's design but to Pritchett's supervision may indeed be true. After September 1851 Middleton's name is not mentioned in correspondence, but neither is Pritchett's.

However, on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1857 Middleton wrote to Mr Brewster from 85, Bondgate, Darlington, his home and practice address: "I beg to mention my account for plans etc. connected with the enlargement of Greatham Church and shall be much obliged by a cheque for the amount. I was glad to find that during my absence the proposed alterations had been completed, I hope to your satisfaction. Signed J Middleton."

It would therefore seem that after preparing the designs, Middleton had been away from Darlington and had left the supervision to someone else - Pritchett? However two months later, Middleton wrote to Mrs Brewster - presumably her husband had died - from 2, Higher Terrace, Torquay. The letter is dated January 29<sup>th</sup> 1858. (28)

"Dear Madam,

I must apologise for having delayed answering your letter so long, but it was forwarded to me when I was travelling and got mislaid and overlooked - stained glass for the East window would be quite in keeping with the style of architecture and an immense improvement on the internal appearance of the church. Should you not be able to afford stained glass then ornamental quarries would be a great improvement on the plain and would not be expensive. Mr Pritchett would be able to give you information as to cost and would also provide you patterns if you wished. With respect to the 30/- extra you mention, the plan could not have shown the deviation without being on a very large scale and then the contract would have been that amount more, so that the total would have remained the same. (sic)

I expect to remain here the next three months so that if you receive sufficient subscriptions to pay my small account during that time, I shall be obliged by your

forwarding a cheque to me here. If delayed after that, to Mr Pritchett who will know where to forward it.”

Apart from raising all manner of intriguing questions, the letter does at least confirm Middleton’s presence in the country in 1857 and 1858. John Middleton, his wife and son are included in the ‘Arrivals’ lists in Torquay for December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1857. They stayed at Number 2, Higher Terrace, and their stay in the town lasted until 26<sup>th</sup> May 1858. The letter also confirms that he was still on good terms with Pritchett and that they were involved with the Greatham work. Presumably the 1857 use of Bondgate on the letter to Mr Brewster was purely as a forwarding address.

Like the alterations at Manfield, those at Greatham must have aroused a considerable interest and even criticism but no comments are recorded in the *Journal of the Ecclesiological Society*. The destruction of Norman antiquities such as the chancel arch would have been seen as sacrilege and would certainly have given rise to bitter comment from anyone with a love for ancient buildings. It is surprising that Middleton and/or Pritchett were party to such architectural vandalism. (29)

Assuming Middleton’s arrival in Darlington in 1844 and the termination of the partnership with Pritchett junior in 1854-55, he would have pursued his career in that town for approximately ten years. During that period, there must have been many contracts for which no archives survive. There are probably also many buildings, restorations and additions in that area in which he worked, that we may never know were completed by Middleton. Nevertheless, a time came when he realised that it was right to move on, before he became too firmly settled in that part of the country. Perhaps the poor health of his wife or his son persuaded him to seek a healthier environment; perhaps he wanted to see at first hand the Gothic glories of Europe about which he would have heard from colleagues, clients and acquaintances or which he had read about in the many architectural publications and journals that were so popular at that time. Whatever the reason, he left Darlington, although his work in the North of England did not cease entirely as we shall see later. By 1859 at the very latest, he had settled in Cheltenham and had accepted the invitation to design a new church for the town.

## ***References, Chapter IV***

### ***Coniscliffe***

- 1 University of Durham Library, Durham Diocesan Records; Coniscliffe Mortgage DDR/QAB/CC 37. Queen Anne’s Bounty was the revenue from first fruits and tithes appropriated to the Crown in 1534 but given up by Queen Anne in 1704 for the benefit of the Church. Grants were made towards augmenting the income of small livings and towards the repair, maintenance and even purchase of parsonages.
- 2 *ibid*
- 3 *ibid*: The Affidavit is worth reproducing in part: ‘John Middleton in the County of Durham, Architect, maketh oath and saith that he has been accustomed to value and survey and to superintend the building and repairing of houses and other buildings and that he has lately surveyed the Vicarage house of the Vicarage of Coniscliffe.....and that the paper writing hereunto severally annexed marked A,B,C,D,E and F, contain a true state of the said buildings and a plan and specification of the work proposed to be done on the said glebe and a true and correct estimate according to the best of this Deponant’s judgement and belief, of the expense of such work....’
- 4 University of Durham Library, Durham Diocesan Records, DDR/QAB/CC37

- 5 Ibid. The inspection report is 'A', the specification, 'B' 'agreeable to the four drawings prepared by J Middleton, Architect of Darlington.' The four drawings are 'C' to 'F'
6. The present owners were thrilled to discover someone interested in the history of their house and very kindly shared with the author the research they had so far covered and gave him a tour of the property.

### **Hartlepool**

- 7 *Bricks and Mortar. A Celebration of the Church in Hartlepool.*
- 8 Sir Cuthbert Sharp FSA
- 9 *Durham Directory 1894.* F Whellan & Co
- 10 University of Durham ,Durham Diocesan Records, CCP A1/7 (temp) 1854-1855
- 11 University of Durham, Durham Diocesan Records. Specification March 25<sup>th</sup> 1854 as above.
12. The Church of Holy Trinity with St Mark, Hartlepool, has some early photographs of Holy Trinity Church but not of the parsonage.

### **Manfield, Neasham and Hurworth**

- 13 GRO D2970 1/183
- 14 North Yorkshire County Records Office, Northallerton PR Man 9/1
- 15 In possession of the Vicar and Churchwardens.
- 16 The newly appointed Incumbent in 1999 naturally knew little about the history of the restoration. During a 'new broom' search of the vestry, he found a chest containing many of Middleton's plans and drawings which he very kindly allowed me to copy. The one for the Priest's Desk and Stall and the seating plans are not drawn by Middleton, but signed 'pro J Middleton Architect, Darlington 1853,' in a hitherto unfamiliar script. Likewise the heading on the drawings is in neat italic script not at all like the stylised print used on other building plans, which suggest that they may have been delegated to a pupil such as Haswell or Johnson perhaps. Parish Archives at Northallerton contain some correspondence between the Vicar, Mr Swire and the Squire, Mr Wilson. See above PR MAN 9/1
- 17 Durham Record Office, County Hall, Hurworth School D/X 1264/1-3
- 18 *Newcastle Courant* 10.07.1847; 16.04.1847; 30.04.1847; 21.01.1848; 23.01.1852.

### **Pupils, Piercebridge and Pritchett**

- 19 (i) *Wesley Historical Society* N E Branch, March 1990 G Potts & G Milburn.  
(ii) '*Ecclesiastical Works of RL Johnson.*' Degree Dissertation for BA Architecture 1983 Newcastle upon Tyne, A D Matthews. Copy in Newcastle Reference Library.
- 20 Durham Record Office, County Hall; , Piercebridge School D/Ed/5/3/1-2 and 30.
- 21 Middleton appears in the Census for 1851 together with his wife Maria, son John Henry, 2 visitors and 3 servants at 85 Bondgate. Of the visitors, one was a solicitor's daughter Miss Ewes, aged 21 the other aged 1 was a clergyman's son-perhaps the child of Maria's brother Richard Charles Pritchett. It is also interesting to note that in 1855 James Pigott Pritchett, Middleton's brother-in-law and partner in Darlington, married a Miss Ellen Mary DEWES of Knaresborough, aged 25!! Perhaps the enumerator in 1851 was hard of hearing!
- 22 *Borthwick Texts and Calendars No 18.*
23. Directories: *White and Co 1847* J Middleton, Architect 85 Bondgate  
*Slater 1848* as above and James P Pritchett & Son, 13 Lendal, York.  
*Aspects of Darlington: 1851* Architects: Thomas Dixon, 2, Harwood Grove.  
Herbert & Fawcett, 2, Priestgate  
J Middleton, 85 Bondgate
- Whellan's Historical and Topographical Directory 1856:*  
Robert Bland Dixon, Market Place  
William Robson, Bondgate  
George Mason, Central Buildings  
Richardson and Co Northgate.
- 24 Church Guide, 1995.
- 25 University of Durham Library, Durham Diocesan Records CCP A1/7 (temp). The word 'late' has been inserted between and above the words 'my' and 'partner'.

### ***Greatham***

- 26 Durham County Records, correspondence on Greatham: EP/RU SN
- 27 Greatham Church Guide Leaflet.
- 28 Durham Record Office; County Hall: Correspondence on Greatham EP/RU SN.  
In the year 2001, 2, Higher Terrace is 44, The Terrace. Part of the original row has been demolished. Number 44 is the office of Chartwell, Surveyors. I am grateful to Mr and Mrs M Harding of Cheltenham for this information. There is no evidence of his having completed any work there during this period. However in 1877, Middleton, then in Cheltenham provided a drinking fountain for the Dick family of Newbridge House. The fountain, a small gothic style structure set into a wall recess, is in poor condition. It bears the inscription, 'Praise God from whom all Blessing Flow. CD March 1877' The CD refers to Miss Charlotte Dick. A mystery remains - the Dick Family lived at Brook House from 1851 until 1925, where the fountain now is. I am grateful to Taunton Local History Society for this information and for a photograph of the fountain.
- 29 The Clerestory was added in 1869 by RJ Withers

## CHAPTER V

*Middleton's arrival in Cheltenham; the religious background to his first Cheltenham church at St Mark's; St Mark's schools.*

The whereabouts of John Middleton and his family between leaving Darlington and settling in Cheltenham have been suggested in the many obituaries which appeared in architectural journals and the local press at the time of his death. Obituaries which appeared after the death of his son John Henry also contain references to the family's travel and study abroad. The former obituaries were obviously written while John Henry was still alive and therefore able to correct any mistakes. It is highly probable that he even contributed to their content. John Henry did in fact become more famous than his father ever did, but in the world of Art, Archaeology, and Antiquities rather than Architecture, and during his relatively short life he must have had conversations with a very wide circle of friends and colleagues about his early years. After his death, there were many opportunities to share memories of him, some of which were published. Several of these contain reference to time spent in Italy while John Henry was a child, prior to the family's move to Cheltenham.

Having left Darlington in the mid 1850s and handed over the practice to his brother-in-law, James Pigott Pritchett junior, John Middleton and family certainly travelled in this country. It is fairly certain that they also spent some time on the continent before arriving in Cheltenham. Middleton was only in his mid-thirties at the time, his wife nearing her fortieth birthday and their son John Henry aged about ten. It would not have been extraordinary for an architect to take a sabbatical in order to travel abroad to admire the foreign examples of Gothic architecture which were becoming so fashionable in this country. 'From about 1850 onwards *The Ecclesiologist* (1) began to give a cautious blessing to the introduction of continental details....and from that time British architects were beginning to use foreign detail in their churches....And how much there was to choose from! The whole of Europe lay before the Gothic revivalists, especially Italy with its many buildings glowing in sunlight.' (2) The Cathedral at Albi was a particular attraction and established professionals and aspiring ones took advantage of the many opportunities to make the Grand Tour. While abroad they filled every sketchbook they could find with drawings of things they saw. This 'resulted in a new interest in texture and colour. Polychromy inside and out became the main concern for the more advanced. Colour was achieved not with paint but with different building materials and has become the trademark of the British Victorian Architect.' (3)

This influence can be seen in much of Middleton's domestic and ecclesiastical work and his professional library at his death bore evidence of what had influenced him most. (4) Unfortunately no diary of his travels survives neither do any of his sketches or drawings.

The arrivals list in the *Cheltenham Looker On* for January 1859 includes a reference to a Mr John Middleton arriving at the Plough Hotel, and he may well be the subject of this biography. Also a Mr J Middleton arrived at The Queen's Hotel in April of that year and from January to April of 1859 a Mr & Mrs Middleton were living at 12,

Royal Parade. There were several Middletons living in Cheltenham at the time, but as far as it has been possible to ascertain, none was related to John and Maria Middleton. Whichever of the above arrivals relates to John Middleton, architect, we do know that in the 1860 *Cheltenham Annuaire*, he is listed under 'Resident Gentry' living at 13, York Terrace. This was a recently completed row of Italianate style houses in St George's Road. There came to live in that same year, at No 1 York Terrace, the Reverend J Fenn, a broad evangelical who had been appointed to the living of Christ Church (5) and whose age, arrival in Cheltenham and length of service to the town were almost identical to Middleton's. The two men were to work closely together for nearly twenty years to the benefit of church and education.

Middleton's obituary in *The Builder* reported that after travelling widely in Italy 'he settled in Cheltenham without the intention of practising there.' (6) This opinion may have been suggested by the Appeal Literature for the proposed St Mark's Church which he designed soon after his arrival in the town. It would have been surprising had Middleton decided to retire as he was then only forty years of age and his wife was forty-three. Their son John Henry was only thirteen at the time. To retire at that age might suggest the ill health of one of the members of the family, or substantial private means or a combination of both, but in view of his vast output in the years ahead and the extensive travel which this entailed, it is unlikely that ill health was a personal problem. However as we shall later see, Caroline, Dowager Countess Dunraven for whom Middleton worked at Clearwell, commented more than once in her diaries, on the poor state of health of both Mrs Middleton and her son, John Henry. Young John Henry was enrolled at the Junior Proprietary School pending entry to Cheltenham College, where he was a day boy from August 1861. He arrived speaking fluent Italian, leaving in December 1864 to continue his education at Exeter College Oxford. (7) Little more can be added to what has already been written about Middleton's arrival in Cheltenham but from July to September 1860, the newly arrived family was away from the town visiting Matlock and Ilkley Wells. (8) Perhaps they were staying with relatives, perhaps on holiday, or perhaps combining both of these possibilities with visits to sources of potential building materials in the area. This is not as fanciful as it might appear because just before their departure, there appeared in the Cheltenham press, an invitation to readers to subscribe to the building costs of a new church for the district of St Mark's, Cheltenham, the architect for which was to be John Middleton esq. (9) This is quite astonishing as by the time this notice appeared he had been in the town for less than a year. Admittedly the town was not overrun with architects but there again, most towns of Cheltenham's size relied very much on local, established, professional builders to carry out all but the most prestigious work and Cheltenham was no exception. There were about six acknowledged local architects in the town (10) so why had Middleton been chosen for this important commission? That question may never be answered but it might be helpful at this stage to look at the religious climate prevailing in Cheltenham at the time as well as considering the developments and ideas that were influencing provincial architecture.

On his arrival in Cheltenham the town was still under the influence of Low Church Evangelicals. There were many nonconformist places of worship and the town was well provided with Anglican churches. Besides the ancient Parish Church of St Mary there were others situated near Pittville, at The Park, on the Tewkesbury Road and at four other locations near the town centre. The Rev Francis Close had arrived in

Cheltenham in 1826 and in 1856, he was appointed Dean of Carlisle. While he was in Cheltenham he promoted the building of at least four of these churches in response to a continuing rise in the town's population at both extremes of the social scale. (11) But this did not immediately solve the need for even more seating for Anglican worshippers. The ancient parish church was in very poor condition, with structural faults identified in 1850 and 1856, and it was left to Close's successor to address this problem. By July 1859 the church had been closed and a temporary church built nearby capable of holding 1500 people. In March 1861, the parish church was reopened and together with the temporary church, provided much needed accommodation for vast numbers of Cheltenham's members of the Established Church. This then was the situation when the Middletons arrived in the town. However the population was continuing to expand and did so over the next twenty five years with new settlements becoming established to the west of the centre in the St Mark's area; to the south in the Tivoli area, and in the Park and Gratton Road districts. The rapidly expanding western part of Charlton Kings parish was also becoming popular and fashionable and quite alarmingly for some of the staunch evangelicals, the High Church 'party' had made its presence felt in the town at St John's. A split in that congregation in 1864 gave rise to the need for a new church which would allow a continuation of their distinctive style of worship (12). All Saints came about as the result of this split. There were thus many opportunities available to local architects, and Middleton, by choice or by chance, found himself in a very good position to offer his professional services and to leave his mark on Victorian Cheltenham.

As well as considering the religious background to the Cheltenham that Middleton adopted, it is worth looking also at the social and environmental milieu into which he settled. He could not fail to have been struck by the number of places of worship of all denominations which the town hosted and he must have been impressed by the rising tower and spire of the Catholic Church of St Gregory, designed by the York-born architect Charles Hansom. (13) He may have attended the Confirmation service in the recently erected temporary parish church, when 706 persons received the Sacrament from the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol. (14) Had he ventured along the Swindon Road, he would have been able to admire St Paul's Normal College for teachers and perhaps recognise in it the work of SW Daukes who had also trained in York with JP Pritchett. Next door he would have seen the modern Union Workhouse. In other parts of the town he would have recognised Cheltenham College, perhaps Miss Beale's original Ladies' College at Cambay and the Grammar School in the High Street. He might have been extremely interested in and used, the fine railway station at Lansdown, and again recognised in it the hand of SW Daukes. He may even have availed himself of the facilities offered by the Queen's Hotel, the Assembly Rooms, or Montpellier Rotunda and Walk, which was only minutes away from his home in York Terrace.

In 1851 the town's population stood at over 35,000 and was still increasing. The town could boast of several good hotels, private libraries, its own Building Society established in 1850 and a wide variety of shops catering for all classes. Cavendish House had opened in 1824 and theatre entertainment was available at the Royal Well Pump Room, as were 'the waters'. The General Hospital in Sandford Road had opened in 1849 and there was an established Fire Service in the town. The County Police Force was housed from 1858 almost opposite to where Middleton was to

establish his office five years later, in Clarence Street. Gas lighting had been available in the town since 1818; coach and carriage making was a thriving industry; Letheren's Art Metalwork factory opened about 1860; the Brewery was a popular supplier to the town's hostelrys and of course there was always the need for new buildings. This picture of Cheltenham in 1860 is important to our understanding of the environment into which Middleton settled. The town was certainly not a provincial backwater but rather a centre, even at that period, for education, social life, convenient access to the capital and opportunities for personal advancement. Between 1837 and the 1850s, Bayshill Road, Parabola Road and St George's Road had been developed on the Bayshill Estate and it was to this part of the town that Middleton was attracted and in which he first lived.

To return to the previously mentioned invitation to subscribe towards the building of a new church in the St Mark's area, it is worth recording the actual wording of the appeal:

'District Parish of St Mark, Cheltenham; a rapidly increasing population already amounting to nearly 1100 souls, scattered over this wide extent of ground, has necessitated the provision of additional means of spiritual supervision and instruction. Efforts are being made with a view to erecting a Church to meet the existing needs. The plans have been kindly prepared by J Middleton esq, a gentleman of considerable experience in Church Building, who *though for some time retired from his profession* has generously offered to give the whole of his services as Architect as his contribution to the Church' (15)

The Chairman of the Appeal Committee was Middleton's near neighbour in York Terrace, the Reverend J Fenn, the Vicar of Christ Church. One month before this notice appeared in *The Cheltenham Examiner*, another local journal *The Cheltenham Looker On* had informed its readers that a new church for the 'newly appointed district of St Mark's, comprising Lower Alstone and the north west portion of the Gloucester Road to the limits of the parish,' had been decided upon. (16) The parish referred to was that of the ancient parish church of St Mary in the town centre, for although Christ Church was responsible for the area in which the new church was to be built, it was at that time only a conventual district of St Mary's and not a parish in its own right.

In February 1860 the Reverend GP Griffiths had been given pastoral responsibility for the area which was to become St Mark's parish and as there was no church or other suitable building in which to hold services, they were held in a farmhouse kitchen at the Arle extremity of the district. (17) The area was inhabited by many poor families most of whom were employed on the land as agricultural labourers. Of the approximate 1100 which formed the 'local' population, 272 were on Poor Rate Relief and unable to make any contribution towards the costs of a new church. The local press was therefore very encouraging in the appeal to the wider population of the town, 'to make as liberal a response as they find they can honestly afford.' (18) The Reverend Mr Griffiths himself purchased the site for £300 from Mr J Lear in April



1860. It consisted of 2,913 square yards, and in December 1861, it was conveyed to the Diocese as a gift. Mr Griffiths was a man of means and in addition to the site, he advanced £500 towards the building of the church and £600 towards the endowment. The chosen site was next to a large house, 'Twin Oaks' and in the centre of numerous and respectable, recently built cottages. (19)

Two plans had been submitted by Middleton to the Building Committee in March 1860, a month before the site was actually purchased. At that meeting he had also offered his architectural services as his contribution towards the project. Two estimated costs for the realisation of the plans amounted to £2,000 and £2,500 respectively. The Committee adjourned for a week's consideration but insisted that whatever decision was reached, the building had to be constructed of stone. (20) Obviously because Middleton's professional skills could not be assessed locally, references were taken up and at the meeting referred to above, it was minuted that, 'In reply to direct enquiries, most satisfactory testimony to Mr Middleton's ability as an architect have been received from the Vicar of West Hartlepool, of St John the Evangelist, Darlington and from Mr James Medland of Gloucester'. (21)

On the basis of these testimonials it was agreed to appoint Middleton. It was further agreed that all correspondence to and from the architect should first be approved by the committee before any action was taken. The following month, chaired by the Reverend J Fenn, the committee accepted one of the sets of plans 'for a substantial church, which will seat at once 502 adults in the body, one half of the pews being given for the poor'. There was also to be room for nearly 100 children. The plans allowed for extensions at a later date – transepts and a gallery, - and for a tower and spire as soon as funds became available. (22) The pressing need was to have the church completed and ready for consecration as soon as possible. Advertisements inviting tenders were placed in five Cheltenham papers, two county papers, and in two national professional journals - *The Builder* and *Building News*. Working drawings were available for inspection at St James' Infant School, St James' Square. Two tenders were eventually submitted – one for £3,200 and the other for £2,880.

Mr John Acock was successful with his lower tender and his father stood surety for him. Work began immediately on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1860 with a completion date set for 14<sup>th</sup> June 1861. Work progressed so rapidly that the laying of the foundation stone was fixed for Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September 1860 at noon. The local papers reported that 1000 people were present on that occasion, all accommodated on tiered seats along two sides of the enclosure in which the building had already begun to take shape. The walls and buttresses had reached a height of several feet above the foundations but a corner had been especially left for the ceremony. (23)

The Lord Bishop of the Diocese, the Right Reverend Charles Baring, had given his wholehearted support to the project but by the time that the stone was due to be laid, he had been translated to Durham and his successor had not yet been enthroned. The honours for the occasion therefore fell to the Reverend Canon William Carus, representing the Simeon Trustees, patrons of the Cheltenham Rectory. The Rector of Cheltenham headed the procession of between twenty and thirty clergy, including of course the Reverend Mr Griffiths. The Reverend J Fenn was unable to be present as he was mourning the recent loss of his eight year old daughter. After the liturgical ceremonies had been completed, John Middleton presented Canon Carus with the

mallet and trowel which had been prepared for the occasion. The trowel with its silver blade and ivory handle and the mallet of polished oak had been suitably inscribed and were given to Canon Carus as a memento.

Mr Middleton directed Canon Carus in the laying of the stone. As it was raised from its position, a bottle containing contemporary coins and a list of the committee members was lowered into a previously prepared cavity. The mortar was delicately spread by Mr Acock and the stone was then 'slowly lowered into position with the mallet handed to (Canon Carus) for the purpose by Mr Middleton.'

In June 1861 Middleton informed the committee that the church had been roofed for some time. Much effort had gone into keeping to the timing specified in the contract and the builder, Mr Acock had suggested that a celebratory feast for the workmen and their wives, should be provided. This offer was to be extended to the men engaged in the construction of the Reverend Griffiths' Parsonage House, Hillfield. Middleton served on the organising committee and the Reverend Griffiths paid one third of the costs, the balance being met by the building committee. (25)

Although by then £2000 had been raised, there was still a shortfall and until this was found they could not proceed with the tower and spire. The Rector of Cheltenham offered to donate his Easter Offering and surplice fees until the church had been consecrated thereby confirming that it was free of debt. Many local churches had special preaching services with the collections being earmarked for the St Mark's Building Appeal. The newly appointed bishop of the Diocese, Bishop William Thomson, had agreed to consecrate the church on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February 1862. However as the sum required to free the church of debt had not been realised, he postponed the consecration. In the event the delay was only for one month and in March the formal ceremony took place. The Bishop's sermon was the first to be preached in the new church

Bishop Thomson's introduction to Cheltenham could have been more cordial. As well as having to postpone the consecration, there was also considerable ill feeling from some of the more evangelical clergy present when the ceremony did eventually take place. Their cause for complaint was that some of their colleagues insisted on wearing surplices for the ceremony instead of the more customary preaching gowns. The Diocese informed the objectors that this was not as a result of any preference expressed by the bishop for he was "happy for his clergy to follow their own beliefs and inclinations." By the end of the following year, 1863, Bishop Thomson had been enthroned as Archbishop of York!

*The Ecclesiologist* carried a report of the consecration of St Mark's – 'rather a pretty middle-pointed church with nave, aisles, chancel and west tower. The roofs are of a very good pitch. It is soon to have a spire.' (26) An appeal towards the cost of completing the tower and adding the spire was launched at the end of 1863. An offer of £400 towards completion had been received provided that the remaining £800 be raised within a reasonable time. Among those who contributed towards this second appeal were the Rector of Cheltenham and the Reverend J Fenn, and Major RC Barnard who was soon to become a client as well as a close friend of John Middleton.

By August 1864 the work had begun on the tower and spire and also on the boundary walls. (27) The required sum had not been raised but the contractors, Messrs Wingate and Sons of Gloucester, were prepared to make a start with whatever funds were available - just £800. Within eighteen months, the church's Annual Report was able to announce that the tower and spire had been completed, 'thus thoroughly finishing the building in accordance with the designs of the architect, Mr J Middleton.' A special service was held on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1866 to celebrate this achievement and enough money remained to pay towards the cost of the boundary walls. The final balance sheet, audited and found correct by the architect, included the following items of expenditure:

	£
Carving by Boulton	27.11.0
Ironwork by Marshall	20. 8.6
Communion Cloth	14.10.9
Font	9. 0.0
Altar Rails and Desk	14.15.0
Marble to Font	1. 4.0
Paid to Contractor	3,051. 6.7
Clerk of Works	68 10.0
Churchyard walling etc.	34. 9.0. (28)

The altar rail referred to was presumably a temporary one as the present one was installed by Middleton in 1881.

The dimensions of the church according to the architect's plan are given in a contemporary description. The chancel is 33 feet by 20 feet; the nave and aisles to include vestry and porch, 74 feet by 44 feet, with a total exterior length, including the tower, of 138 feet. The height of the tower is 140 feet. (29) The 1983 *Listed Building* description confirms that it is built of drilled Cotswold stone with Bath stone quoins and dressings. 'Forest of Dean stone is used to form alternating polychromy in the voussoirs and the whole building is roofed with red tiles. The church boasts a five bay aisled nave with double transepts (added in 1889 in a style corresponding to that adopted by the late John Middleton) and a two bay chancel. The two tall arches to the chancel and tower with its railed gallery are striking internal features. The pulpit is of stone with naturalistic carving, as is the font. The sanctuary tiles are medievalising red and buff and the East Window has glass by Kempe. The chancel has carved head stops to drips and carved decoration to the buttresses. The tower is in three stages and has corner pinnacles and a broach spire. There is a central gabled south porch.'

Both the contemporary description and David Verey comment on the lack of ornamentation. Verey writes that 'there is a good west tower and spire, rich, competent and conventional,' but he suggests that St Mark's is the least sumptuous and the least effective of Middleton's designs. (30) In 2001 the church stands with its lofty tower and spire visible from many parts of the town and forms a striking landmark and memorial to John Middleton. St Mark's is in fact his first contribution to Cheltenham's architectural heritage and was eventually completed in all respects according to the original plans. The tower, spire, boundary walls and gate piers with overthrow all bear witness to a vision which until this point, he had been unable to realise elsewhere.

At the time that the church was being constructed, it was announced that a parsonage house was planned in the immediate vicinity of the church. Mr Acock was confident that it would be finished at the same time as the church. It was also intended to build an Infants School for the children residing in Alstone which would serve as a lecture room for weekday services closer to the poorer homes.

To address the building of the parsonage first of all. When the proposal to build the new church at St Mark's was first discussed, the Reverend George Pruen Griffiths was curate at Christ Church and living in his own property in St George's Road. He was a native of Cheltenham and he loved the town and its people very dearly. When it became obvious that there would be financial difficulties surrounding the provision of a curate to take charge of the new church, and the provision of living accommodation for him, Mr Griffiths approached the Rector of Cheltenham and offered himself and some financial assistance to secure pastoral care of the district in question. (31) He offered his services without fee or reward. This generous offer was accepted and he was licensed as Perpetual Curate on 12<sup>th</sup> November 1862. By 1863 he was living in the newly constructed parsonage house, Hillfield, St Mark's. In the following year he was sharing the house with his brother, the local solicitor, Mr E Lloyd Griffiths. By 1865, the brother was living in a newly erected house, The Granleys, in the same grounds as Hillfield. These two houses are almost certainly by Middleton, both circumstantial evidence and his later architectural domestic style leading to that conclusion. Hillfield is a building of High Victorian Gothic design. It is a long and narrow house with the main rooms at the rear and consists of two storeys. The north-east elevation has three gables the large one to the right having a canted bay, a Gothic pointed arch window and a lateral stack on the left rising from the buttress. The north-west front is asymmetrical with a moulded two-centre arched doorway on the left, a two-light cusped window to the right and an oriel above on a moulded stone corbel. Internally the ground floor rooms have Gothic stone fireplaces and elaborate moulded ceiling cornices. The entrance porch and hallway are tiled, the hall being separated from the porch by a wood and glazed screen and door. The main staircase has stick balusters with an impressive carved lion-sejant finial. (32)

The Granleys, the home of E Lloyd Griffiths the solicitor, is also built in High Victorian Gothic style on two storeys and is constructed of hammer dressed limestone with freestone dressings. The roof is steeply pitched with stone gable ends. The front, like Hillfield, is asymmetrical with four windows each with stone mullions and transoms. The gabled porch is right of centre and the principal rooms are either side of the tiled entrance hall leading to a central stairwell. The room to the left of the entrance hall has moulded ceiling beams on corbels and a stone fireplace with colonettes. The main stairs retain their original stop-chamfered newels and brattished finials with arcaded balusters. (33) As previously suggested, no plans for these properties have come to light but they bear an unmistakable similarity to other domestic buildings which are known to be by Middleton, including his own personally designed home at Bayshill. (34)

The new church had been completed, a new parsonage built but what of the Infants' School? In 1862, the Reverend Mr Griffiths made a grant of a site for the school for poor persons in the district of St Mark, Cheltenham. (35) Middleton built the school on the corner of what is now Rowanfield Road, near the railway level crossing. The Deed of Gift for the land is dated 16 July 1863 and comprised land 38 feet one inch in front.

It was bounded on the north by the road leading from Alstone to Arle; on the east, by the road leading to the Libertus Estate, (now Rowanfield Road), and to the south and west by cottages and premises belonging to the Reverend Mr Griffiths. (36)

The school was opened in July 1863 and replaced on a new site, the old schoolroom originally set up by the Reverend Francis Close further up Alstone Lane towards the Gloucester Road. In 1874 additional land was donated as a result of the demolition of some of the above mentioned cottages which belonged to the Reverend Mr Griffiths, increasing the school site to 97 feet in length on the Rowanfield Road side and to 68 feet 8 inches at the front. Further land was added in 1897. (37) The school was built of red brick with Bath stone dressings. The main entrance was from Alstone Lane and there were classrooms either side of a long passage which led through to a small yard with outside toilets at the rear.

A further school for St Mark's was built to the south, in Hatherley Lane, then in St Mark's ecclesiastical district. Middleton's plans for the school are signed and dated 1876 and the school was opened in 1877. Although such parish schools are not as architecturally important as his churches, they do help to illustrate the range and variety of buildings with which he was engaged. The great detail shown on the plans, marking the exact thickness of every timber, the position of every oak pin, the weight of lead in every roof ventilator, show the attention to detail which Middleton expected. The cost of this second school for the parish amounted to nearly £800. (38)

Neither of these schools has survived.

## References Chapter V

- 1 Journal of the Ecclesiological Society
- 2 Clarke, BFL
- 3 Dixon and Muthesius
- 4 Bishop, Christopher. Staff who later worked in the practice 'remember Mr Middleton's books' but these have long since disappeared.
- 5 *Cheltenham Examiner* 23.07.1882
- 6 *The Builder* 21.02.1885
- 7 Lowton. (William Morris' College was also Exeter.)
- 8 *Cheltenham Looker On*, 21.07.1860 Departures from Cheltenham, 13 York Terrace, to ..... Matlock and Ilkley Wells, Derbyshire, Mr Mrs Middleton.  
They returned on 15<sup>th</sup> September. On July 10<sup>th</sup> 1861, they departed for Wales.
- 9 *Cheltenham Examiner* 25.04.1860
- 10 Harrison's *Gloucester Directory*. 1859 Architects in Cheltenham:

Dangerfield	Henry	32, Cambray
Humphris	Daniel	London Road
Ingram	Henry Joseph	Montpellier Street
Knight	William Hill	49, St George's Place
Onley	Samuel	Royal Old Wells
Paul	Andrew	9, High Street
Sadler	George	397 High Street

Samuel Onley until 1862: H Dangerfield was Borough Surveyor until 1862. He was immediately succeeded by D J Humphris. W H Knight was working in the town by 1837 at the latest.

- 11 Scotland. The dates of building are as follows: Holy Trinity, Portland Street 1818-1830; St John 1827-1829; St Paul 1829-1831; Christ Church 1837-1840; St Philip, 1834-40. St Peter, Tewkesbury Road 1847-1849; St Luke 1853-1854.
- 12 Blake: '*Cheltenham. A Pictorial History.*'
13. St Gregory's Tower and Spire completed 1864.
- 14 Diocese of Gloucester and Bristol 1836-1897

### ***St Mark's Church***

- 15 *Cheltenham Examiner* 25.04.1860 (Author's italics.)
- 16 *Cheltenham Looker On* 17.03.1860 'The committee do not pledge themselves to accept the lowest tenders or any of them, if above the Architect's estimate.'
17. St Mark's centenary brochure.  
1861 Census: Rev'd GP Griffiths Eaton Lodge, Bayshill, Unmarried aged 33, born ..... Cheltenham, Curate of Arle and Alstone.  
Emily, sister, proprietor of houses, unmarried, born Cheltenham aged 45.  
Charles Davis, visitor, Vicar of Tewkesbury.  
Three House servants.  
Eaton Lodge is in St George's Road near the former Jenner House.  
The Census also informs us that in the Libertus Estate, St Mark's Rectory is 'in building' ...and that St Mark's Church is 'in building'.  
George Pruen Griffiths. Wadham College Oxford. BA Fourth Class Maths 1849. MA 1851. ....Deacon 1850, Priest 1851. Curate Tewkesbury 1850-1857; St Peter Tewkesbury Road, ....1857-1859, then Christ Church. Vicar St Mark's 1860.  
Griffiths married Flora Charlotte, eldest daughter of Colonel WP McDonald, Madras Staff ...Corps, on April 6<sup>th</sup> 1864 at the English Embassy in Paris. On April 23 1870 he married ...Elizabeth Lea, daughter of Matthew Pearce Brampton, in this town. (*Cheltenham Looker On* for respective dates.)  
Elizabeth was twenty years his junior and had been born in Scotland.
18. *Cheltenham Looker On* 01.04.1860
19. Church of England Record Centre, ref, 22297 pt 1; 24065 and 254850.  
In 1849, a Freehold Land Society purchased 15 acres in the St Mark's area. 62 plots were .....to have a pleasure ground, suitable carriage roads, footpaths, gates, and approaches. Each .....property had to conform to a specific plan of architectural beauty. This is today's St ..... Mark's Estate. Traces remain of some properties - The Oaks, 29 St Mark's Road, a house ..... occupied by the solicitor Thomas Willans, originally named Twin Oaks.  
The Church stands on one of the plots. (Sampson, p68)
- 20 GA P78/8 SP/1
- 21 ibid.
- 22 Church of England Record Centre Archives, ref 22297 pt 1.
- 23 *Cheltenham Examiner* 22.09.1860. The stone was moved during an enlargement of the church. in 1888 when the double transept was added to provide a further 214 sittings.
- 24... *Cheltenham Looker On* 22.09.1860
- 25... GA P78/8/SP1
- 26 *The Ecclesiologist*
- 27 *Cheltenham Examiner* 17.08 1864.
- 28 GA P78/8 SP1
- 29 *Cheltenham Examiner* 26.08.1860. Plans at GRO D2970 1/169 Tower and spire.
- 30 D Verey in Pevsner.  
Grants had been received from the Diocesan Church Building Association and the .....Incorporated Church Building Association. The Society for Promoting Christian .....Knowledge had donated service books.  
Individual donations immediately prior to the consecration came from Mrs Dent of .....Sudeley Castle; Mr Charles Schreiber, prospective conservative parliamentary candidate; .....the Liberal MP, Colonel Berkeley; F Jearrard, architect, and Dean Close of Carlisle.
- 31 *Cheltenham Examiner*. Obituary
- 32 *Listed Buildings* description and personal visit.
- 33 ibid
34. In 2001 The Granleys retains its original name. Hillfield is called 'The Knole'.

As suggested, circumstantial evidence points to John Middleton as being the architect .....although WH Knight is another possibility. However the matter of the celebration party .....referred to in the main text would suggest Middleton.

Goding, under the entry for February 8<sup>th</sup> 1862, writes: 'Mr Griffiths has also erected a handsome parsonage house and a new residence for the curate in the neighbourhood of the church.'

Cheltenham Borough Records at GA C5/6/1/1/1, the Register of New Buildings, records the person giving notice as Thomas Darby, builder, detached house near St Mark's Church, for E Lloyd Griffiths, esq of Hillfield.

Middleton used Mr Acock to build the church, and he also built the parsonage. Middleton was on the committee for the completion party for workmen and wives, for both contracts. Middleton used Darby for later work in Cheltenham.

E Lloyd Griffiths was Middleton's solicitor and one of his executors.

#### *The 1871 Census:*

House next to Hillfield not named.

E Lloyd Griffiths, 49 solicitor, born Cheltenham

Mary 50 wife, born, Leeds, Yorkshire

Sarah 14 daughter born Cheltenham

Ada 11 daughter born Cheltenham

Of interest is another property in close proximity to both the Granleys and Hillfield built by 1873, and named Southfield, when it was lived in by Col WJ Cooke. The original indenture of February 1871 shows that the site was sold to Col Cooke by Rev'd Griffiths for £600 and was part of a field of 2 acres called High Beech. The conveyance and agreement stipulated that every dwelling had to be of at least £1300 in value and the external appearance had to be approved by Reverend G Griffiths. The house, Southfield, became Elston House and finally Oldfield Court when it was bought by Cheltenham Borough Council in 1946. CBR C3/4/2/2/3.

When the house was built Colonel Cooke was serving in The Madras Staff Corps – as had the father of Griffiths' first wife, and Mrs Cooke was living at Apsley Villa with her two daughters and a servant. The house, Oldfield, is of rusticated drilled limestone with projecting bays and several oriel windows. The entrance hall has a mosaic tiled floor, stone staircase and ornate stone fireplaces in four of the five bedrooms. Internally it is not as ornate as Middleton's other houses and could just be by W H Knight. In 2001 it was undergoing major renovation prior to conversion into apartments. The house's most recent name is Oldfield Court, demolished in 2004.

#### ***St Mark's Schools***

35 GA P78/3 SC9

36 ibid

Alstone School. Goding, op cit, says that the school was opened August 5<sup>th</sup> 1861. The Christ Church Infants' Log Book records for April 1864, "25 names withdrawn from the register. 17 children in the St Mark's district at the Rev GP Griffiths' desire, have gone to the school just opened by him."

In 1858, the solicitor, RS Lingwood, wrote to the Reverend Francis Close, who was at the time, Dean of Carlisle, as follows:

"In the year 1826, the land and building thereon lately used as the Infant Schoolroom at Alstone, were surrendered to the Revd Lewis, Rev Wilson and yourself. The building has become in a very dilapidated state and ..... has been closed. The committee has the opportunity of disposing of the old building at Alstone for £100 to be converted into a dwelling house."

Close was asked to give his consent and although he expressed concern about moving the school away from the centre of the population where it was needed, he agreed. This school would have been on land almost opposite the Alstone Lane entrance to today's Alstone Croft, probably the little black and white cottage still in situ. (Christ Church School Archive per Jill Waller.)

In 1934 the Middleton school was transferred to the control of the Vicar and Churchwardens of Christchurch. The author taught there from 1964-1972. The school was demolished in the late 1980s.

- 37 On the site plan of 1863 what is now Rowanfield Road is named St Stephen's Lane. Jill Waller suggests that the road then led to the property of a *Mr* Stephen's – and was misnamed, *St* Stephen's
- 38 GA D2970 3/9-School (Infants) for Reverend G Griffiths, £755. The school was enlarged by Middleton's son in 1888 and by Prothero and Phillott in 1894. The St Mark's District School was in Roman Road and was constructed in 1887 to plans by another local architect WH Knight of the firm, Knight and Chatters. (*Cheltenham Examiner* 24.02.1886)

The former Hatherley School was the subject of much controversy in 2001 when the owner was successful in securing its demolition. It had closed as a school in the 1970s. A Planning Application was made for dwellings on the site of the now demolished school, but this and subsequent applications were several times rejected. The materials from the school were used elsewhere and the bell turret was reputedly sold to a Texan Millionaire for re use on a building project in the USA. In 2004, the site is occupied by housing.

Brooks also credits the former Ragged School in Milsom Street to Middleton, 1863-1864. It is typical of his designs in red brick with blue bands and comprised one long central schoolroom. It was later enlarged but has now been converted into domestic accommodation.



## CHAPTER VI

*Middleton's social and civic life in Cheltenham; business partners; early business records;  
John Henry Middleton; John Middleton, FRIBA.*

To say that Middleton retired to Cheltenham would be a gross misrepresentation of the facts as they turned out to be. That may have been his original intention but after the work on St Mark's many other requests for his professional services came pouring in. Apart from the other four churches which he built in the town, his portfolio contains contracts for new buildings, alterations, restorations, churches, schools, hospitals, mansions, furnishings, memorials, and monuments. (1) He worked in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Warwickshire and Devon; he completed further work in Yorkshire and spent a great deal of time in Wales working on churches and houses. Obviously over a period of twenty-five years in Cheltenham there are some jobs recorded in the existing ledgers for which no drawings have survived and some drawings in his portfolio are not identifiable from the accounts. Clearwell in the Forest of Dean is one example of the former which is surprising when one considers the vast amount of work he did in the village. However what is evident is that Middleton built up an extensive practice based on his main office in Cheltenham but with subsequent branch offices in Wales, London, and Cambridge. He is justifiably credited with being one of the most accomplished local architects of the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. (2) In his church work he came down firmly on the side of the ecclesiological movement begun in 1839 by the Cambridge Camden Society. The influence of its journal, *The Ecclesiologist*, which first appeared in 1841, is evident in most of his church building and restorations. 'Galleries, high pews and triple-deckers (pulpits) must be swept away; churches should again embody and symbolise Catholic principles – an emphasis on the sacraments not on sermonising. Chancels must be distinct and fully developed, discrete baptistries created and the emphasis shifted from the pulpit to the altar. To celebrate continuity with the past, new churches should be designed in an historically correct Gothic - or as Pugin advocated - in the English Decorated style of the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. Medieval churches should be restored.' (3)

Fashion had changed and things were now far different from the days when Middleton was studying with Pritchett in York. Certainly the Camden influence is evident at St John's Darlington and as far as Middleton was concerned, gone were the 'preaching-box' days. In Cheltenham the Church of England desperately needed to react positively to the nonconformist influence because there was a real danger of losing members to the chapels. Generally the 1840s had seen a period of Romanesque influence, illustrated in Cheltenham at St Peter's Church on the Tewkesbury Road. (4) However from 1850 onwards, the fashion changed and moved towards Middle Pointed Decorated Gothic, even Early English. Many beautiful churches were built in the provinces by relatively unknown architects who began with small scale restorations and domestic contracts. (5)

The five new Victorian Gothic churches built by Middleton illustrated this attempt to restore the medieval style of church architecture with an emphasis on the chancel and the sanctuary. In following his church work we can see how closely he adopted the increasingly popular fashion for clearly defined nave, aisles, chancel, sanctuary, and

porch. If finances allowed, a tower and spire at the west end formed an integral part of the design. The font was situated at the south-west corner, the chancel raised above the level of the nave and approached through a clearly recognisable arch. The clergy seats were correctly placed just inside the chancel facing north and south. The level of the sanctuary needed to be higher than the chancel and contain the altar, a credence, sedilia, and piscina and there ought to be a sacristy to the north-east. (6) This became Middleton's goal, a goal which he more or less realised in his churches at Darlington, Clearwell and St Mark's, Cheltenham.

Middleton's churches reflected the wealth of colour and detail which architects of the period had admired during their travels on the continent. He made liberal use of brick, tiles, coloured stone and marble as well as the fashionable 'structural polychrome.' (7) In many of his churches and some of his larger houses too, one can also find the influence of Ruskin where, if carvings from nature were attempted, 'they should only be lacking in life to be equal to nature, and all arches should be pointed for that is what is seen in nature.'

These then were some of the influences bearing on John Middleton, influences which he adopted conservatively at first at Darlington and St Mark's but with greater flair and freedom in his other churches. He also developed a personal style for the exterior of his buildings where he preferred strong, masculine, contrasting stone textures. Unfortunately the external appearance often does not do justice to the richness and beauty of the interiors, with their polychromy and elaborate carved detail. This is especially true at All Saints and Holy Apostles, Cheltenham. However before looking in detail at the four Cheltenham churches which he designed after St Mark, it might be helpful to understand how Middleton became involved in the life of the town in which he settled and to introduce some of the people and organisations which influenced the development of his career. It has often been said that the best road to success and acceptance is to become involved with the community and that appears to be true in Middleton's case.

To begin with his domestic circumstances, we learn from the 1861 Census that he was aged forty and living at 13, York Terrace. He was described not as an architect but as a Landed Railway Proprietor thus confirming the theory that he had retired from his chosen profession. The reference to railway proprietor no doubt refers to his holdings in the Stockton and Darlington Railway and the North Bitchburn Colliery. Living with him at York Terrace were his wife Maria, his son and a visitor by the name of Thomas Henry Morris aged thirteen and born in Halifax. This visitor must have been a family friend or even relative for we shall meet him again at the time of young John Henry's death in 1896. The domestic staff consisted of a servant, Sarah Green aged thirty, born in York, and Esther Bassett the cook, aged forty-four, born in Stroud. Ten years later, when the family was living at Westholme, Middleton's personally designed house on the Bayshill Estate, he was described in the Census as an architect. His son, John Henry, was aged twenty four and living at home, and described as an Oxford Undergraduate. An eighteen year old niece from Derby, Edith Bitchell was staying with the family. Staff now included a cook, a lady's maid and a housemaid.

In 1881 Middleton and his wife Maria, then in their sixties, were living in the same house with five new staff - lady's maid, parlour maid, housemaid, cook and undermaid. Middleton died in 1885, in the month after he and Maria had moved to their third

Cheltenham home, in St George's Road, only yards away from Westholme. This house had previously been named Gresham House, but the Middletons took with them the name of their former house. The name 'Westholme' can still be seen painted on the left side of the house which stands almost opposite The Overton Hotel. Maria Middleton was still living there as a widow with one servant, Hannah Goodwin, in 1892.

Turning to the professional side of his life, we know that Middleton worked on his own until 1868. Perhaps events were overtaking him and he realised that a practice the size of the one into which his was developing, whether by accident or design, just could not be run by one man alone. He realised that he needed assistants or partners to whom he could delegate some of the responsibility which the ever increasing demands upon his time were making. It would appear that he had been working from home and although some designs for the early contracts do exist, accounts do not, at least not in any detail. A clear indication of his decision to take on a partner is seen in the title page of the first available cash book, beautifully inscribed in Gothic lettering, using coloured inks and reading:

Cash Book of Messrs Middleton and Goodman, Architects.  
Cheltenham March 1<sup>st</sup> 1868. (8)

The Articles of Partnership between Messrs Middleton and Goodman, Architects, were signed and dated 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1868 and deposited with Middleton's Solicitor, E L Griffiths. Goodman had paid £1050 for his co partnership for a period of ten years. This entitled him to one third of all profits on any work begun after three months of the agreement, with one day off a week and ten weeks if desired, per annum. Each partner would work from his own home, and keep a distinct establishment at his own cost. Either partner was entitled to do any gratuitous work they thought fit, provided they informed the other partner, but all pupil fees were to be shared in the same proportion as profits from contracts. Goodman was entrusted to make up the books, and Middleton was entrusted with their safe keeping. There are several clauses in the agreement relating to the possible retirement of Middleton before Goodman's ten year term was completed. These included the condition that until Goodman's ten year period had expired, Middleton could not work for payment once he had retired, although he would continue to receive his two thirds proportion of fees for any work begun before his retirement became effective. Provision was also made should Middleton die before Goodman's contract had expired. (9)

The decision for each to work from their respective homes was short lived. The practice was obviously successful and within a short time they had opened an office which was situated on the first floor of No 1, Bedford Buildings. This property makes the western corner of Clarence Street and Well Walk, leading into St Mary's Churchyard. The office remained there until after Middleton's death.

Of his partner, little is known. The 1871 Census for Cheltenham records Alfred Percy Goodman, architect, aged 30, living at Lucknow Villa, Gloucester Road, the address given for him in the Articles of Partnership. He was unmarried and had been born at St Pancras, Middlesex. At the time of the Census he was living with his widowed mother. In the 1870 Cheltenham Directory, he is included under Resident Gentry. After 1874 his name is no longer associated with the practice and his address in that year is given as The Myrtles. No information has come to light as to the reasons for the partnership

to cease. From that date until 1885 the practice was known as Middleton and Son. 'Storey's Gate, London' was added to the practice's address from 1877. However Middleton's son John Henry was not taken into formal partnership until 1881 as we shall find later.

John Henry Middleton, was admitted to the Royal Institute of British Architects, (RIBA) on the first of March 1875. He was proposed by the well known architects GG Scott, FP Cockerell, and his maternal uncle, JP Pritchett of Darlington. It may well have been through the influence of his son, colleagues or even clients, that John Middleton applied to become a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects in November of the same year. His application, sent from his home address, Westholme, Cheltenham, reads as follows:

Dear Sir,  
Desirous of becoming a FRIBA I beg to enclose for you  
the various papers connected with my application.  
I remain yours very sincerely,  
John Middleton.

PS: My son has been absent from England some time and  
will remain some months longer. Should any payment be  
due from him, I shall be glad to forward a cheque for the  
amount if you will kindly inform me of the amount.

At the time this letter was written John Henry was on one of his adventurous travels abroad and his father's reference to payment no doubt meant annual membership fees.

There are only a few papers to do with John Middleton senior's application in the archive at the RIBA. One is a reference in support of Middleton's application, dated September 29<sup>th</sup> 1875 and signed JP Pritchett, Fellow.

JP Pritchett it will be recalled was Middleton's brother-in-law and former partner in Darlington. He made no reference at all to family or partnership connections but said that he had known Middleton for many years and was acquainted personally with many of his works. There follows a list of works in Cheltenham – "The Ladies' College, De Lancey Fever Hospital, All Saints and other churches in Cheltenham." He then added to the list, "and many churches, mansions and other buildings in Yorkshire, Durham, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Herefordshire, Middlesex, Surrey and South Wales." Of these, works in Worcestershire and Surrey have not been identified, although between 1869 and 1872, Middleton was involved with estimates for the replacing of the top of Bredon church spire, in Worcestershire.

The RIBA archive also contains Middleton's nomination paper dated 10<sup>th</sup> November 1875, which reads as follows:

I, John Middleton, of Cheltenham, having read the  
Charter and Bye Laws of the Royal Institute of British  
Architects, and being duly qualified and willing to  
conform thereto, is (sic) desirous of being admitted a Fellow.

We the undersigned do, from our personal knowledge  
of him, propose and recommend him to the Council for ballot.  
Witness our hand this 10<sup>th</sup> day of November 1875.

The nomination is signed by John Middleton; Sir Gilbert Scott, Fellow; Edward Middleton Barry, Fellow and JP Pritchett, Fellow. He could not have wished for more respected sponsors: Scott was a father of the Gothic Revival and Barry was the architect of the Houses of Parliament. Council approved the nomination on 29<sup>th</sup> November and at the Ordinary General Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1876, John Middleton of Cheltenham was elected a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

John Henry had joined his father's practice and ran the London Office, but as suggested above, this was not in any way a formal partnership although 'Middleton and Son, Architects, Cheltenham and Westminster' did appear on headed notepaper and some drawings. However on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1881 formality was introduced into the partnership with the signing of an Indenture between John Middleton of Cheltenham, Architect and John Henry Middleton of Cheltenham, Architect, making them 'co partners in the profession in Cheltenham, London or elsewhere.' The title of the partnership was that which had existed informally since at least 1876, Middleton and Son. Like the agreement that had been made with Goodman, this partnership was initially for a period of ten years, but in this instance the profits were to be shared equally. Premises were listed as Bedford Buildings, Cheltenham, and 4, Storey's Gate, London, with the London office accounts being sent to John Middleton in Cheltenham on a monthly basis. Various clauses refer to possible retirement or withdrawal from the practice of either partner, the final clause however stating that on the death of John Middleton, the firm's goodwill would pass entirely to John Henry Middleton. (10)

Middleton had several apprentices articulated to him between 1864 and 1885 of whom Henry Prothero MA, FRIBA had been one, and George Henry Phillott another. For a short while in 1864 the young, newly qualified Watson Fothergill spent several months working with Middleton before moving to Nottingham where he was to establish his own successful practice. (11) Another assistant was Mr HW Chatters who later became RIBA and left Middleton, to join Mr WH Knight in the architectural practice which became Knight and Chatters in 1883. *The Cheltenham Examiner* recording Middleton's death in 1885 alluded to these and other pupils:

'In his career he formed almost a school of architecture  
in the pupils who were under his tuition.' (12)

A look through some of the office account books gives an intimate insight into the early days of the practice especially at the time of the Middleton-Goodman partnership. Here is a selection:

1868	Rent to Miss Overbury, 1 quarter	£4.10.0
	To Mary Juggins, for first cleaning of office and five weeks' attendance	16.0
	To Mr Alibu for moving office furniture	17.2
1869	Prints of All Saints	15.0
	Painting Office	1 06.0

1870	Paid Mitchell one week salary	1 10.0
	Subscription to architectural exhibition	10.3

(There then follows a long list of expenses for office furniture and supplies.)

1871	Christmas tip to postman	2.0
1873	Rent now	7.00 0
	Coins for Tivoli Church	3.9
1874	Marshall for picking lock	1.0
	Marshall for mending door	2.0
1877	Rent and Housekeeper, Storeys Gate	10.02.0
	Painting name at Storeys Gate	12.0
1878	Parcels to Sowerby	2.6
1879	Rent Storeys Gate	6.14.6
	Copy of Godings Cheltenham	6.0
1880	Rent Storeys Gate	8.08.0

At this point the recording of expenses in this manner stops. Thereafter they appear as single page entries for each client and include travel, plans, postage, telegrams and prints of proposed designs. (13) In view of Mr Goodman's anonymity it is interesting to note that between 1868 and 1874 travel expenses are often recorded for Mr Middleton, or 'Mr M', but not so frequently for Mr Goodman or, 'Mr G'. These latter ones are sometimes to Capt Evans, Herefordshire, (Byletts), Woolstone Church, and Brookthorpe, Gloucester.

LW Barnard FRIBA, writing in 1948 recalled life in the office at the time Middleton died in 1885. He described conditions which were undoubtedly true in the earlier days of Middleton and Goodman as well as in the later years of the Middleton and Son era:

'Drawings had to be prepared with not half the mechanical aids we have now. Perhaps the greatest difficulty was that we had to prepare each copy of the plan by hand and the work was copying these specifications or bills of quantities unless the latter were lithographed as they often were. We had to rub ink from a stick which if you were doing much ink drawing, had to be done two or three times a day. Added to this, we had not got then of course, any advantage such as telephones or means of transport. Even a bicycle was not used at the office before 1890 and it is hard to realise that though the work was scattered all around Cheltenham, the assistants generally had to get to the work by walking. How the large jobs were ever completed at that time seems difficult to understand. This state of affairs lasted for the first thirty years of the office.'

Within two years of his arrival in Cheltenham there is little doubt that Middleton had established himself as an accomplished ecclesiastical architect and as a valued member of the community. The Church Vestry Minutes of Christ Church parish record that at the Vestry Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1862, the Vicar, the Reverend J Fenn nominated John Middleton to be Vicar's Warden for the ensuing year. In very neat copperplate writing, Middleton's signature showed acceptance of the office for which he had been

nominated. This same procedure, with the same result, was to be repeated annually until 1878 when he and his co-warden, Major General McCausland asked to be relieved of their duties. What seems very strange in view of such lengthy service, is that there is no further reference to Middleton in the church's minutes of meetings, not even on the occasion of Middleton's death, whereas an expression of deep regret was recorded upon the death of the Parish Clerk!

In addition to serving as Churchwarden, Middleton also served as secretary to the Christ Church School from 1863-1875. There are some interesting entries in the school's Log Book which refer directly to John Middleton himself:

August 1864. Mr J Middleton visited the school and promised to give orders for new blinds.

In January 1865 and December 1868 he recorded a full report of the visit of Her Majesty's Inspector. In March 1868, the Reverend and Mrs Hopkins and Mr Middleton, accompanied by a Police Detective, went to the school to examine and enquire about some money stolen from a school drawer. Other entries reveal perhaps that Middleton was not above overstepping the mark!

September 8<sup>th</sup> 1871. J Middleton esquire visited the school on Thursday and gave orders for several needed repairs.

November 17<sup>th</sup> 1871. Rev MI Finch gave notice that in future *no* order may be given for repairs without first applying to him.

Whoever Messrs Hopkins and Finch were, it goes to show that Middleton was not above a reprimand! From 1863 to 1874 he was also secretary to the Cheltenham School of Art and in 1863 he was a Founder Member and became the first Treasurer of The Cheltenham Permanent Library. It was due to his enthusiasm more than anyone else, that the Library had been founded. At one exploratory meeting for all interested parties, at the end of March 1863, Middleton was present and shared company with several well known Cheltenham personalities of the time. For some of these he was later to carry out commissions or share public duties. The names of the Reverend Barry, Principal of Cheltenham College, the Reverend J Fenn, Vicar of Christ Church, the Reverend TA Southwood, the Reverend Doctor Morton Brown and Major RC Barnard provide a representative sample of well known and respected inhabitants of the town. A provisional committee had met on 11<sup>th</sup> March and Middleton's name was included in the committee list. A Provisional Council was then elected to see the project off the ground and elected to this Council were several persons mentioned above, including Middleton himself.

In the 1870s Middleton became an Ordinary Elected Member of Council of Cheltenham Ladies' College again serving alongside Dr Morton Brown. Other members included Dr ET Wilson, father of Edward Wilson the future Antarctic explorer and Major General McCausland, Middleton's fellow Churchwarden at Christ Church. Also on the Council were Mrs James Owen, 'that friend of Dorothea Beale who with Mrs Middleton became intimates of Miss Beale from about 1880. Her diary is full of references to them both at this period.' (14) John Middleton was also a Founder Member of the Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society in 1876 and secretary to and Member of, the Cheltenham Council of the Society until his death in 1885. He organised local meetings

for the Society in Cheltenham, planned excursions for members and led field trips to places of architectural or archaeological interest. This was an interest he shared with his son and there were several occasions when the one deputised for the other in presenting papers on topics such as Cheltenham Parish Church, or Bishops Cleeve Church for example. But perhaps his most influential and responsible role in public service was that of Improvement Commissioner for the West Ward of Cheltenham, an office which he held from 1863 to 1875. Up to 1876, the town was governed at local level by thirty Commissioners appointed under the Cheltenham Improvement Act of 1852. To qualify to become a Commissioner, one needed to own property to the value of at least £1000 and one had to reside within a five mile radius of Cheltenham town centre. In his time as Commissioner, Middleton served on the Sewerage and Drainage Committee, the Public Cemetery Committee and the Water Supply Committee. Obviously as his profession made more and more demands on his time, Middleton's attendance at Committee Meetings became fewer. In the year 1870-1871 his presence is recorded at only 19 out of 71 possible meetings at which he could have been present.

It will be noticed that Middleton's civic and church duties ceased in the period 1874-1875 at a time when changes were taking place in the administration of the Borough. Perhaps pressure of work at this time and wariness of the effects of possible changes which might result from incorporation persuaded him to take a back seat. Apart from his voluntary role as treasurer of the Library, Middleton's main interests were the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society and The Royal Institute of British Architects to which he had been elected Fellow in January 1876. For seventeen years he was an active member of Friends in Council. This latter organisation was an informal club for like-minded professionals who met in one another's homes to discuss and debate matters of social and literary interest. It had been started in 1862 by Major RC Barnard. The number of elected members was limited to twelve, and only on the departure of a member could another person be elected, and this had to be a unanimous decision. The club owed its origin to a similar venture in Cambridge, 'The Apostles,' and its aim was to provide 'intellectual entertainment for professional people.' Meetings were held in the homes of members on a rotational basis where the host who also acted as President for the evening, presented a paper on a previously advertised topic – no politics, no theology. Refreshments – no knife suppers – were provided and guests were allowed to be present. Dorothea Beale, Principal of Cheltenham Ladies' College was regularly present as a guest not an elected member. In fact, most members were from the teaching, clerical or military professions, the majority with Oxford or Cambridge degrees. John Middleton was elected a member in 1868 and presided over a meeting each year from 1869 to 1884 with one exception. The topics which he presented ranged through 'Dennis' Cities of Etruria', 'Darwin's Descent of Man' and 'Assyrian Discoveries', to, 'The Talmud' and 'Habitations of Man in All Ages'. The members' lists show how many of them were people for whom Middleton worked professionally or with whom he served in a civic capacity. (15) In 1876 the year in which he was elected FRIBA, he also joined Freemasons' Lodge 82, about which more will be said later.

Politically, John Middleton was a Conservative. In July 1865, Charles Schreiber, a Conservative, stood against the long serving Liberal MP, Colonel Berkeley. In an election broadsheet reproduced in the *Cheltenham Looker On*, Middleton's name appeared among those soliciting support for Schreiber and in the following year a thirty-



year tradition of Liberal representation for Cheltenham was broken. Schreiber was returned victorious. (16)

Middleton was again involved with political infighting at a local level, in 1871, when nominations were invited for a new Commissioner for East Ward. Mr Willis offered himself for election but was not immediately supported by the Conservative wing, having shown himself too independent for their liking. However he later declared his total commitment to the Conservative camp and they subsequently supported his nomination. The Liberals accused his supporters of doing an about turn, for fear of losing control on the Commissioners' Body. Middleton, one of Willis' promoters, vehemently denied any such motives, and *The Examiner*, although pro-Liberal, assured its readers, 'We treat any assertion vouched for by Mr Middleton, with the greatest respect.' (17).

From a domestic perspective, very little is known about Middleton's family life. Money was obviously not a problem and Maria Middleton and son John Henry would seem to have been the only other members of John Middleton's family. Perhaps understandably for the period, Maria does not feature prominently in her husband's professional or civic life and this may be due in no small part to the medical condition of his son. John Henry was not a healthy youth and his forced withdrawal from his studies at Oxford due to a severe and painful illness, which will be addressed later, meant that his five or six years back in Cheltenham, placed a considerable burden on his parents. For much of the time he was confined, by choice, to his room, and this must have curtailed their social activity. The Dowager Countess Dunraven visited the Middletons at their home in June 1867. She wrote about her visit in her diary, as follows: "Called on Mrs Middleton, who was in deep distress at the dangerous, indeed hopelessness (sic) of her only son and child. She seemed better in herself." A year later, December 1868, after another visit, she recorded, "How sad that both (Middleton's) wife and his son are lying on their beds with incurable (diseases?)." She wrote of her sympathy for Middleton himself in that his wife and child "had little hope of enjoying the comforts and affections provided for them by dear Mr Middleton, who it seemed was wonderfully resigned and (?)." As it was, both Maria and John Henry outlived Middleton, and hopefully, Maria would have been present for at least some of the Friends in Council evenings when they were held at Westholme. John Henry did not waste his time during these early days of his illness and on good days he read and studied avidly which helped to prepare him for the distinguished, albeit short, career which awaited him.

LW Barnard recalls his first day working under John Henry when he took over the Practice following the death of his father in 1885.

"I was met by him and a staff which then consisted of 6 or 8 assistants. John Henry at once gave me a job to copy a church plan and after a short time came to see what I had done. He thoroughly scared me by exclaiming that I had done nothing and when he saw my writing and printing I thought he was never going to stop. When he went out of the room his assistants assured me that that was nothing new as he always expected everyone to work as fast as he did. It startled me for the first day at work, but I must say however that he was kindness itself. When he took his pupils out one at

a time to see work, he could not take too much trouble to answer any questions and to teach as much as possible.” (18)

This opinion of John Henry is confirmed in later years by his friends and colleagues in the William Morris circle. LW Barnard also remembered quite clearly, John Middleton senior.

“As a small boy I knew him more or less as he was a great friend of my father (Major RC Barnard) and when John Henry grew up, I might say he was an even greater friend of my father He was also Godfather to my brother Sedgwick.”

Here then we have seen John Middleton as architect and father, with a strong sense of civic responsibility. We have learnt about his faith, his commitment to his family, his reputation amongst his contemporaries in his adopted town, and about his political persuasion. It is appropriate that once again LW Barnard should lead us into the next phase of Middleton’s career in this part of England.

“The work was better then (than in 1949) especially as regards joinery. John Middleton himself was very fond of stop chamfers and squarejoints with mortices and tenons often designed by himself. As regards planning, the planning of a church as designed by John Middleton 90 years ago, is as good as any we can do now.” (19).

## References, Chapter VI

1 D2970 at GA

*Blue Guide*

2 Brooks, Chris and Saint, Andrew.

3 By SW Daukes

*Faber Book of Victorian Architecture*

4 Clarke, BFL

5 Clarke, BFL

6 D2970 2/2 at GA.

Also:

1871 Census, Lucknow Villa St Mark’s:

Martha Goodman	head	widow	52	annuitant	b Gloucester
Alfred P Goodman	son	unmarried	30	architect	b St Pancras
Frederick Goodman	son	unmarried	28	solicitor/attorney	do
Florence Goodman	daughter	unmarried	15	scholar	do
Juliana M Jones	visitor	unmarried		annuitant	b Gloucester

Almost next door were 1 & 2 The Myrtles, in which lived

Philip Marden head married 61 builder b Cheltenham

From 1872, AP Goodman lived at 2, The Myrtles until 1874, the Misses Marden living at No 1.

7 Articles of Partnership, GA D2216, box 25.

8 GA D2216 Box 25 pt 2. John Henry was not totally committed to following in his father’s footsteps. On his death he put the firm into thorough working order and presumably sold his share to two former pupils of his father one of whom, Phillott, had only recently been admitted into partnership: see *Cheltenham Examiner* 21.02.1885  
When John Henry became a member of the RIBA, his address was given as Grosvenor Square, London - while working with Scott?

9 Brand.

- 10 *Cheltenham Examiner* 18.02.1885  
 Mr HW Chatters became President and Chairman of the Directors of the Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society 1919 - 1931.  
 Assistants and pupils whom LW Barnard remembered or knew of during the period 1860 – 1885 are listed in *Ninety Years Past*. and include:  
 Robert Davies - later worked for the London Sanitary Protection Association: a letter of 24<sup>th</sup> April 1879 at GRO D2216 box 25, contains Middleton's request to his solicitor to "let Mr Robert Davies have his articles."  
 Mr Sessions – died in 1949  
 Mr Stucke – very studious. Passed examinations for RIBA, The Surveyors' Institute, and The Sanitary Association. He carried out many contracts in Capetown, Bloemfontein and Pretoria.  
 Albert Edward Pearson remained for nearly forty years and produced countless drawings of very high quality. Marvellous writing in copper plate and account books are a model of care and neatness. Died 1911.  
 FEP Edwards – FRIBA Chief Architect to the City of Sheffield.
- 13 GA D2970 2/2.
- 14 Raikes. This reference may of course refer to another Mrs Middleton. Miss .Beale's diary is not available for this period.  
 Friends in Council: Among members with Middleton were Major RC Barnard: Capt. Henry Bell, archaeologist; Dr G Copeland, benefactor of St Gregory's Church; Dr ET Wilson, secretary of Delancey Hospital; John Brend Winterbotham, solicitor; Dr Claudius Buchanan Ker, a friend of Tennyson; Rev J .Harrison, first incumbent of Ss Philip and James; Rev RH Cooke Vicar of Healaugh, Yorks and a worker in brass; Reverend George Butler, husband of Josephine Butler the social reformer; Reverend J Fenn of Christ Church; William Macready, the Tragedian; Reverend James Owen, Vice Principal of Cheltenham College and housemaster of Cheltondale, which was designed by Middleton. Many of these were, or became, clients of Middleton.  
 Subjects not mentioned in the text, upon which Middleton presented a paper were Jocelyn of Brankland, Jeaffreson's Book about the Clergy, The Depths of the Sea, The Fall of Prince Floristan, The Light of Asia, Angel Messiah. Epic of Kings was his final paper on 7th October 1884. (Cheltenham Local Studies Library 63G367/R1642/18798.)
- 16 – *Cheltenham Examiner* 1865 Election Reports.  
 Schreiber fought his campaign on many issues including one which was very controversial at the time. He expressed his determination to oppose the aggression of the Papacy and to go as far as possible for the repeal of the Government grant to the Roman Catholic Seminary at Maynooth in Ireland. One must remember that at this time Ireland was a part of Great Britain and 90% of the population was Roman Catholic. To be seen to be doing anything that would antagonise them would have encouraged the troubles that were eventually to surface at the turn of the century. Schreiber's opponent took a completely different stand but misjudged the feelings of the people of Cheltenham including Middleton presumably – and lost the support of most of the Anglican clergy.
- 17 *Cheltenham Examiner* 15.11.1871
- 18 *Ninety Years Past*. op cit
- 19 ibid

Details of Middleton's private and public life have been taken from many references to his activities reported in contemporary newspapers, Directories, professional journals and the Minute Books of organisations to which he belonged.

Of his work as a Town Commissioner, the following statistics indicate that his professional duties may well have conflicted with the amount of time he could have been expected to devote to the former role. Of possible attendance at Meetings in the year 1870-1871 for example, his record was:

Monthly Meetings	attendance 5	possible 13
Sewerage and Drainage	attendance 1	possible 15
Burial Board	attendance 1	possible 15
Cemetery Committee	attendance 1	possible 8

The balance of the figure given in the text is accounted for by special or emergency meetings.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *Further Cheltenham Churches – All Saints, Holy Apostles, Ss Philip & James and S Stephen.*

During his twenty-five years in Cheltenham, Middleton was involved with countless restorations, alterations, reordering and rebuilding of churches in the town and further afield. However, the work with which he is most associated locally is the provision of five Anglican churches for the town which had become his home. The first, St Mark's, has already been described. Another two were begun in the 1860s and two in the 1870s and we shall visit these in the order in which the foundation stones were laid. This leads us immediately to All Saints Church at Pittville, a church which Goodhart Rendel described as 'a splendid example of what Gilbert Scott was always aiming at and never achieved, complete Gothic self assurance with Victorian punch.' (1) The church is unique in Middleton's portfolio in that it was built specifically for a High Church congregation and its internal decoration and ordering were planned with this in mind.

The church was built in a rapidly expanding part of the town and in surprisingly close proximity to the very evangelical Holy Trinity Church of 1823. The events which led to the building of All Saints were long and protracted, but were essentially the result of a difference of tradition between the new Patrons of St John's Church in the town and its Priest-in-Charge. St John's was a proprietary church with High Church traditions of worship in an evangelically dominated town. (2) When the right of presentation passed to the evangelical Rector of Cheltenham, in 1863, the Reverend George Roberts was replaced by an evangelical incumbent. (3) Obviously Mr Roberts had his supporters and in February 1864 there appeared in *The Cheltenham Examiner* the following notice:

'Proposed erection of a new church by the congregation of St John's and their friends: a committee has been formed for the purpose of collecting subscriptions towards the building and endowment of a church in the Parish of Cheltenham where the services of the Church of England may be conducted as they have been for the last eleven years by the Minister of St John's. The promoters of the new church have no intention of disturbing the existing parochial arrangement nor of interfering with the ecclesiastical authorities of the Parish. All they desire is the enjoyment of that freedom of worship and of doctrinal teaching which is in these days, conceded universally by the force of public opinion both to Churchmen and Dissenters. The cost of building and endowment is estimated at £10,000.'

A building committee was formed and by 1865 a new ecclesiastical district had been marked out. This contained between three and four thousand persons, in one of the poorer areas of the town. The newly appointed Bishop, Charles John Ellicott, approved of the initiative and allowed five years for the completion of the church. Within a very short space of time, between two and three thousand pounds had been

raised with promises of a thousand pounds for the endowment, a tenth of the total estimated cost.

On 18<sup>th</sup> November 1865, The Builder announced that the site for the church was shortly to be enclosed and authority had been received ‘to commence the structure to be erected by Mr Middleton, architect.’ The site had been donated by two of the supporters of the Reverend George Roberts and just five weeks after this announcement, on December 27<sup>th</sup>, Bishop Ellicott, laid the Foundation Stone, ‘the weather for the time of year being exceedingly fine.’ This was the Bishop’s first such ceremony since coming to the Diocese.

The promoters of the new church assured the public that All Saints was to be a house of daily prayer, with weekly communion, observance of the Fasts and Festivals of the Church and daily Morning and Evening Prayer. (4). The right of presentation (ie to nominate the incumbent) was vested in the Bishop apart from the first, which the promoters reserved to themselves for the Reverend Mr Roberts. All sittings were to be free and apart from any endowment, the stipend would come from voluntary contributions.

In spite of the fact that All Saints was a ‘breakaway church’ it had the support of the ecclesiastical authorities and numbers at the stone laying ceremony were impressive. Familiar names were given in the press reports of the proceedings and included Middleton’s own incumbent, the Reverend J Fenn of Christ Church and Sir George Prevost, Archdeacon of Gloucester and Tractarian friend of John Henry Newman, and rather surprisingly, the staunchly evngelical Rector of Cheltenham. The former Rector, Dean Close, would no doubt have refused to attend in view of his opinion about ‘High Church practices’. Again there were two processions of clergy, one in surplices and one in gowns. The latter included in its number the Reverend Mr Fenn and the Rector of Cheltenham. After the appropriate act of worship, Middleton assisted the Bishop in placing the stone, and handed him the trowel and mallet. The Bishop struck the stone three times saying “In the name of Jesus Christ we place this stone. In the name of God the Father, of God the Son and God the Holy Ghost.” (5)

Three months later Middleton advertised that anyone who wished to see the plans and drawings or who wished to make a contribution towards the building could do so at the cottage occupied by Mr Jenkins, market gardener at the rear of Fairview Place, from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> April. (1866). By 21<sup>st</sup> November a letter to the Church Building Association revealed that the church was about fourteen feet above ground and that the builder was Mr Thomas Darby. This was the same builder who worked on The Granleys, the Lloyd Griffiths’ house at St Mark’s and a prolific builder in the town.

However, all did not proceed as smoothly as the stone laying ceremony might suggest. The prospective incumbent, the Reverend Mr Roberts had probably invested too much of his own money in the project and his subsequent bankruptcy meant that, under Canon Law, he was unable to continue his ministry. A successor was appointed and pending completion of the church, services were held, amongst other places, in a hired hall in the High Street. By this time, March 1866, Middleton had planned and designed another church in the town, for which that foundation stone had also been laid - Holy Apostles at Charlton Kings. Delay in completing All Saints was caused not through lack of funds but as a result of local church politics. This must have been

most frustrating for the architect and meant that the church, although ready, was not consecrated until 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1868 at 11 am. The Countess Dunraven from Clearwell, was taken by Middleton to see the church later in the year and recorded the event in her diary. "We then all drove to All Saints, the new church designed by Mr Middleton and admired it very much."<sup>(6)</sup> The Early French Gothic style was much admired as was the extremely rich interior. In one respect All Saints is typical of Middleton's work in that he used contrasting stone texture to enhance the external appearance. For this church Cleeve Hill stone was used with Bath stone dressings.

The Cheltenham Examiner gave a very detailed description of the proposed church when the plans were first viewed <sup>(7)</sup> and the interpretation of the plans bore remarkable similarity to the description of the church three years later in 1869. On the former occasion, the architect was accorded great praise:

'The style...while giving a grand simplicity of outline, admits of great artistic treatment, of which circumstances Mr J Middleton has fully availed himself.'

The Church was not however, completed at this stage. The internal adornment was gradual so that in 1869, it was reported that the church having lost its unfinished appearance, 'is now a thing of real beauty.' This beauty was most obviously identified in the roofing where in the nave and transepts, the naked timbers had been panelled, and in the chancel where richly moulded and groined arches had been introduced. In the sanctuary itself the panels were not filled in but painted and the colour gave a rich glow to the work. In addition three new windows had been added since the consecration and together with the carving and marble which had also been added, deserved more attention than anything else. The chancel floor had had its Minton tiles laid, 'of a costly and appropriate pattern and colour,' while the sanctuary steps and risers were of green and red serpentine marble. New brass gas standards and an ornate brass altar rail were in place and the altar 'of oak with panelled front and ends, enriched with ebony shafts and inlay, boxwood bases and caps,' had been made by Mr Allibone to John Middleton's design. Further praise was heaped upon the architect extolling the general completeness and excellence of the work which had been carried out. 'Credit should be given to Mr Middleton for the taste which he has shown in the design and superintendence of the minutest detail.'

Little remained to be done architecturally although attention was drawn to the need for proper choir stalls and 'something more in harmony with the surroundings than the present ugly pulpit.' Middleton must have delighted in the challenge of ongoing additions to this his most sumptuous masterpiece and his first response to the above criticism was to design in 1872, a new pulpit to be carved by Mr Boulton. <sup>(8)</sup> It was installed at the same time as the reredos, which was also to Middleton's design and reflected Mr Boulton's skill. The Builder gave a very detailed description of the pulpit and reredos, accompanied by some fine illustrations. The description of the reredos is worth repeating in full. <sup>(9)</sup>

'The reredos runs round the East end of the chancel and is divided into five compartments, each one containing three arches. The divisions are marked by angels two feet six inches high, standing under canopies above which rise marble pillars which are carried up to support the groining of the chancel. Of these angels some are holding symbols of the Passion while others have their hands joined in an attitude of

prayer. Smaller angels playing musical instruments occupy the spandrels. The plinth and pillars are of English, Irish and Italian marble, the larger angels of Caen stone and the rest of the work is alabaster. The three centre compartments forming the reredos proper contain representations in relief of Our Lord bearing His cross, the Crucifixion and the entombment. The other arches are filled with incised work of black cement on an alabaster ground. At the North side is the Bishop's Throne, with a crocheted canopy and on the South side is the credence and a three seat sedilia.'

Middleton's accounts provide £900 for Mr Boulton for materials and carving, an enormous amount in those days. Of more surprise is the fact that the petition for a faculty to 'sanction works completed since the Consecration of this church, ...and all the above described, which are listed, including the architectural statues of our Lord and His Apostles and Evangelists in the nave' was not presented until February 1877 - in retrospect. This was included as part of the petition for a faculty to install a new organ in place of the original one. (GA/GDR A/1/1877/2)

The boundary walls, railings and gates are all to Middleton's design and his final contribution was the new Vestry in 1883. The addition of the ambulatory at the East end, provided for in his original plan, was not completed until 1898. This was paid for through a generous legacy received by the church in the will of Mrs Anne Williams. Additions have been made since Middleton's day but there have been few alterations. One proposed addition while he was still working on All Saints was for a chancel screen. (10) His son John Henry designed one in 1879 and a facsimile was erected in the church over the Christmas period to test the reaction of the congregation. The estimated cost of erecting a permanent screen in oak, was £350 and would have looked totally out of place in the church. Objections were raised to this particular design and to the idea of a screen in general. In reply the Vicar made it quite clear that the design was not for immediate implementation but would have to wait until funds were raised if the project was approved at the end of the day. Nothing was done until 1894 when the present screen was erected to the design of Henry Prothero.

All Saints was built as, and remains today, a fine example of a church intended for High Church worship and Liturgy. Middleton put every breath of his artistic, architectural and ecclesiological self into what was to be his most challenging ecclesiastical commission. It is certainly the most spectacular of his large churches and as one critic wrote, wrote, 'a fine building with an absolutely stunning collection of fittings.' (11)

It was mentioned earlier, that at the same time as he was working on All Saints, Middleton was preparing another project about which he had been consulted. As All Saints was the realisation of the vision of a particular community so the proposed church at Charlton Kings, Holy Apostles, was to be the realisation of an individual's dream.

Charles Cooke Higgs was a wealthy land and property owner, living at Langton House on the London Road. There had been a steady increase in the number of 'better class' residents in this part of Charlton Kings and the parish church of St Mary was some distance away. Higgs took it upon himself to donate a site for a new church together with £1000 towards building costs. He had completed this first stage of the project by 1862. The site chosen was a triangular plot at the junction of the London

and Cirencester roads next to that on which his own house stood. He appealed to residents for contributions towards the building fund but the response was not as enthusiastic as he had expected. Probably the residents feared losing their burial rights in the parish churchyard if they did not worship at St Mary's. (12) A second challenge to Higgs' proposals was the fact that the anticipated number of new houses in the area did not reach expectations as rapidly as he had predicted. However, he was determined to proceed and appointed John Middleton to draw up plans for a new church. These are dated 1865 when they were approved by Mr Higgs and the builders, William Jones and Son. Higgs next approached the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for a grant but this was not forthcoming so he decided to finance the whole project out of his own pocket. (13)

The Cheltenham Examiner reported the start of the building in September 1865. (14) It made much of the fact that the site was a very imposing one, situated on raised ground and commanding one of the best approaches to, and exits from, Cheltenham. It also assured any readers who might have been apprehensive that such a prominent site might contain what would eventually become an eyesore, that Mr Middleton's plans 'indicate that the church will be one of the handsomest specimens of modern architecture in the county.' The report continued to praise Middleton for the clever way in which he had adapted the design to fit the unusual triangular site and for his assessment of the obvious need for very deep foundations due to the light sandy soil of which the site was composed. The plans showed that as much artistic design had been put into the western elevation as had been put into the east end. This was important for it was going to be the west end that one would see on leaving Cheltenham. When commenting on the plans for the tower, opinions that would hardly be voiced today were shared with the newspaper's readers: 'the tower will be twenty feet less than that of St Gregory, but compensated for by an equal if not superior elegance of outline; further comfort can be taken from the fact that the elevated site meant that the new church will look down on St Gregory's!' (15)

Foundation trenches had been cut by September/October 1865 and it was intended to go no further before the winter. Estimated costs for the construction of the church, were £4,300 with an additional £1,700 for the tower and broached spire - 176 feet tall. Higgs hoped that if the plans were carried out to the letter with no expenses spared, his church would indeed be the best example of Middleton's churches.

Although he had spent only five or six years in Cheltenham, Middleton had built up quite a reputation for himself, and the churches so far mentioned were not his only ecclesiastical work in the town or in the county for that matter. In addition to St Mark's, and by the time he started on Holy Apostles, he had almost rebuilt St Peter's Leckhampton and completed a considerable restoration at Newent Parish Church. All Saints had also been planned, although at this stage the foundation stone had not yet been laid.

On 13<sup>th</sup> March 1866, nine months before the completion of St Mark's, the foundation stone of Holy Apostles Church was well and truly laid by CC Higgs himself, just three months after Middleton had been present at a similar ceremony at All Saints. There were not vast crowds present and the service was conducted by the Reverend J Gabb, Vicar of the Parish of St Mary, Charlton Kings. He 'delivered a few remarks suitable to the occasion' (16) perhaps indicating by his brevity, that he was not entirely



in favour of the project. Sixteen months later the church was well on the way to completion and a very full and vivid description of this latest addition to Cheltenham's Anglican churches appeared in The Cheltenham Examiner for 24<sup>th</sup> July 1867:

'The nave has five arches on each side and the caps of the columns supporting the arches are ornamented with tracery. Between the arches are placed carved figures of the twelve Apostles, six on each side. The chancel arch is blue and white stone, the caps of the columns being elegantly carved. Beneath the chancel arch are placed on each pillar, groups of angels each bearing a scroll on one of which is inscribed, "Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness" while the other carries the exhortation, "Let everything that has Breath Praise the Lord." Two other groups of angels are located immediately over where the Communion rail will be placed. The roof of the nave will be gilded and decorated. The floor of the nave and aisles will be of stone while that of the chancel will be laid with encaustic tiles. Mr Middleton of York Terrace is the architect.'

The report also included elsewhere the names of the contractors and craftsmen involved with the work. Jones and Sons of Gloucester, were the builders, and the carving and interior tracery were shared between Messrs Boulton of Worcester, Roddis of Birmingham and Geflowski of Cheltenham.

The date for the opening of the church and its consecration could not be given at this stage, but it was generally agreed that the beauty of the interior would not be surpassed by any other ecclesiastical edifice in the neighbourhood. (17) It was to be another four years however, before the official opening took place, on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June 1871. This was five years after the laying of the foundation stone and two years after completion. This was due in part to Mr Higgs' insistence on his right to nominate the incumbent. (18) A large congregation was present for the opening service conducted by Bishop Ellicott, and they were 'emphatic in admiration of the architectural arrangements and ornamentation of the edifice, vastly superior to those of any of the churches in Cheltenham. They bear eloquent testimony to the taste and professional ability of John Middleton, to whom the design and execution of the work was entrusted.' The local press in describing the finished church picked up on some of the points made four years previously but on this occasion concentrated on the colourful roof in the chancel and sanctuary, the oak seating for the congregation and the choir, the oak pulpit on its plinth of Caen stone and marble and the Caen stone reredos with its alabaster and marble ornamentation. Again it would seem appropriate to quote in full the Cheltenham Examiner account of the official opening ceremony. (19)

'A visitor must be struck with the airy lightness and elegance of the whole building. The stem like pillars of the nave supporting the symmetrical perpendicular arches are enriched with chastely chiselled capitals, the subjects upon which the sculptor has exercised his art being commonly groupings of leaves and fruit, flowers and birds. The eye is charmed with the profusion and excellence of the sculpture, whether in the nave where every corbel has been turned into

the head of primitive apostle or modern martyr, or in the aisles where the window arches terminate in the chiselled faces of many of the world's greatest thinkers and philosophers, ranging from Luther to Melancthon; or in the chancel where the sculptor and decorator have vied with each other in producing rich and varied effects; where the walls are encrusted with groups of angels in various positions of worship or adoration, and where the roof is a burnished vault glowing with gold and pigment of various colours. The maple stained woodwork of the roof is elaborately decorated with crosses and monograms and other ecclesiastical symbols in vermilion, chocolate, white and graduated shades of blue and grey. The graceful span of the chancel arch arrests the eye as it travels onwards towards the chaste and laborately carved reredos. The alternation of Bath and dark grey Forest stone in the bend of this arch and the arches of the chancel aisles produces a particularly happy effect. The half figures of the Apostles between the arches of the nave are boldly and effectively carved and the clerestory above them is a good contrast, from the simplicity and comprehensiveness of its design.

The reredos is a triumph of the chisel. The material – marble of two or three colours - is wrought into simple but exquisitely harmonious patterns and the recess is appropriately filled with a representation of the Last Supper. The oak pulpit harmonises with the other fittings of the church. The carving which is elaborate but in exquisite taste bears much of the character of the Later Decorated period. The seats are of plain open woodwork, only those in the nave are appropriated.....A survey of the whole building leads us irresistibly to the conclusion that a lavish and or at the same time, a discriminating bounty has been exercised in the erection and decoration of a place of worship which is, all circumstances considered, quite unique in this county.' (20)

The organ had been installed at this stage but the tower and spire, although planned, as for all Middleton's new churches, were still a dream. Even so, the cost so far to CC Higgs was £7,000, which in the original estimate had included tower and spire. However he must have been overwhelmed with the result that Middleton had achieved and The Cheltenham Examiner's description quoted above must have filled him with pride in 'his church'. The exterior of the church is again typical of Middleton's bold, masculine effect - rough faced local stone, with ashlar dressings. The sundial belfry bears the date 1868. The west end still supports the original turrets with pinnacles and finials.

In addition to the unqualified appreciation of Middleton's accomplishment, 'one of the finest specimens of that gentleman's taste we have seen,' (21), there was also lavish praise for, the carving 'of which it would be difficult to speak in terms of praise too high', and for the skilful, ornamental ironwork – the latter by Mr Letheren. As Mr Boulton, the sculptor and Mr Letheren feature prominently in much of Middleton's works it might be appropriate to give here, a brief summary of their careers.

Richard Lockwood Boulton and his two brothers started the firm of Boulton and Swales in London c1838. They soon had branches in Birmingham and Worcester. On the death of his two elder brothers RL Boulton moved to Cheltenham. (22) It may well

be that the opportunities presented in the demand for church building and restoration, and the presence of an architect such as Middleton, who specialised in such contracts, influenced Boulton's decision to move. He had been an exhibitor at the Royal Academy, had been awarded medals for his sculpture both in Paris and London's Great Exhibition of 1851, and had carried out work for Scott, Pugin, Street and Bodley. The firm became the country's leading ecclesiastical sculptors bringing to life the designs of many of the great Victorian architects including those mentioned above.

William Letheren by contrast was one of the earlier metalwork craftsmen in Cheltenham. He established his Vulcan Iron Works at Lansdown, near the town's Midland Station in the 1860s. His Art Manufactory soon became well known internationally and he received commissions from places as far apart as Florence, Bombay and Shanghai. Middleton's Ledgers make frequent references to work contracted to him.

Holy Apostles would appear to have been the realisation of the High Victorian ideal but whereas it was built, in common with St Mark's, All Saints and St Stephen's on a newly acquired site, Middleton's fourth new church presented a totally different challenge. (23) However before moving on to look at that commission it is appropriate at this point to address two further contracts which he completed for CC Higgs. While Middleton was negotiating the building of the Hatherley Lane School for the Reverend GP Griffiths at St Mark's, work was actually beginning on a Boys' School at Charlton Kings. Mr CC Higgs had given the site adjacent to the church facing the west front, together with £1,000. He felt passionately that there was a growing need for such provision in the parish and he envisaged a school which would accommodate 200 pupils. The style of the building which Middleton proposed was totally in keeping with that of the church. In the Middleton archive for Holy Apostles are several plans and drawings for the school, signed Middleton and Goodman 1872. (24) These show provision for an attached teacher's house and several pencilled in alterations and additions to the original plan. The foundation stone was laid by Mr Higgs on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1872 in the presence of 100 neighbouring gentry. (25) In the evening the London Inn hosted a supper for the twenty or so workmen employed on the contract and among the toasts proposed was one to the architects, Messrs Middleton and Goodman and one to Mr Hawkins the builder.

The school was formally opened one year later (26) when it was revealed that the final account for the work would amount to £2,000. The celebrations began with a service in the new church at the end of which a procession made its way to the new schoolrooms which were filled with parishioners and children. A second but much briefer service followed after which Mr Higgs declared the school open. The Incumbent and his wife entertained fifty-five of the important residents of the district to a luncheon at their home. The Cheltenham Examiner again provided a very full description of the building (27) which had been built to promote the principles of the National Society (28) but which was to retain its status as a Voluntary Church of England School. The original intention to provide a boys' school was in fact altered to accommodate boys and girls.

'The school is in the geometrical Middle Pointed style of architecture with boys and girls schoolrooms each 40 feet by 16 feet and with a

separate porch to which is added a classroom 20 feet by 18 feet, with an apsidal end facing towards Cheltenham. The roofs are of open timber slightly stained and relieved with colours. The buildings have been erected by Mr Middleton the well-known architect. The builder is Mr Hawkins, the carvings are by Mr Boulton and the wrought ironwork by Mr Letheren, all of Cheltenham. The external walls are of rough faced coursed limestone with grey and green stone dressings and double pitched tiled roof.'

Above the twentieth century east end entrance are two three-light windows and a gable to each facet of the apsidal east end. There is a western bell turret and the roof is capped with decorative ridge tiles. The interior was converted into two residential homes in 2003 but the rich stencilling on the roof timberwork is still clearly visible. This is very similar in design and pattern to the decoration of the church roof prior to the fire of 1970. In the apsidal end there is a complex roof structure and in the large classroom there is a panelled wall frieze below the wall plate. The carved interior corbels are rather ornate for what was a small parish school but the whole structure is an appropriate complement to the neighbouring church. (29)

Mr Higgs completed his gift to the parish with the addition of a handsome drinking fountain at the point where the two roads converge from London and from Cirencester. This provided a suitable visual adornment for this important and prominent site. Middleton's design for the fountain has not come to light but its erection is included in the report of the school's opening – 'a fountain which whilst artistically pleasing will supply a grateful boon to the thirsty wayfarer.'

Sadly the gate piers to the church and school sites have disappeared but the overall picture is one of completeness, marred only by the intrusion of an abundance of street furniture on the approach roads out of Cheltenham.

Now to return to the challenge mentioned previously. The church of Ss Philip and James, Cheltenham, was the fourth of Middleton's Cheltenham churches to be built but unlike the three previous ones and St Stephen's which was at the time, in the process of being built, Ss Philip and James presented a challenge unique to Middleton. His other churches had all been constructed on virgin sites but with this contract he had to design a church for a site that already contained one. (30)

The original St Philip's Church, Leckhampton, 'badly built, badly ventilated, and inconveniently arranged' (31) had been built on land donated by Henry Norwood Trye of Leckhampton Court. (32) He had laid the foundation stone in 1838 and the church was consecrated in 1844. The tower was at the east end, and contained the chancel. (33) It was a typical 'preaching box' church over furnished with galleries. Although originally suited to what was a poorer area of Leckhampton, by the 1870s it was totally unsuited to the more affluent population which was moving into the area. Situated as it was, only yards from the small St Stephen's church, then a Mission Church, it was nevertheless in Leckhampton parish whereas St Stephen's was in Cheltenham.

A parish meeting was held at the Vicarage in December 1878 to discuss what could be done to improve the accommodation in the church. (34) It was concluded that to spend

money on the church as it would be unwise, and that the congregation ought to be consulted with a view to building a new church. Obviously much discussion and testing of opinions had been carried out before this meeting because towards the end, plans were introduced for inspection, signed by John Middleton.

Four new sites were suggested. One, much larger than the present site had been offered for half its market value. A further site in Painswick Road, adjoining Cotswold Villas, about 160 metres from the existing church, did not meet with the approval of the congregation although it seemed to suit the committee. However when a building appeal was launched in 1879 objectors made it quite clear that they would not subscribe to it. (35) This site was therefore rejected and it was agreed reluctantly to fall in with the objectors' wish, which was to erect a new and larger church on the same site and in such a manner that the ordinary services should be interrupted as little as possible. (36) It was thought possible to replace the existing church with a more attractive and commodious building and John Middleton was so informed. In February 1879 he heard that his plans and specifications had been accepted as long as the work did not cost more than the £2000 so far raised by the appeal. Any ornamental work had to be delayed until further funding was available. He was authorised to invite tenders with a closing date set for 21<sup>st</sup> March, but he suggested – and it was agreed - that 21<sup>st</sup> April was more realistic. (37)

However at a meeting in April 1879 Robert M Lingwood proposed that the land surrounding the church to the east, north and south should be enclosed so as to accommodate a new chancel, transept, organ chamber, vestry and choir room. This would serve to alter, enlarge and improve the building. (38) A month later Middleton produced seven tenders varying in cost from £2,800 to £3,500. Current assets stood at £2,520. The lowest tender from Mr Jones was accepted but Middleton insisted that there should be added to the contract a condition that the contractor should hold back from certain works until written authorisation was given to proceed. A Faculty was granted on 29<sup>th</sup> May and work began almost immediately. By the end of the first week of June 1879, a temporary east wall had been constructed within the church and the demolition of the tower and external walls at that end had begun. The congregation then worshipped in the remaining part of the church while a new chancel and transepts were being built beyond the temporary east wall.

In July 1879, the Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association (39) considered the 'Specification of the Manner of building a new Nave and foundations to the aisles and Tower according to the fifteen drawings prepared by Messrs Middleton and Son, Architects of Cheltenham.' (40) The specifications showed that the rest of the church was to be demolished and a new nave and aisles were to be built west of the new chancel and transepts. The actual floor space was to be extended to fill as much as possible of the existing churchyard and a tower and spire were indicated at the south-west corner.

The foundation stone was laid in September 1879 but although plans had been approved, it was not until March 1880 that the practicalities of where and how worship was to be conducted during the rebuilding were actually discussed. (41) The possibility of erecting a temporary church on the site was mentioned at one meeting and in May, Middleton was called upon to explain this further. He suggested that the existing nave should be demolished, new foundations cut and laid and new external

walls built to a height of three or four feet. An iron temporary church could then be constructed inside this shell, the whole process taking about two months. This was agreed, Mr Jones' tender for completing that part of the contract accepted and Middleton's proposal to increase the height of the tower was approved.

The iron church was erected as planned and services were held in it while the new nave and aisles were erected over it and around it. (42) It is remarkable that not once did the contractors interrupt a Sunday service and only rarely a weekday one. Again the local press heaped praise upon Middleton: 'The work adds, if that were possible, to the high reputation of the architect,' praise which was affirmed in several local accounts of the progress of the project: 'The work is to the design and personal supervision of Mr Middleton, a gent to whom Cheltenham is indebted for several of its most ornamental and characteristic public buildings.' (43) It was not all easy going for Middleton however, and there were some problems with the building committee and neighbours of the church. One issue concerned the choice of glass for the chancel windows. Middleton was informed that the committee recorded its strong dissatisfaction and that his explanation was not at all acceptable "We do not consider your reply satisfactory. Meet us on 15<sup>th</sup> August at 10 am." The problem with neighbours arose out of damage to the house next to the church caused by the contractors. The proximity of the north transept to the adjoining house in Gratton Road is still to be seen, but Middleton managed to settle the matter through solicitors which avoided court action. (44)

In Easter Week 1882 the new church of Ss Philip and James, Leckhampton, was consecrated by Bishop Ellicott. The service was within the setting of Holy Communion and in his sermon the Bishop referred to, "this noble and spacious house of prayer and praise," The Cheltenham Looker On enthused over the new building in its report of the opening: (45)

'The structure may well be pronounced a marvel of mechanical skill and ingenuity and as an example of ecclesiastical architecture it may challenge comparison inside or out with any of its type.'

At the reception which followed the consecration, the Archdeacon of Gloucester 'offered a tribute of thanks to one to whom the parish was more indebted than anyone else for the beautiful effect, – the architect. (Cheers)' He told those present, that as they were aware, the Archdeacon's Office took him into many parts of the Diocese and he was constantly on Mr Middleton's track, as wherever he went he saw the beautiful taste and charming church feeling which Mr Middleton eminently displayed in his work. (Hear, Hear) He assumed that they all knew of another church which they might almost call the sister church to their own, All Saints, (applause) and he could tell them of numerous other churches which Mr Middleton had planned. "You can tell the chastened and beautiful task with which he accomplishes his work wherever he goes and therefore I hope you will rise with me and offer a tribute to the accomplished gentleman who has enabled you to erect this church so beautifully." (Applause)

Canon Trye, Treasurer of the Diocesan Church Building Association, and Rector of the Parish Church of St Peter, Leckhampton, endorsed everything that had been said. He explained that he had known John Middleton personally from the time of his having enlarged and rebuilt his own church, St Peter's, and he was well aware of how

efficiently Mr Middleton had superintended that work. By now, Middleton must have been red with embarrassment but he found courage to reply. He said that he was much obliged for the kind manner in which the work had been received and that he felt it a great distinction to have the work approved by men of such refined taste, as it afforded him full compensation for the labour and care necessary for the building (Hear, Hear.) (46)

The church is in the Early English style, built of Cleeve Hill stone with Bath Stone dressings. Corsham, Leckhampton, Painswick and Forest stone is also used in the chancel and transepts. (47) The ground plan identifies the chancel, chancel aisles (transepts), nave, nave aisles, and a spacious, imposing porch with a massive tower at the south-west angle. The interior is impressive with the nave roof of wooden panels supported by shafts resting on moulded corbels. The nave arches are supported on Mansfield stone pillars with moulded caps and bases. The clerestory above is quite impressive, separated from the arches by a moulded string of Mansfield stone. The aisles are lighted by two-light windows, and the West end has a large circular window saved from the original church with two, two-light windows below it. Beneath these is a handsome external door.

The chancel is approached from the nave through a lofty gothic arch with richly carved and bold mouldings and is supported on either side on black marble shafts. The east window is of five lights. The roof timbers of the chancel are supported by similar marble shafts with richly carved corbels. It is possible that Middleton intended to colour the roof of both nave and chancel at a later date. (48) The chancel is separated from the transepts by richly moulded arches and the polychromatic stonework combines well with the gilded wooden vault and tiling of the sanctuary. The lighting was by means of pendant gasoliers of hammered brass – converted to electricity and still in use today. The total cost without the proposed spire was £9,700 and provided seating for 860 persons. There were no galleries, by this time considered totally out of place in church architecture. The carving was by Martyn and Emms and the ironwork and heating by Messrs Marshall. (49) Martyn and Emms was a famous Cheltenham firm of sculptors and carvers. HH Martyn began his career with RL Boulton. The story of the firm is fully told in Whittaker's book. The nave lighting was by Messrs Mallory.

The surrounding walls, and gates by Letheren, are contemporary with the church but the planned spire, as with all but two of Middleton's churches, never materialised. The copper saddleback steeple and fleche were added in 1903 to the design of Prothero and Phillott. The chancel stalls were provided in 1886, the nave seating was completed in 1892 and the reredos was installed in 1889. The iron screen was erected in 1902. (50) The font, pulpit and lectern however are part of the original furnishings. The chapel in the south transept contains memorials from the original church.

In April 1888 a stained glass window was placed in the North aisle in memory of John Middleton. It is the work of his son John Henry and was presented by the family as Ss Philip and James was one of the last commissions on which he had been engaged. The Cheltenham Examiner described it a most appropriate tribute 'which will preserve from oblivion for many generations to come, the name of a gentleman who was ever ready to assist in the promotion of any good work in which his professional skill

might be of service.’ (51) The two-light window depicts the Good Shepherd – ‘My sheep hear my Voice,’ and Christ carrying his cross – ‘I know their sorrow.’

It is puzzling that no reference is made to St Stephen’s in any of the speeches or that the window was not erected there. St Stephen’s was very nearly complete at the time of Ss Philip and James’ consecration and was only just around the corner, some half a mile distant. It is possible that this omission may be connected to the absence of any reference made about Middleton at Christ Church at the time of his death. (52).

St Stephen’s was built in two distinct phases and was not completed until 1883, thus qualifying as the last of Middleton’s new churches. Christ Church, had been consecrated in 1840 and the area it served extended as far as the Park, where it shared the boundary with the Parish of St Peter, Leckhampton. Many of the pew owners at Christ Church were totally unaware of the poverty and poor housing conditions that existed in the rapidly expanding and densely populated district of Tivoli which lay at the south-eastern extremity of their parish. This was in spite of the fact that their incumbents had lived in that part of the parish until the late 1850s. In 1860 the newly appointed incumbent of Christ Church, and Middleton’s neighbour in York Terrace, the Reverend J Fenn, produced a map for his parishioners on which he had highlighted Tivoli as being at the centre of the poorest part of the parish. He was desperate to do something to provide church accommodation for these people and he eventually persuaded his congregation to support the building of ‘a Mission Church for the deserving poor.’ (53) Negotiations continued for many years amidst strong opposition but eventually in June 1873 a site was sold for £300 to the Building Committee which had been established to investigate the proposal. It was agreed that within six months, work would commence on building a church ‘of similar description and not inferior to, St Mark’s in Cheltenham.’ Plans were prepared by Middleton for what is in fact the present chancel of St Stephen’s, ‘to be erected with due regard to economy, for £1,250.’ The plans allowed for enlargement at a later date if the need arose. (54)

This building measured 35 by 22 feet and is in the Early English style. By the time of the laying of the foundation stone, the walls of this ‘chancel church’ had been raised some several feet above ground. Among those present in the shell of the new church on 4<sup>th</sup> November 1873, were the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, Bishop Ellicott, John Middleton, Mr JC Dent of Sudeley Castle and General McCausland, Middleton’s co-warden at Christ Church, who was also chairman of the building committee. It was he who handed the Bishop the plated trowel for use in laying the stone. (55) The Bishop smoothed the mortar, administered the customary light taps with a small mallet and declared the stone well and truly laid. (56) In the cavity beneath the stone the architect had placed a bottle containing contemporary coins – itemised and accounted for in Middleton’s cash-book for the period – and a vellum list of subscribers to the building fund.

The ‘Mission Church’ was completed at a cost of £1,000 provided largely by subscriptions raised at intervals by the congregation of Christ Church. They had agreed to defer all alterations, additions and unnecessary repairs to their own church until St Stephen’s was completed. (57) The formal opening of Tivoli’s own place of worship took place on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1874 at which Bishop Ellicott emphasised the fact that St Stephen’s was to be a free, open church for the poor of the district among



whom the Vicar's late wife had worked so tirelessly. He knew that a congregation would not have to be encouraged, as it was already in waiting and he expressed his hope that the full completion of the architect's design would be realised as soon as possible.

The Cheltenham Examiner expressed delight at the architectural style of the church which although only part of a much larger plan, enabled all who saw it to realise what an imposing building Mr Middleton's church promised to be. Bath stone had been used for the dressing and lining of the internal walls. Alternate voussoirs of blue Forest stone had been introduced into the chancel arch as well as the north side arches which eventually were to form the entrance to the organ chamber and the north vestry. These arches are supported on polished red granite columns. It must be remembered that what is now the open chancel arch, was in 1874, the bricked-in, temporary, exterior west wall of the small church.

The east wall contains the original large four light window with a rich arch mould springing from marble columns. The south wall contained three windows, one in the sanctuary and two between the present pillars. The north wall contained only one window in the sanctuary. The roof is still as it was when constructed – open timbered with moulded cornices - and the principals are in pairs connected by ornamental pierced boarding, supported on marble columns on richly carved corbels. (58) It is a great pity that this ceiling is not more clearly visible today as it is a very attractive and decorative feature of the present chancel. A blank space of rough walling was left beneath the east window where a reredos could be inserted when funds allowed. Designs for this had already been prepared by Middleton at the same time as the original plans. (59)

Just seven years later, 19<sup>th</sup> December 1881, the building committee met to draw up an appeal for funds to complete the nave and aisles according to Middleton's design. Within two years these had been completed and paid for through donations, grants from the Diocesan Church Building Association, the Warneford Trust and the generosity of the late Mr E Gillilan whose son-in-law was to become the first Vicar. (60) Bishop Ellicott was again at St Stephen's for the consecration on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1883 (61) and in his sermon he described the church as handsome, "but on second thoughts a beautiful church. The chasteness of the architecture, the delicate carving, the proportions, are all calculated to awaken feelings of admiration." He also commented favourably on the excellent acoustics, still very much appreciated today.

Prior to the consecration of the church the organ chamber and vestry had been added in 1876 at a cost of £900, by piercing the north wall of the chancel. The opening up of the temporary west wall of the chancel, and the addition of nave and aisles absorbed £3,395 in materials with a further £500 spent on fees, heating and lighting systems. (62) The building which Bishop Ellicott consecrated is in rock-faced locally obtained stone with Bath stone internal dressings and linings. The plainness is relieved by the introduction of blue Forest and red Mansfield stone to the piers, arches, shafts and strings, thus adding colour to the blandness of the Bath stone. The roof is of a very high pitch, semi circular, and of panelled woodwork and moulded ribs with carved bosses at the intersections. The nave consists of six bays with clerestory above. The west wall is very ornamental with an arcade of small arches running across the width

of the nave. Above this arcade are two windows with double tracery and an elaborately carved niche between. (63)

The original 'Mission Church' could now become the chancel and sanctuary and the planned reredos was installed in time for the consecration. The chancel and sanctuary floors are lined with ornamental encaustic tiles. The Altar was designed by Middleton and the altar rails were a gift in memory of the late Mrs Fenn. The font was carved by Martyn and Emms to the design of John Middleton, and donated in memory of Lady Selina Henry in 1882. The pulpit also was designed by Middleton and presented in 1884, replacing the original temporary one. The gas lighting was supplied by Suggs Patent Sunlights and the ventilators can still be seen in the nave roof. Hammered wrought iron brackets with leaves of vine and passion flowers supported the aisle lights. Again, RL Boulton was employed for the stonework carving in the chancel and Martyn and Emms for that in the nave and aisles. Mr Letheren was responsible for all the original ironwork. (64)

It is regrettable that Middleton did not live to see the adornment of the interior of St Stephen's, a church which David Verey described as having

'a dull exterior but a successful and carefully detailed interior of richest decoration about which there is a feeling of completeness of design.' (65)

Within the space of twenty-three years John Middleton had created five new churches for the town which had become his home. These churches, although added to and in some cases internally reordered by succeeding generations, still stand as proud witnesses to the Christian faith, to the faith and commitment of our Christian forebears and to the faith, professionalism and artistic vision of John Middleton, architect.

## ***11 References, Chapter VII***

### ***All Saints***

- 1 HS Goodhart-Rendel was an architect turned architectural historian.
- 2 A Proprietary Church is one which is built by subscription and maintained by individuals. 'High Church' in Middleton's day could simply have indicated that there were candles on the altar or that the Priest wore a surplice.
- 3 1863
- 4 *Cheltenham Examiner* 03.01.1866
- 5 GA P78/2 M1/1, Order of Service.
- 6 Diary of the Countess December 1868.
- 7 *Cheltenham Examiner* 03.01.1866
- 8 The Builder 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1877 describes the pulpit figures on the angles as representing Noah, Joseph, Elijah, John the Baptist, St Chrysostom and St Augustine. The heads in the medallions represent Our Lord and the Evangelists.
- 9 The contractors and craftsmen employed for this second phase of the work were the original builder Mr Darby for the ceiling carpentry; Mr Hyett of Gloucester for the ceiling decoration; Hardman and Co of Birmingham for the stained glass and Messrs Hart, Son, Beard and Co for the brass. Mr Boulton did all the carving and marble work. (*The Builder* 27<sup>th</sup> January 1877)  
The canopy above the altar is a later addition of 1895
- 10 *Cheltenham Examiner* 21<sup>st</sup> January 1880.
11. Sladen, T. Notes referred to in *Listed Building* description.

The *Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic* 9<sup>th</sup> October 1909: A new chancel decoration had been undertaken by Temple Moore, an important late Victorian architect. The work consisted of new altar decoration and additions, a new reredos and a decorated (painted) roof. The reference to a new reredos refers to a redesigning of the one already there. The figures remained the same but the gothic arches were replaced by trefoil ones and the whole reredos was raised considerably so that it concealed the shelf of the east window. This had the effect of making the reredos more visible from the nave and allowed for a gradine to be installed behind the altar. The arched canopy above the altar is also by Temple Moore. Riddle curtains on rods were added at this time.

It is interesting that after Middleton had completed undoubtedly his finest work, in a church that had broken away from St John's, he was consulted in 1881 to complete an architectural survey and to draw up plans for proposed alterations to the chancel of St John's, but it is doubtful that the work was in fact completed.

Work completed at All Saints after Middleton's death:

North Porch – 1886.

St Paul above West Porch – 1886

Head of the BVM in South Porch 1886, by Alfred Bernard Wall, (1849 – 1923) a local sculptor who carved the Tympanum above the west door. (1885) He was also responsible for the Stations of the Cross at St Gregory's Church, Cheltenham.

Frescoes at West End – designed by Sir W Richmond and painted by J Eadie Reid.

Font canopy designed by GA Protero and made by W Letheren – 1896

Lady Chapel by Prothero, reredos by HH Martyn.

Brass Lectern 1899.

West Rose window presented 1900 by Mrs Morton Brown in memory of her brother who was a Churchwarden.

South Transept, Burne Jones window 1901.

Paintings either side of the chancel arch, decorated ceiling under the floor of the tower, four windows removed and replaced by Ss Thomas, David, Columba and Patrick c1907.

The exterior north and south doors were supplied in 1929/30 and the outside Calvary was erected in 1920.

### ***Holy Apostles***

12. Paget
13. Middleton does not appear to have charged for his professional services
14. 13.09.1865
15. St Gregory's tower was completed in 1864 and is 202 feet in height.
16. *Cheltenham Examiner* report
17. At this point the All Saints congregation was worshipping in rented premises in. the High Street.
- ...
  18. The consecration of the church actually took place after the death of Mr Higgs. It had its .....own ecclesiastical district assigned to it on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1885. The long delay caused . ... many people to question whether the project had in fact resulted in producing a white .....elephant. The original intention had been for the church to be called The Church of the .....Twelve Apostles.
  19. 7.06.1871
  20. The font was originally at the centre of the west end but repositioned post 1970. It is of ... .....Caen stone, with alabaster pillars on a grey granite base. The bowl is octagonal and carved .....with events from the Bible associated with water. This font was given by the Reverend HG .....Liddell of Hatton Lawn, the grandfather of Lewis Carroll's 'Alice'. Carroll visited Liddell .....at Charlton Kings in 1863.

The two sedilia and the piscina in the sanctuary have marble columns and foliate capitals. The sedilia each contain intricately carved medallions of angels, one praying, the other offering a blessing. The piscina/credence is surrounded with rich carvings of harvest goods, echoing the nature theme to be seen in the diaper work on the walls of the apse and in the capitals on the pillars. There is a unique carved stone behind the pulpit at floor level with the inscription John Middleton, Architect. This is not to be found in any of his other churches.

CC Higgs died in 1884 aged 88. In the funeral oration much was made of his generosity in providing the site for the church and the school and for paying from his own pocket, £8,500 building costs. (*Gloucester Journal* 16.08.1884.) In 1970 a fire gutted the church and the choir stalls were destroyed.

The sanctuary ceiling had to be renewed but was completed as a replica of the original. The nave ceiling also had to be replaced but at a lower level than the original. Nearly all of the nave pews were saved from destruction. The original nave beams were decorated with the same stencilled pattern as is to be seen on the beams in the adjoining Holy Apostles School.

- 21 *Cheltenham Examiner* 7.06.1871  
 22 In 1866 he moved to Cheltenham to work in the many churches under construction or  
 .....being restored. cf John Whitaker in “*A Gloucestershire Gallery – HH Martyn.*”  
 23 Fourth church, Ss Philip and James. St Stephen’s was started in 1873 but not completed  
 .. until 1883  
 24 GA D2970 1/27. Identified as Charlton Kings Church but in reality, .. Holy Apostles.  
 25 *Cheltenham Examiner* 7.08.1872  
 26 *Cheltenham Examiner* 1.09.1873  
 27 *Cheltenham Examiner* 3.09.1873  
 28 The National Society is The Church of England’s Education Department.  
 29 The owners in 2001 used the building as an Antiques Centre and obviously loved the  
 .....building, spending considerable sums on restoring the interior. The school has recently  
 .... been converted into a Funeral Director’s Office with Chapel, and accommodation above.  
 In 2008, the pews in the church were replaced by chairs and the forward Sanctuary was  
 .....redesigned.
- Ss Philip & James**
- 30 Fourth church in that the foundation stone was laid after that of St Stephen’s but  
 ....completed and consecrated eighteen months before St Stephen’s.  
 31 GA P198/2 CW3/24.  
 32 Now the Sue Ryder Home, at Leckhampton.  
 33 *Cheltenham Examiner* 1.10.1879  
 34 GA P198/2 SP1/1  
 35 ibid.  
 36 *Cheltenham Examiner* 1.10.1879  
 37 GA P198/2 SP1/1.  
 38 GA, P198/2 CW3/24  
 39 The Diocese of Gloucester and Bristol until 1897, thereafter separate Dioceses.  
 40 GA P198/2 CW 3/21. There are fifteen plans in D2970 1/80 and the specifications  
 ....abstract of July 1879 refers to ‘all old materials to be the property of the contractor except  
 ... the stained glass. Materials may be re-used where suitable.’ In the nave all the wood used  
 .. was to be oak – English and Riga, of the very best quality, or red fir wood from the Baltic.  
 .. No defects were to show as it was not to be painted, stained or varnished.  
 41 GRO P198/2 VE 2/1  
 42 The iron church was erected and services were held therein . The iron church was  
 ....dismantled in February 1882, and sold to a parish in Sunbury on Thames.  
 43 *Cheltenham Looker On* 1.04.1882  
 44 GA P198/2 VE2/1  
 45 *Cheltenham Looker On* 1.04.1882  
 46 *Cheltenham Examiner* 19.04 1882.  
 47 *Gloucestershire Notes and Queries*, Volume III.  
 48 *Cheltenham Examiner* 19.04.1882.  
 49 RE & C Marshall began in 1814 and continued in the same family. RE Marshall came ....  
 .... from London working first in the High Street and from 1827 in Clarence Street. In 1818  
 .... they added gas fittings to their business and were involved with the first street gas lighting  
 ... in Cheltenham that same year. The workshops were in St James’ Square and reputedly had  
 .... the first phone connection in the town between their Clarence Street shop and the ...  
 ....workshops.  
 50 GA D2970 3/9//No53 & 107  
 51 *Cheltenham Examiner* 5.05.1888  
 52 See chapter on Middleton’s final years. Middleton must have had some affection for St  
 ....Stephen’s as he donated two new chalices to Christ Church when St Stephen’s was started,  
 ... with the instruction that they, or two of the old Christ Church chalices, were to be given to  
 ... St Stephen’s upon its completion. There is no evidence that this was ever done.  
 ..... NB: GA P198/2 IN 4/5. Middleton has often been credited with the design of the St  
 ..... Philip’s School at the foot of Leckhampton Road, but the Treasurer’s accounts and

Appeal Literature clearly confirm the architect as Langton Sharwood, whose fees for the drawings were £30.19.09. Middleton may have made a later addition.  
 Ss Philip and James is the only one of Middleton's churches to have a columbarium – nothing to do with Middleton – but the increased size of the church meant that there was nowhere to re inter bodies disturbed when the church was re built and no space for future burials. The crypt was converted for use as a columbarium in 1963. In 2008 plans are being considered for major interior alterations.

**St Stephen**

- 53 St Stephen's Church History 1973
- 54 Plans are at GA under St Stephen's Parish. More information about the church can be found in the Church History, op cit.
- 55 Since purchased and donated to the church
- 56 Beneath the present East window.
- 57 The name was chosen by the Reverend Fenn "from an old and sacred association with a church of that name in a cathedral city in a remote part of the country."
- 58 The architect's model of the proposed completed church of 1883 has been found and is now in the care of the Cheltenham Museum Service.
- 59 It is now at the west end under the statues of the Apostles.
- 60 See the brass memorial tablet in the South Aisle.
- 61 Assigned a particular district – to all intents and purposes a parish – on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1884. From that date Banns, marriages, baptisms, churchings and funerals could be conducted and the church was given a parish boundary.
- 62 Although John Middleton does not seem to have charged a fee for his other Cheltenham churches, his 1882 ledger contains the following entry; 'Preparing plans, drawings etc in connection with the nave and aisles of St Stephen's Church, £75.5.0'
- 63 GA D2970 3/9. The internal West wall statues and that of the Patron Saint, on the exterior west front were installed in December 1885 only months after Middleton's death. Likewise the north porch forming the lower part of his proposed Tower, was completed in June 1885 at a cost of £580. In 1885 it is recorded that 'The Tower awaits completion, the spire, a peal of bells a clock and oak pews.' The South Porch was completed in 1886 for £180.
- 64 The screen dates from 1897- Queen Victoria's Jubilee.
- 65 Pevsner: *The Vale and the Forest of Dean*. Plans for the tower and spire were abandoned in 1930. The South transept was added in 1888, GA D2970 3/9. This is now a combined Lady Chapel and Parish Meeting Room.

## CHAPTER VIII

*Restoration and rebuilding; St Peter, Leckhampton; St Luke, Cheltenham; St Giles, Coberley; Holy Trinity, Badgeworth; St Mary, Charlton Kings.*

The ecclesiastical work which we have looked at in Cheltenham so far, has been new work, but Middleton's other professional skills were put to the test throughout his time in the town. As early as 1866 he was negotiating the rebuilding of St Peter's church, Leckhampton; in 1868 he was completing similar work at Coberley and, as late as 1876, he began to enlarge and rebuild a major part of the parish church at Charlton Kings. While these larger contracts were being supervised he was also undertaking all sorts of other work ranging from church re-ordering to the building of hospitals and private homes. We shall look at some of the ecclesiastical work first of all.

In the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a great interest began to develop in all things old, and medieval churches were a major focus for such interest. As far as architectural practice was concerned, restoration presented an enormous challenge, both professionally and academically. Sadly, in many cases, there was a very fine line between restoring and rebuilding. In the genuine attempt to make ruined or dilapidated buildings look neat, attractive and appealing, many ancient, original architectural features were removed, and replaced with modern copies. The original work was then either destroyed or sold to collectors. The publication in 1863 by the RIBA of '*Restoration Guidelines*' (1) was certainly overdue and the advice it gave to architects helped to raise awareness of the desirability of conservation whenever possible. Middleton obviously took note of these guidelines in most – but not all - of his church work making it clear in his specifications which materials should and should not be re-used. This certainly is the case with the work done at Ss Philip & James, Leckhampton, and St Peter, Leckhampton. There were major deviations from this practice however, as we shall see when we look at the work he did at Coberley and Charlton Kings, for example.

Naturally restoration and rebuilding provided much needed income for aspiring local provincial architects, as they awaited commissions for new work. (2) Finance would not seem to have been one of Middleton's concerns, for his personal reputation and professionalism, were beyond question. Coupled with his son's avid interest in archaeology, antiquities and art, his practice was resourced with more than adequate expertise to undertake the most challenging restorations, although the actual methods employed were not always above criticism, as was suggested above and as we shall see later. (3) However let us look first of all at one of his early, major works on a medieval church in close proximity to Cheltenham.

This first example was in fact an almost total rebuilding and extension of St Peter's Church Leckhampton, a 14<sup>th</sup> century church set in close proximity to a former manor house, now the Sue Ryder Home. The parish is a large one and with an increasing population in the mid-nineteenth century, the accommodation that the church could provide was proving totally inadequate. (4) Until 1866 the church consisted of a nave, a south aisle of three bays, a chancel east of the tower with its elegant, slender spire,

and a priest's door in the north wall of the chancel. There was a porch in the centre of the north wall of the nave and inside, all the walls were plastered and whitewashed. Seating was available for approximately 450 people. Something needed to be done to provide more seating and to bring the church into pristine condition.

At a vestry meeting in October 1863 it had been resolved to raise a parish rate to pay for repairs to the church. (5) In May of the following year, it was decided to consult a professional, experienced architect as to the advantages to be gained from repairing – or removing and rebuilding – the north and west walls. Estimates from two builders were sought and in March 1865 it was agreed to apply for a faculty for the repair and enlargement of the church using plans prepared by John Middleton. The estimated cost of £1,575 was to be raised by an appeal for voluntary contributions. At this precise time, Middleton's only local testimonial was St Mark's Church but his references for that contract and his association with Christ Church may have been sufficient for him to have been consulted over St Peter's.

The faculty was granted and the Bishop authorised the use of the schoolroom in Hall Road as a suitable place for services to be held while the work was taking place. Later in the year, work began in earnest and within a very short space of time, the church had been almost demolished. Of the original church only the chancel and the tower and spire were left intact and part of the south aisle. The Diocesan Association for the Building of Churches donated £120 and the Incorporated Church Building Society gave £45, on condition that within a year, a sermon and collection on behalf of the work of the Association had been provided at Leckhampton. The work had to be completed within five years from 1<sup>st</sup> July 1864 and of the proposed 500 sittings, 323 had to be free. Voluntary contributions were not as generous as might have been expected and, in 1867, a further appeal was launched: 'The work is in a forward state, the roof being nearly finished but we regret that the funds already raised are insufficient for completion so that the church may be opened for worship, £300 still being needed.' (6)

Work progressed in stages as funds became available. The south aisle wall was partially rebuilt and a completely new north aisle, to match this south one, was constructed. The church was extended by 23 feet, two bays westwards and a new window and doorway were introduced into the west wall. The former north porch was rebuilt using the original materials, in its present position in the north wall. The old vestry was removed from the south-east side and a new one was erected with an organ chamber opening directly into the south aisle. The gallery was not replaced and the nave roof was raised considerably. All the monuments had been moved and stored before work began and they were now repositioned on the plaster free walls at a cost of £11.10.0. The old pews with doors were replaced with those in use at present.

In 1866 the firm of G Haden of Trowbridge installed a warm air heating system for the sum of £53.10.0 'executed to the satisfaction of the architect, Mr J Middleton esq.' Middleton's invoice to the Rector, Canon Trye, in October 1866 included £101.2.0 for drawing up plans and specifications, the total cost of this contract being £2,263, considerably more than the original estimate.

Further additions and alterations were made in subsequent years: a new organ chamber was provided at the east end of the north aisle in 1871 which enabled the

vestry in the south aisle to be enlarged. The original pulpit was also adapted and new priest's and choir stalls provided. This was a major contract and left very little of the original, ancient church in evidence, but created space, light and comfort to welcome back the congregation.

Another church extension which Middleton completed at the same time that he was working on St Peter's Church, Leckhampton, was at St Luke's Church in Cheltenham. Although in separate parishes, the churches are actually less than two miles apart. St Luke's had been designed by the London architect Frederick Ordish, and was consecrated in 1854. It was built with much encouragement from the Reverend Francis Close, who, it will be remembered, was the staunch evangelical Incumbent of the Parish Church of Cheltenham. St Luke's, when built, was in an area in which many Cheltenham College parents lived, and Francis Close hoped that the church would serve the spiritual needs of the boys who attended the College which was only yards away from the church. (7)

In 1866, *The Cheltenham Examiner* and *The Builder* recorded the extensive addition to the chancel of St Luke's Church under the supervision, and according to the designs of Mr Middleton. (8) *The Cheltenham Examiner* described the work as 'unusual' referring to the fact that this was the first example in Cheltenham, of the enlargement of an existing church, which subsequently required consecration. This is explained by the fact that the extension included the sanctuary, the most sacred part of the building, where the Sacrament of Holy Communion would be celebrated.

The work which Middleton was called upon to undertake, was the lengthening of the chancel and the chancel aisles which would provide a further 100 seats. The contract also included the re-positioning of the pulpit and the removal of the organ from its position in the west gallery to the north chancel aisle, beyond which a new vestry was constructed. Moving the organ made a tremendous difference to the amount of light allowed to enter the church through the west windows.

The east end of the church was demolished and the building was extended about twenty feet towards the present College Road. The chancel aisles, although lengthened, remained shorter than the chancel itself. The chancel extension began from the easternmost bay of the present arcading. The original aisles contained two single-light windows and the north and south walls of the chancel one single-light window. The extension increased each aisle to four windows. The side windows in the chancel were each replaced with much larger three-light windows. The chancel windows have marble columns and moulding with hollow moulded hoodmoulds with headstops. (9) The east window is of very elaborate design and the arch has been enriched in recognisable Middleton style in carved Forest stone. On the north and south walls of the chancel there are some delicate and attractive floral carvings of lily, primrose, and lily of the valley. Above this runs a frieze of decorated inlaid coloured stone.

Within the sanctuary the east and side walls are heavily and ornately decorated with arcades, finials and pinnacles containing mosaic panels on black marble plinths. These panels display the symbols of the evangelists. The actual reredos designed by Middleton, is formed of a gabled arcade on a coloured marble plinth and a banner carved with, 'Do this often in remembrance of Me.' The panels within the arcading



have faces of the four evangelists with that of Christ in the centre. Unfortunately much of the stone has been painted at some later date although it is not unpleasant. The carving was done by John Roddis of Birmingham and bears striking resemblance to that at Holy Apostles. The sanctuary also contains an ornate sedilia to the south and a piscina in the north wall. The hosts of angels which adorn the sanctuary immediately command one's attention. Each angel is holding a different but easily recognisable musical instrument.

Middleton's accounts indicate that the priest's stall and lectern were altered as part of this contract and it is highly likely that the font is also to his design. (10)

Whether Middleton's work at St Mark's, or his successful rebuilding of St Peter's Church, Leckhampton provided the motivation to accept further contracts we cannot tell for certain, but the latter work was soon followed by a similar commission, although on a much smaller scale. The church of St Giles at Coberley is situated just a few miles east of Cheltenham and comprises a chancel, nave, 14<sup>th</sup> century south chapel, Perpendicular south porch and west tower. In the mid eighteenth century the church was seriously neglected and was almost a ruin. In fact so neglected was it, that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, horses and carts were driven through the chancel as a short cut. (11)

Attempts at restoration had been made but an assessment of the building, by the newly appointed Reverend Charles Henry Wilson, in 1866 revealed the need for a complete rebuilding of the chancel and nave, and a restoration of the tower and former chantry chapel. The chancel was beyond use, and a faculty application indicated that the east end and the chancel arch would have to be completely rebuilt, 'the place being in such a dangerous condition that it was unusable as a place for Divine worship.' (12) The faculty was granted, approving the demolition and rebuilding of the chancel and nave and the restoration of the chantry chapel. The architect chosen for the task was John Middleton and work began on the demolition in May 1868. Work progressed so speedily that on 17<sup>th</sup> June of the same year, the Rural Dean was able to lay the foundation stone of the new chancel. (13)

Between 1868 and the completion of the work in 1871, Middleton made approximately 20 site visits to Coberley. (14). He was still architectural consultant in 1875 and in view of his regular supervision of the work it is surprising that so little of the Norman Church remains today. The Norman font and ancient woodwork have all disappeared with no record having been made as far as one can find, of the Norman features of the church. This cavalier attitude towards antiquities reflects badly on Middleton and would seem to be a repetition of his regrettable decision over the Norman chancel arch at Greatham that is referred to in chapter IV.

Most noticeable of the work done at Coberley is the rebuilding of the chancel. The walls were taken down to their footings and then rebuilt. All stone used was 'rose in the neighbourhood.' The reredos is very ornate with decorated perpendicular stone panels with a vine string above. The roof was renewed and the many carved angels in the sanctuary and chancel carry emblems of the Passion. They are the work of RL Boulton and are very similar in design and detail to so much of his work for Middleton. On the south wall in the chancel Middleton placed a small monument to Giles of Berkeley who died 1294, and whose heart was buried in the chancel. Prior to

the rebuilding of the chancel, this monument was situated against the north wall. There was also an impressive monument with recumbent effigies in the chancel at this time and Middleton removed it to the chantry chapel, where it can still be admired. In the nave, the roof was replaced, the windows repaired and made uniform – ‘all according to the old order of architecture’ and best Newcastle glass was used. The arcading separating the nave from the chantry chapel was decorated with richly carved capitals of realistic ferns, acorns, and much figure carving. The chapel itself was remarkably well restored but according to Verey, ‘It is the chancel and the nave which reveal Middleton’s best Early English design.’ (15) The font was to Middleton’s design and replaced a Norman one. The total cost of the work was in the region of £990 for the nave and £520 for the chancel, towards which the Reverend Wilson made a considerable donation. (16) The church was reopened for worship by Bishop Ellicott on August 10<sup>th</sup> 1871. It must be said that in spite of the destruction of so much that was ancient, the church is without doubt one of Middleton’s smaller church successes.

Not all of Middleton’s work involved demolition on the scale so far witnessed at Leckhampton, Coberley and, as we shall see later, at Charlton Kings. Although Coberley is his only known Cotswold contract, most of his other work in the county was completed in what one might call clusters – either churches or houses in a particular part of the county, centred in or around a particular town. But before considering some of these it will be as well to look at the remaining restoration work with which he was involved in the immediate vicinity of Cheltenham. Some is more extensively documented than others and a casual visit by Middleton or Goodman recorded in the firm’s ledgers does not always indicate that the work was actually carried out. Reference has been made in such circumstances to parish archives and to published parish histories. This was very much the case at Coberley and is again the case when considering his work at Badgeworth, a small village some four miles south of Cheltenham.

The Church of the Holy Trinity, Badgeworth, is a building of stone in the Decorated style with embattled tower at the west end. The north aisle chapel is most exciting not least because of the wealth of ball and flower decoration around the windows and door. The longest serving incumbent was the Reverend AW Ellis Viner who served the parish from 1849 to 1902. It was during his ministry that Middleton was consulted about repairs to the chancel and to parts of the nave.

By the 1860s, the chancel was showing signs of serious deterioration. The walls were composed of fragile and minute rubble, cased within a thin layer of larger stones which had perished in many places. (17) Middleton undertook a thorough survey and concluded that complete rebuilding was necessary. The chancel was demolished in 1868 and rebuilt. This present chancel is approached by steps and separated from the nave by a low wall. (18) It is wide and the sanctuary rises by one further step. In the south wall of the chancel there is a door leading to the vestry and a low opening now glazed, where the organ was once positioned. Beyond this is a ‘new’ vestry created by Middleton. The chancel ceiling is panelled and the beams are supported on each side and at the corners by corbels of beautifully carved angels playing musical instruments or holding inscribed medallions. One unusual winged angel forms the apex of the former organ recess and all of its neighbours bear very striking resemblance to those seen in many of Middleton’s other churches. The south porch was also rebuilt as part of Middleton’s restoration programme.

The work was carried out by Mr Spring of Painswick for £926.10.0 with an additional cost of £1.7.6 for carving each bench end. (19) This probably refers to the renewing of the seats in the chancel although the pews in the nave were replaced at about the same time. In accordance with the practice of the day Middleton issued payment certificates for Mr Spring's work between June and September 1868 marking the completion of each stage of the contract. (20)

A much more significant commission is Middleton's next project at Charlton Kings. I have suggested elsewhere (21) that the Parish Priest of Charlton Kings in the 1860s may not have totally supported the erection of Holy Apostles' Church but his successor arrived with dramatic and visionary plans for the restoration and enlargement of the Parish Church of St Mary in the centre of the village.

St Mary's is mainly 12<sup>th</sup> century and on his appointment the Reverend Charles Dundas described the church as "very ugly, very uncomfortable and very badly ventilated" (22) Perhaps it was the challenge to address these issues that prompted him to accept the appointment and it proved a challenge which he lost no time in addressing. He called a Vestry meeting for 29<sup>th</sup> January 1876 at which he persuaded those present that there was the need for a major restoration of the Parish Church. There were obviously many exploratory and preparatory consultations and discussions before the proposals were brought to the Easter Vestry some months later. There it was announced that a restoration committee had been appointed and that the professional services of the well-known architect John Middleton had been called upon. (23)

Middleton had been asked to draw up plans and in lengthy discussions between himself and the Vicar, three phases for the work had been suggested:

work on the body of the church	£1,100
re-seating	500
Chancel and Transepts	400

The Easter Vestry accepted these proposals in principle and gave their assent to further discussions taking place which would lead to the church being completely restored. The galleries would be removed, and the church enlarged by extending the nave and aisles one bay westwards. Middleton was invited to attend a further meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> May at which he stressed that in his view the enlargement of the nave, re-roofing and the concreting of the floors were priorities. (24) He emphasised that the work should begin as soon as possible or else it would have to wait until the following year. In his opinion the roofing would take at least four months to complete and could not be done in winter if the church was to be used during that time. The meeting gave him instructions to proceed at once with drawings and by September 1876, £1,200 had been promised towards the costs. This left a further £900-£1,200 still to be found if the work was to be completed in full and according to Middleton's estimates. He was asked to re-examine the roof work to see if any savings could be made there, but he was unable to find any likely savings in that area. However, he did make slight alterations to his plans for the chancel, mainly in respect of the windows. By October he had been instructed to obtain tenders for the most costly part, which was in the nave, west of the tower. At the next meeting he attended, he explained how he

intended to phase the work. Initially he would close off three bays and remove the pews east of the north aisle. Services could then be held in the chancel and transepts. His proposals were well received and he was thanked for his attendance and great assistance to the Building Restoration Committee.

A faculty was immediately applied for with a summary of the work attached

Restoration and enlargement according to the plans and specifications produced to the committee; (25) tablets as may be requisite, to be re-sited; corpses re-interred in other parts of the churchyard; a piece of land on the west side of the church 18 feet by 60 feet to be enclosed and built upon.

Middleton's actual specification which accompanied the application provided more detail of what was intended and shows the careful attention he paid to good order, and to the personal feelings of those who would be affected by the upheaval:

It is proposed to take down the present galleries and remove all the pews; to take up all the floors over the whole area of the church and excavate to a depth of 12 inches and cover the whole with concrete of 6 inches. The new floor will eventually be 8 inches above the present level; pull down the present modern nave arcade and rebuild as shown in the accompanying plans, extending the nave westward a distance of 15 feet;

the old roofs will be taken down and those of the parts west of the chancel repaired and replaced with an inner panelled arched ceiling, the extension to have a new roof similar to the old;

the old stonework inside will have the whitewash removed and the whole of the church will be re-seated with open seats as shown. The lower arches to have screens as shown;

a new west entrance and windows, and new doors to the various doorways and new glass in the windows;

a new pulpit. The vestry will have a heating chamber.

Roofs will be covered with stone slating as at present using the old as far as they will go. Gable crosses with cresting to the roof.

All the old monuments as necessary, to be taken down and carefully replaced in such parts of the church as shall be decided upon;

the organ brought from the south Transept gallery and placed in the north Transept as shown.

Any tombs or headstones found within the line of the extension to be carefully re-erected in another part of the churchyard.

Drains from the various fall pipes.

Estimate for the whole £1,950.

To the specification is added as a postscript,

Also to enclose a piece of land on the West side of the said church 18 feet long and 60 feet wide and thereon to build. Carefully to disinter any corpses which it may be necessary to disturb and to re-inter the same in another part of the churchyard.

The extent and comprehensiveness of the planning bears a striking resemblance to that undertaken at St Peter's, Leckhampton, but whereas work there seems to have proceeded without objection, at St Mary's Middleton did have to face strong opposition to his plans. The citation was affixed to the church on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1877 inviting objections to be lodged with the Bishop. Two parishioners officially expressed their concerns (26) focusing mainly on the effect that new seating arrangements would have on the rights of pew holders (27) and more seriously, the effect on those whose family graves were to be disturbed by the extension at the west end. Questions were also raised about the quality of the materials to be used and countless technical questions. (28)

In response to these objections, the Bishop fixed a hearing for 24<sup>th</sup> March 1877 but, at two meetings held in the February, Middleton addressed these matters and obviously won over the objectors. He promised to produce a seating plan with the names of all pew owners clearly identified. In reply to another question, he assured the committee that he personally would act as clerk of works. He further gave the following assurances: "No monument will be moved unless absolutely necessary and if moved, will be re-fixed on completion of the work. Any graves in or near the foundations will be dealt with as in the specification" – that is, re-interred. The committee and objectors were convinced by his explanation and the plans were signed. Middleton told those present that work could begin the following month, in March 1877, or as soon as the faculty was recovered. The objectors notified the bishop of the official withdrawal of their caveat on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

Work began with the removal of the galleries. The flooring vaults beneath the floor were filled in and the planned concrete floor laid. The corpses that would be disturbed by the extension at the West end were exhumed and re-interred at the south-west corner of the extended churchyard. (29)

Within a year the work on the nave had been completed during which time services had been held in the chancel and transepts. *The Cheltenham Examiner* (30) gave a full and enthusiastic account of the opening by Bishop Ellicott on St Mark's Day April 25<sup>th</sup> 'From the tower of the church a flag floated gaily, bells rang merrily during the day and festival was general. The choirs of All Saints and Prestbury augmented the St Mary's choir and Mr A von Holst was organist. (31) The church had been in a condition of decay and dilapidation that must have been to the parishioners themselves intolerable and to visitors an occasion of offence.' (32)

*The Cheltenham Examiner* report continued with only a very general reference to the opposition which the plans had produced. Work on the chancel and transepts had been

included in the original plans but at the time of the report, funds had not become sufficiently available to proceed. However the feeling was that seeing the wonderful result already achieved, parishioners would not be happy with the building only half restored. Worthy of special mention was the removal of the galleries. The open pews, the panelled arched ceiling, the new pulpit to the design of Middleton and the repaired and repositioned font were all singled out for particular praise. (33)

Although the extended west end received much admiration, ‘especially the new windows, totally in keeping with the antiquity of the building,’ it is surprising that in achieving this, Middleton had destroyed the original 12<sup>th</sup> century doorway, replacing it with the present gothic one. This blatantly flouted the Restoration Guidelines to which he had once adhered so meticulously. All that he did retain from the former west front were the gargoyles and the 1824 rose window. This makes the comments passed at the celebration banquet even more puzzling :

‘Colonel Holmes had great pleasure in proposing the health of Mr Middleton the architect, to whose skill in design they owed the satisfactory state of the building. The work had been done according to the excellent taste of their architect and it was to be hoped that the fondest antiquary would be able to give his approval to the work, and not to say that the destroyer had been there.’ (34)

There was general approval of the ‘wonderful and satisfactory change that had been accomplished’ and the Bishop stated that a more successful restoration he could not imagine, except that perhaps it could have been lengthened a little more. (35)

A rare glimpse into Middleton’s humour and personality is shown in his reply to all the compliments he had received at this banquet. He told the assembled gathering that when he had visited the church with Lord Lyttleton it had been in a truly dreadful state. His companion had remarked that it was a very useful church for it contained everything that ought to be avoided. This naturally produced loud laughter and cheers.

In 1877 a progress report had been presented to the building committee in which the next phase of the work was identified. By June 1878 work had begun, financed ‘mainly through the generosity of a resident gentleman.’ The chancel was demolished and new walls were built along the lines of the existing foundations. (36) New windows were inserted in the north and south walls together with a new three-light east window. The roof was raised, oak panelled sedilia provided and all the monuments were removed and repositioned, mainly in the nave. At this stage the church appeared very light and airy as most of the coloured glass had been removed and not yet replaced. Such was the position until 1880. The east window was not coloured until 1883. (37) The chancel was reopened for worship in November 1878 and was furnished with many individual donations. (38)

Phase three could not be proceeded with immediately. All available funds had been used and yet the side aisles and transepts had not been completed according to Middleton’s plans. The Reverend Charles Dundas left in 1883 and his successor supervised the tiling of the aisles, the rebuilding and lengthening of the north transept, paid for with a legacy, and the restoration of the ceiling in the south transept. There was a financial deficit overall and Middleton was unable to complete the south

transept restoration, which included the proposed screen separating the transepts from the chancel. (39)

St Mary's was undoubtedly one of Middleton's most challenging restorations and one for which he received most opposition from parishioners. This revolved around the interference with the historical seating, the removal of monuments and the disturbance of corpses. Several aspects of the work here bear similarity with his other restorations undertaken in the county, some of which is today highly controversial - removal of plaster from walls, removal of monuments from their original positions, and a seeming lack of sympathy with the craft of past generations.

### **References, Chapter VIII**

#### **12 St Peter, Leckhampton**

- 1 Miele.
- 2 Faber *Guide to the Victorian Church*
- 3 See chapter XIV on Kempley.
- 4 This, in spite of the fact that there was a daughter church to the north of the parish – St Philips, opened in 1840 – and that in 1834 a gallery had been erected in St Peter's itself to increase seating capacity.
- 5 GA P198/1 VE 2/1
- 6 GA P198/1 CW 3/4

#### **13 St Luke**

- 7 Blake
- 8 *Cheltenham Examiner* 1866
- 9 *Listed Building Description*
- 10 GA D2970 3/1. Building costs for enlarging the chancel were £650 plus the costs for the reredos, Reading Desk and lectern-all paid by 1872.  
One 1889 *Cheltenham Looker On* acknowledged a new marble step for the chancel, new choir stalls and a new Communion rail. The chancel roof was panelled at the same time.

#### **Coberley**

I am most indebted for much of the information contained in the chapter, to the excellent church guide book by Mrs Atherton available at the church.

11. Atherton.
12. GA P105 IN 4/3
- 13 GA D2970 1/37 . The plans are not numbered but most are dated 1868 and signed, Middleton and Goodman Architects, Cheltenham.  
One shows the proposed vestry, half the length of the chancel to the north west of the chancel. The original vestry was inside the Chapel sanctuary. Another plan shows the side of the porch prior to restoration; a third plan shows the ground plan with old work, new proposed work, and new work completed, which is in fact the chancel. There is also a plan showing north elevation, east elevation, and south elevation, before alterations. The plans for new work are stamped 'Approved, Diocesan Association Gloucester and Bristol' and are endorsed on the reverse ' This is one of the plans referred to in our contract, Charles Watson , William Smith.'
- 14 GA D 2970 2/2
- 15 Pevsner, '*The Cotswolds.*'
- 16 GA D2970 3/9, entries 4 and 8. which refer to certificates to be issued when work was satisfactorily completed:  
No 4 for Rev C Wilson 25 April 1868 5 months:  
when window sills on and window ready  
when ready for the roof  
when the roof is on and the work finished £520

No 8 Nave of Coberley £990

when chapel done  
when ready for the roof  
when covered in  
when finished.

### ***Badgeworth***

- 17 Bradley: *The History of Badgeworth Church*
- 18 The screen dates from 1917
- 19 GA D2970 3/9 Contract 2 1868
- 20 ibid: March 24th 1868, £926, with an additional £1.7.6 for each bench end carving in the chancel.

Certificates issued were: when walls are ready for the roof.  
when chancel finished  
when floors laid in nave  
when roof finished  
when seats are fixed  
when all work is done.

### ***St Mary, Charlton Kings***

*The History of Charlton Kings* by Mary Paget and articles in the *Charlton Kings Local History Publications* have been used extensively when putting into context the information found in the Middleton archive at GRO.

- 21. See Holy Apostles.
- 22. Jesus College Oxford Archives, quoted in *Charlton Kings Local History Journal 14*.
- 23. *Cheltenham Examiner* 1878
- 24. GA P76/ SP 2/1
- 25. Middleton's plans GA D2970- 1/26
- 26. GA P76 SP 2/5
- 27. Those who bought or rented their pews.
- 28. As 26 above. What would happen to the front panels of the gallery - would they be used?  
What provision was made for access to the organ chamber?  
Would plain or ornamental ridges be used on the roof ?  
What ventilation would be available and how would it be arranged?
- 29. *Charlton Kings Local History Bulletin* 14.
- 30. *Cheltenham Examiner* 1.05.1878
- 31. The two Anglo Catholic Churches in Cheltenham at the time.
- 32. *Cheltenham Examiner* 1.05 1878
- 33. Carved by Martyn and Emms
- 34. *Cheltenham Examiner*, 1.05.1878.....
- 35. Total cost according to the ledger of contracts was £2,802.5.0 with Middleton's plans amounting to £33.9.6.
- 36. Rebuilt not enlarged. In January 1877 fund raising began and a Fancy Bazaar was organised for the work to be done on the restoration and enlargement of the church. Among the Patronesses named in the advertisements was Mrs Middleton. (*Cheltenham Looker On* February 3<sup>rd</sup> 1877)
- 37. The present reredos dates from 1901
- 38. *Charlton Kings Local History Bulletin* p37.Vol 14.
- 39. GA P76.



## CHAPTER IX

### *Minor Works: Cheltenham, Holy Trinity Church; St Lawrence's Church, Swindon Village; St Mary's Parish Church Cheltenham*

Up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century the upkeep and maintenance of Anglican parish churches was financed by means of a parish precept – a church rate – that everyone paid regardless of their religious affiliation.

In 1868 this practice was abolished but in some cities and towns proprietary churches had been built to provide accommodation which was lacking in over subscribed churches or to cater for particular needs or tastes in worship. We have already mentioned some such churches in Cheltenham which were maintained by charging pew rents. This income paid for the capital laid out in building the church, provided an income for the shareholders and also a stipend for the incumbent. Pews could also be bought outright and re-let or re-sold at between £100 - £200 a time, quite a profitable investment. This did of course place an added responsibility on the incumbent – a poor preacher meant empty pews!

Holy Trinity Church in Cheltenham was consecrated on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1823 and was capable of seating 900 people. The church had provision for burial vaults and a small burial ground outside. Built in the gothic style it was one of Cheltenham's earliest proprietary churches. Although externally it was quite ornamented with pinnacles on the tower and at the corners of the roof, internally it was a copybook example of a simple preaching-box. There was little internal ornamentation, an insignificant sanctuary, and no chancel. The focus of the congregation's attention was the pulpit. Large galleries occupied the east, south and west walls.

Middleton was approached in 1877 to undertake a survey of the church and to produce plans for what today would be called re-ordering, rather than structural restoration. It is for this reason that his work at Holy Trinity has been included under 'minor works'. His plans of the existing arrangement show the large raised pulpit positioned immediately in front of the shallow sanctuary. The Altar, or holy table, is placed against the north wall and the communion rail is concave. The aisle pews are in closed blocks facing inwards towards those in the nave. The galleries could seat 370 people and the ground floor had seating for 522. Middleton's proposals were dramatic.

At a vestry meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1876 (1) a case was put 'to have all the existing pews removed and the church re-pewed in a more modern and convenient style; to repair the church generally and make other internal alterations such as lowering the front of the galleries and altering the communion rail; removing the pulpit and Reading Desk.' All of the alterations were sanctioned by the Incumbent of the Parish Church and the minister of Holy Trinity. (2) No vault or monument was to be affected.

Middleton was commissioned to draw up plans which would satisfy the above requirements and he attended the Vestry Meeting on April 11<sup>th</sup> following. There he presented his plans based on previously held discussions. His main attention had been

given to seating. (3) Slightly more commodious pews were proposed with the side aisle seating to be re-positioned so that the pews all faced towards the sanctuary. A new gallery was suggested to replace the existing one, supported on green timbers with a more ornamental front than that which was currently there. A new pulpit and reading desk would be provided and the line of the altar rails would be altered.

The plans accompanying the above specification (4) showed a slightly larger and more identifiable sanctuary with a convex altar rail, a newly designed pulpit moved nearer to the west aisle with, on the opposite side, a freestanding reading desk. (5) Most of the pews were arranged in the conventional way along a central aisle and two side aisles, facing the sanctuary. The exception to this pattern was two blocks of inward facing pews near the pulpit and reading desk creating the semblance of, but not actually constituting a chancel. The plans met with unanimous approval and it was resolved to petition for a faculty 'according to the plans submitted by John Middleton, Architect.' The faculty was granted on 30<sup>th</sup> May but *The Cheltenham Examiner* had carried Middleton's invitation to tender for the proposed work, throughout that month, as he obviously anticipated a positive response from the Diocese:

'Persons desirous of tendering for various alterations in connection with the repewing etc of Holy Trinity Church, Cheltenham, may see plans and specifications in our office, 14 – 16 June 1877. Middleton and Son, Architects, 1, Bedford Building, Cheltenham. 17 May 1877.'

The cost of the work planned was estimated at £1,748 of which Middleton received fees of £94.18.0. (6) An additional amount of £261 was spent in 1878 for arranging, designing, superintending and erection of windows. (7) Middleton's plans were carried out as planned, apart from the complete rebuilding of the gallery, although new facing panels were provided.

Today the church has been reordered beyond recognition and very little of what Middleton did can be identified. What he did *not* do is to his credit - the memorial tablets were retained and are still in place on the plastered walls.

This would seem to conclude the more significant ecclesiastical work that Middleton undertook in Cheltenham and its immediate vicinity but there were minor works planned for Swindon Village Church, and a somewhat dramatic plan for the rebuilding of the Parish Church of Cheltenham

In 1868 work for Swindon Village church included the cutting through of an arch in the south wall of the chancel to create an organ chamber and a new trefoil window was designed for the chamber. (8) New floor tiles were also to be laid throughout the chancel. New chancel furnishings – stalls, altar rails etc were also planned but there is no documentary evidence to support the fact that these furnishings were actually supplied by Middleton. There is little in the way of description apart from the briefest of mentions in the early ledgers and nothing in the parish archive. All the work carried out before Goodman joined Middleton (9) is sparsely documented and any archival material appears not to have survived. (10) A similar story applies to Boddington where Middleton may have carried out the restoration work of 1876 which included the scraping of the nave walls. It is probable that he also designed the pulpit dated

1878. The restoration of Staverton church c1871 was probably carried out by him and Brooks credits Middleton with the restoration of the church at Elmstone Hardwicke between 1871 – 1878. During that period, the church was partly rebuilt, the chancel walls were scraped and a north vestry and south porch were added. (11) Middleton often donated furnishings to the churches on which he was working and we know that pulpits and fonts were among his many gifts. He presented the font made of Caen stone, to St Matthew's Church in Cheltenham but whether it was to his own design or not, is unclear. (12).

Although not to be found in the Middleton archives, his name is associated with one of the most controversial schemes ever to be considered in Cheltenham. Prior to his arrival in the town there had been much concern over the state of the ancient Parish Church of St Mary. The Reverend Francis Close had suggested enlarging the building some 50 feet to the west, just before he moved to Carlisle. The scheme met with so much opposition that it was abandoned. (13) Close's successor as incumbent of Cheltenham from 1857, Dr Walker, proposed a scheme to remodel the church and increase the accommodation. These plans came to nought when the vaults beneath the church were found to be open and the pillars supporting the gallery were judged to be unstable. 1859 saw the closure of the church and Dr Walker made it quite plain that health and safety were the only two criteria that would persuade him to re-open it. (14)

Advice was sought as to the legal position should the church be demolished and rebuilt on the same site but greatly enlarged. (15) Notices were issued in 1863 inviting architects to apply for the contract to 'rebuild the Parish Church of Cheltenham.' (16) *The Ecclesiologist* was horrified. 'We are rather alarmed at a report that the church is likely to be enlarged or rebuilt. A rebuilding could only be justified by a ruinous or unsafe state of the whole fabric of which the exterior at least seems to be in very good state of preservation.' (17) Enquiries were received from all over the country and from names now highly respected in the world of Victorian architecture – Alfred Bucknall, Gilbert Scott, GE Street, FW Ordish and Pritchett and Son of Darlington, Middleton's former father-in-law and partner. One might have expected Middleton to have been in sympathy with the views expressed by *The Ecclesiologist* but this would seem not to have been the case. He submitted a design for the rebuilding and one must question his motives for so doing. The actual plan he submitted bears no comparison with the plans submitted by the other interested parties, neither in size, detail nor accuracy - in fact his plan appears quite amateurish. His proposal was to demolish the church, as Francis Close had previously suggested, and to rebuild it further to the west almost on the site of today's Children's and Music Library. His plan shows an apsidal east end with north and south transepts, north porch, and north-west tower and spire. There is no legend attached to this plan and, as suggested above, its would have made little impact when compared to some of the elaborate and highly detailed designs which had been submitted by others. Needless to say, his plans were not accepted. (18)

However, Middleton did contribute, albeit in a small way, to the fabric of St Mary's Parish Church. In 1880 the east window was coloured, 'To the Glory of God this window is erected by the Freemasons of Cheltenham, AD 1880.' (19) Restoration had almost been completed when the members of the Cheltenham Lodge of Freemasons decided that they might add something to the embellishment of Cheltenham Parish Church. (20) They offered as their gift, the filling in of the East window with coloured glass. The project was placed in the hands of a small committee one of whose

members was John Middleton. (21) He had been initiated into Foundation Lodge 82 in December 1876 at Cheltenham's Masonic Hall, the same year in which he was elected FRIBA. The window was handed over at the close of a special Wednesday afternoon service on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1880. *The Cheltenham Examiner* described the occasion in full. (22) 'The only formality observed was the entrance of the clergy who entered the church and walked up the aisle preceded by the Committee.' The eight named committee members included John Middleton and he like his colleagues was 'attired in the varied clothing of their several ranks in the Craft from the rich purple and gold of the Grand Provincial Lodge to the pale blue and silver of the ordinary Lodges, and with the 'jewels' whose significance it is not for the uninitiate to enquire ' Thus ended Middleton's professional association with the Parish Church of Cheltenham.

### **References, Chapter IX**

#### ***Holy Trinity***

- 1 GA P78/4 CW 3 / 4
- 2 Holy Trinity was a proprietary chapel within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Incumbent and Parish of Cheltenham
- 3 Today the seating is on soft upholstered chairs.
- 4 GA GDR F1/1/1877/5
- 5 Priest's Stall. Previously, reading desks were similar to pulpits.
- 6 GA D2970 3/1
- 7 ibid

#### ***12 Swindon Village, Boddington & Staverton***

- 8 GA D2970 192 & D2970 3/1
- 9 Joined John Middleton 1868
- 10 The late Christopher Bishop was quite sure that many of the archives disappeared when the firm moved premises.
- 11 Boddington – see Pevsner for 1876 restoration details. Staverton:-GA P53 VE/2/1. The church underwent a major restoration by Middleton's successors in 1891 including the stripping of the plaster from the walls. Elmstone Hardwicke – Brooks, *Gloucestershire 2*.
- 12 The font at St Matthew's is identified as Middleton's gift in the *Cheltenham Examiner* 29.5.80

#### ***13 St Mary's Parish Church***

- 13 Sawyer p112.
- 14 Hence the building of the temporary church on the site of the present St Matthew's Church.
- 15 GA P78 CW 4/1/9
- 16 ibid P78 CW 4/1/6
- 17 Volume 24 1863 p152.
- 18 GA P78 CW4/1/6
- 19 The inscription is at the base of the window.
- 20 Norman, George.Courtesy Cheltenham Masonic Lodge.
- 21 The cost was about £350 and the money was raised by the committee.
- 22 02.06.1880.

## CHAPTER X

*Cheltenham College; Cheltenham Ladies' College; St Hilda's College.*

It might appear from what has been written so far, that Middleton's work in Cheltenham was devoted to ecclesiastical contracts with only the occasional small school or house completed as part of a larger project. But this was far from the case. As we shall see he was to contribute some very fine and impressive buildings to the town, ranging from colleges, and private houses to the foundation of what is today the Delancey Hospital

With the increasing number of well-to-do residents settling in the town during the 1830s – 1840s the matter of how best to provide a decent education for their sons became a prime concern. A good but not too expensive school was needed. Several residents, mainly retired East India Company and Army personnel met and founded in 1840 what was to become the Cheltenham College. It was the first of the English Victorian Public Schools and Francis Close, Incumbent of Cheltenham, was appointed one of the four Vice-Presidents and a Director. The College was financed by the sale of shares each entitling the holder to nominate one pupil to the school. The College opened in houses in Bayshill (St George's Road) in 1841 but within a year numbers had increased dramatically so that by June 1843 the school had moved to new purpose built premises in Bath Road. The first block of what is now Cheltenham College was designed in the Perpendicular style by JD Wilson, the Bath architect. Ten years later, local architect DJ Humphris extended the buildings and by 1860, according to Bryan Little, the College had 'started on what in the end proved a somewhat unaesthetic career of architectural expansion.'<sup>(1)</sup> It was during this period that John Middleton, his wife and son, arrived in Cheltenham and the high reputation that the College had already earned may well have been one of the reasons why the family decided to settle in the town. They certainly would not have been the first to choose the town as a permanent home on account of its educational opportunities. However that may be, young John Henry Middleton entered College in August 1861 at the age of 14. <sup>(2)</sup> His time at College was unremarkable but when he left in December 1864 he continued his educational studies at Exeter College Oxford. <sup>(3)</sup>

In December 1862 the need for buildings in which to house a junior department was recognised. The Principal was keen to see a completely new building constructed for this purpose but the College Council was not of the same mind. Invitations were invited from architects to adapt a room in the existing building – the drawing schoolroom - to provide the desired accommodation. The plans of a local architect, WH Knight, were accepted by the Council, at a cost of £1,470. *The Cheltenham Examiner* reported on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1863 that at the end of the vacation this new department would be opening in a distinct portion of the college buildings with its separate entrance and separate playground for the boys. However by November 1864 this junior department was found to be totally unsuitable. The ceiling had been raised to provide more ventilation but this had proved unsuccessful and the noise in the room was most distracting, there being a permanent echo. In March 1865, a decision was taken by the Council that a new junior building should be erected to the south of the main building. This was proposed by Sir Alex Ramsay and seconded by Mr Curtis-Hayward. Plans were prepared and those submitted by John Middleton at an estimated cost of £2,300 were accepted. The successful contractor was the firm of Wingate and

Son of Gloucester whose tender for the work amounted to £2,337 on a twelve months contract. Towards the end of the contract period, it looked as though the work would not be completed on time, and Middleton was instructed by the Council to express their concern to the contractor, but he assured them that he had every confidence in Mr Wingate. This confidence was well founded and the building was completed and 112 pupils were 'in residence' after the 1866 Midsummer vacation. The Headmaster expressed his entire satisfaction with the accommodation as well as with the improved ventilation. Likewise the excellent work of the contractors was minuted by the College Council, and this was endorsed by the architect, John Middleton. The final cost, including furnishing and architect's fees amounted to £3,000. (4) The former junior department was restored to its original use as a drawing schoolroom.

In style Middleton's junior department is Perpendicular and originally consisted of one large room 115 feet long under a steep pitched roof, surmounted by a fleche. (5) Internally the roof was ornamented with pierced panels. There was a classroom on the side towards the Bath Road, in shape semi-octagonal. The entrance consists of a small building of two storeys which contained a lobby with stairs under a square tower. The library was on the first floor with a classroom and a room for the Headmaster beneath it. (6) Above the entrance door is a stone figure in a niche, representing Francis Close. The whole project makes an attractive addition to Wilson's original building although the proportions of the tower entrance need to be reassessed.

The building of this extension was part of an improvements and expansion phase suggested by the Principal, the Reverend Alfred Barry, to cater for the steady rise in pupil numbers between 1861 and 1868. As well as being responsible for the building of this junior department he provided for several College Boarding Houses. Up to 1862 or thereabouts, College masters supplemented their income by taking boarders into their own homes and some of these private houses were much sought after by prospective parents. Two such masters by whom Middleton was later employed as architect were the Reverend TA Southwood and the Reverend RH Cooke. (7)

The original Board of Directors of the College was abolished in 1862 and replaced by a Council of Life Members and Triennial Members. During Middleton's time in Cheltenham, Council Members included several who were to become his associates – John Yorke, MP, of Forthampton; Charles Schreiber, MP, and WH Gwinnett. Staff who were to become clients or with whom he mixed socially or shared civic duties, included the Reverend Mr Southwood, the Reverend RH Cooke, the Reverend John Leighton, and the Reverend James Owen.

Between 1863 – 1864 a College Boarding House Company was formed under the terms of the Companies Act 1862, to build the boarding houses mentioned above, which would be financed by the College and under College control. Three were completed by 1866 and a fourth, Cheltondale, opened in 1869, built to the designs of John Middleton. (8) Commenting on the first three, by WH Knight, *The Cheltenham Looker On* claimed that 'The longer they are looked at, the less they are admired. Fortunately for the artistic pretensions (sic) of the town, they do not occupy prominent positions.' All of the houses were of a similar design with the master's house at the front, and a long wing to the rear with common room, hall, senior boys' studies, dormitories and facilities. Middleton's Cheltondale stood at the corner of College Road where the Path Laboratory now stands, almost diagonally opposite the east end

of St Luke's Church. Contractors for Cheltondale, which cost £3,348, were WC and L Channon, and the Town Commissioners' building certificate was issued in January 1868. (9) The formation of a Boarding House Company did not mean that the private houses were discontinued and each had its own character and attraction. Middleton's involvement with the Company houses continued for some years. Between 1872–1875 he was responsible for much maintenance work which was carried out on all four of the original ones. The roof lines of Leconfield and Christowe were altered in 1876-1877 and in 1878 he carried out a complete inspection and suggested alterations and repairs to what had by that time, increased to nine Company houses. (10) But Middleton's work was not confined to the Gentlemen's College and a far more challenging and exciting opportunity commanded his attention nearer the centre of the town.

The origin of Cheltenham Ladies' College was similar to that of its brother institution, the Gentlemen's College. It began in 1854 as a Proprietary School, its pupils came from local middle-class families and it was located at Cambray House, between the Promenade and The Bath Road. When the second Principal, Miss Dorothea Beale, arrived in 1858 she had only 60 pupils on the register. Under her the school made exciting progress and from 1864, she took boarders. So popular did the school become that by 1871 Cambray House was too small for the number of pupils and a new site was purchased at the corner of St George's Road and Montpellier Street. This did not meet with unanimous approval but the College Council eventually agreed to the purchase of the Old Well Gardens at a cost £800. (11) The site consisted of a grassed area enclosed by hedges and crossed by an avenue of tall elm trees between which ran a pathway. The frontage extended from the present archway in St George's Road to the double doors in Montpellier Street. On the west side a hedge separated the site from the garden of Fauconberg House on the corner of Bayshill Road, and this too was later purchased as the first College-owned boarding house.

John Middleton was called upon to draw plans for the new school and his designs of 1871 provided for the original College building and the Principal's house. These he presented to the College Council at a meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> October of that year. (12) The chairman of the Council at that time was the Principal of the Gentlemen's College and his opinion helped to sway the Ladies' College Council in favour of proceeding with the erection of the new school. 'A Ladies' College so distinguished, second to none in England, has the right to every advantage that can be secured for it, a right to be lodged in a building of its own, one that should be a College and look like a College.' (13) Within a week of this meeting, a loan of £3,000 had been secured to allow the work to begin. The first block was built between 1871 and 1873 with the planned Principal's house at its southern end. The school block, the Lower Hall, was of brick, faced with Cotswold stone and in the Gothic style 'which some people at the time thought absurdly grandiose.' (14) This first building, 'spired, apsed and generally ecclesiastical in its mien' (15) was in design not far removed from Middleton's new junior wing at the Gentlemen's College although the style was of a totally different period. The Lower Hall was a large room, 80 by 30 feet with six rooms surrounding it. The upper floor consisted of one large room and seven smaller rooms used for music. Internally the walls were lined with buff or red bricks with lines of black or blue, or very occasionally green, bricks. *The Cheltenham Examiner* urged the Ladies' College Council to make the official opening something of national importance, and 'as the Institution is already perhaps the foremost of its kind in the Kingdom.....it would

certainly be not out of place that a member of the Royal Family should be solicited to officiate at the inaugural ceremony.’ (16) Whatever the outcome of this plea, the Lady Principal addressed her staff, pupils and a small sprinkling of friends at the first morning assembly in the new building on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1873. (17)

“Some say our school is church-like...As each stone stands here in its appointed place, resting on one stone, supporting others, so are we a little community, a spiritual building: each is placed in her own niche, each has her appointed place, appointed by the Spiritual Architect; each is needful for the perfection of His design”

The new surroundings must have been in sharp contrast to the plain rooms of Cambray House and the girls must have felt somewhat excited by their colour, and decoration. (18). To quote Elizabeth Raikes:

‘Two churches at that time, (St Mark’s and All Saints) one with its high fine spire, the other with its lavish decoration, were all that the town could show of Gothic Renaissance which followed the teaching of Ruskin and Morris. The Ladies’ College was early among non-ecclesiastical buildings of this type. To some it may have seemed florid, but not to the eyes of youth and hope, which took delight in the pierced and patterned stone, the flowers in the coloured glass, the arch of the windows, the unusual design of the lecture rooms. These caused teachers and pupils to ignore for the most part the undoubted chilliness of the new rooms and the ‘currents of air’ about which some parents wrote complaining letters, for at that time people were even more afraid of draughts than they are today.’ (19)

The house for the Principal was not completed until 1874 (20) and in 1874/1875 Middleton was called upon to design the first addition to his original College, as the pupil numbers had increased to about 300 girls. A paper written by Miss Beale showed how very involved she was with the planning of the school and no doubt she spent many hours with Middleton discussing what she wanted and how best he could produce it. Yet again I quote Elizabeth Raikes:

‘With the removal to Bayshill, our real difficulties began. I had drawn the ground plan with the greatest regard to economy of space. I was told the porch must not be used for an entrance, and I was obliged to show we could not do without it...Then I was asked to do with two instead of four or five lecture rooms and so on. I was obliged to prepare elaborate documents with ground plans etc., ’ere I could get leave to use the space provided, and without which the College could not be carried on.’ (21)

The difficulties which this account infers that Miss Beale had to negotiate with the College Council, may also indicate that Middleton did not at this stage have the freedom of design which he might have desired. However 1876 saw the addition to the south of the original building, in the space between it and the Principal’s house. This addition comprised what is now the Tower entrance, a Calisthenics Room, (for gymnastic exercises) and beyond that a large hall with rose window, patterned brick



walls, pierced and decorated wooden arch-braced ceiling, and the beams springing from ornately carved capitals. An additional room for the lower school was added at the same time.

At some considerable distance from the main building, Middleton designed a Sanatorium completed in 1879/1880 at a cost of £1,318. (22) This was built at Leckhampton on a site just below the junction of the Leckhampton Road with Old Bath Road at the foot of the hill. The Sanatorium was demolished c1965 and planning permission was given for the development of the site with the adjoining grounds. The plans allowed for 21 dwelling houses which today form Liddington Close. (23) The 1964 sale particulars indicate something of the size of the building which was a soundly built, institutional construction of brick with a tiled roof. The ground floor comprised eight rooms, individual wards, and operating theatre, kitchens, bathroom and toilets. At a slightly higher level, on a half landing, was a small staff duty flat with a sitting room, bedroom and toilet facilities. The first floor contained a further 12 individual rooms, bathrooms, housemaid's pantry and offices. All the rooms had stone fireplaces. Adjoining the sanatorium and included in the sale, was a detached cottage-style residence, partly brick partly stone, with a slate roof. There was a separate pedestrian access to this cottage from Leckhampton Road and it was presumably the Matron's house. It consisted of hall, cloakroom, living room and scullery and three bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor. (24) A photograph of the Sanatorium exists in the College archives and gives the impression of it being a rather gloomy and very isolated building, of which the Tudor chimneys are the main and only attractive feature.

Within the next two years further important additions were made to the main College buildings, again designed by Middleton as architect to the College Council. (25) The Art and Music wing was a continuation of the Upper Hall and Tower building of 1876, stretching towards Bayshill Road, and at right angles to the original 1873 building. *The Cheltenham Examiner's* comment on the nearly completed buildings in December 1882 then referred to the greater freedom of design given to the architect which was not possible in the earlier days. This added wing was to become the main block of the College, and was enhanced by additional ornamentation in the Early French style. At this stage in the life of the college, the published accounts revealed an expenditure of £28,595 including the Principal's House and the Sanatorium. (26)

This Art and Music wing involved the lengthening of two large classrooms and the addition of further rooms, music rooms, lavatories etc. However the most striking feature was the entrance hall and Great Staircase, 'more in keeping with the importance of the structure than the original entrance' according to *The Cheltenham Examiner* of December 1882. The entrance which looks north towards St George's Road, leads into a hall about 50 feet high. Over the doorway are three two-light windows, at that time not coloured, and the plainness of the interior walls is relieved by terra cotta moulded tiles, freely used in other parts of the building, and by a band of de Morgan hand painted plaques. (27) There were classrooms on the ground floor and above, a number of small music rooms totally sound and fire proofed. Additionally there was a music teaching room with special lighting. The ceilings on this upper floor were stained timber as in the entrance hall, and they were arched and formed into panels by moulded ribs, carved mouldings being placed at the point of intersection. Heating was by means of hot water pipes passing round the rooms under

all the windows. Nothing had been forgotten that could add to the beauty and sanitary perfection of the building. Middleton's contractor was the firm of Jones of Gloucester with Letheren supplying all the ornamental iron work, and Martyn and Emms the wood carving. (28)

The official opening was held at the beginning of July 1883 when once again, *The Cheltenham Examiner* enthused about the entrance hall and the Great Staircase. The celebrations were marked, first by the filling in of the windows over the entrance with coloured glass, the theme being incidents from 'The Fairie Queene' and secondly, by the installation of an organ in the great hall placed in a specially constructed organ chamber. Guests were able to view and admire these additions and special delight was expressed over the floor at the top of the Great Staircase which opened on to the broad landing. This gave access to a large glass partitioned reception chamber and a large classroom on one side, with on the other, the Art rooms. This room was perhaps the most remarkable feature of the building, having had special lighting installed. Here one probably best sees the influence of John Henry Middleton, as the tints used in the decorations are so similar to those used at South Kensington, and the room contained casts of works unearthed by the Germans at the Temple of Jupiter Olympus. (29) *The Cheltenham Examiner* report continued: 'All the other rooms appear to be all that skill can make them and the decoration which has been supplied since their completion, has served to give a warmth to the stone and a finish which makes them as nearly artistically perfect as seems possible.'

In the evening Miss Beale, the Principal, held a reception for about 1,000 guests, who were received in the reception rooms off the landing. As the guests toured the new buildings, they 'added life and beauty to the scene (and) were unstinting in their admiration of an interior which many of them had the opportunity of seeing for the first time.' Among these guests, mentioned by name, were the architect, Mr Middleton and Mrs Middleton.

Further work completed in the 1880s included a new Lodge, for which a building certificate was issued in March 1881; (30) alterations to the Principal's house at the same time; and some small science laboratories adjoining Montpellier Street for which a building certificate was issued in 1883. These works saw the end of Middleton's active involvement in the construction of the main buildings for the Ladies' College although his successors continued to serve as College architects, initially under the young John Henry Middleton. Further work was completed in 1887, 1890, 1893 and 1894. In 1893 the Principal's house which Middleton had designed was demolished to make way for a new wing along the Montpellier Street frontage, but this did include a new residence for the Principal.

Apart from the main College, one important building designed by Middleton for the College Council but not completed until after his death, was the interesting red brick St Hilda's College in Western Road, Cheltenham. (31) Middleton had just seen the completion of the Art and Music wing and was now called upon to prepare plans for St Hilda's. The project came about because Miss Beale was keen to establish some formal training for Secondary School teachers for which, at that time, none was provided. She set about making an appeal for money to enable her to open a students' home where prospective secondary school teachers could live while being trained. By 1884 she had raised sufficient funds for the work to proceed.

Middleton invited tenders early in 1884 for ‘the erection in connection with the Ladies’ College, of a Students’ Home about to be erected on the Western Road near Christ Church. The Home is destined as a boarding house under certain conditions for girls whose intended vocation is tuition. Accommodation is to be provided in the first instance for about 40 students.’ (32) Initially the house took 14 students some of whom were College staff studying part time. Tenders amounted to sixteen in number of which that submitted by Mr Collins of Tewkesbury at £3,500 was accepted. Supplementary tenders were invited for an annexe as and when needed and for special internal decoration. Collins’ tender for the whole project was £4,125, the highest being £5,691.

The foundation stone was laid on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1884 and the ceremony was performed by the Rector of North Cerney, who like Middleton was a member of the College Council. The small company present included the Rector’s wife, Mr and Mrs Middleton, the Reverend J Owen, Miss Beale, several members of the College staff and some students studying teaching who were currently residing at Fauconberg House. After the ceremony most of those present adjourned to the garden of Middleton’s House, Westholme, which was just a matter of two hundred yards distant. It was envisaged that the building consisting of twelve private rooms, twelve cubicles, plus large communal studies, would be completed by June 1885. St Hilda’s College is in the Elizabethan style, of red brick with Bath stone dressings, mullioned windows and a large frontage to the Western Road. *The Cheltenham Examiner* described it as a plain building but of lofty and attractive elevation. The official opening took place on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November 1885 just nine months after John Middleton’s death. His son and partners, Prothero and Phillott had continued the work according to Middleton’s designs. The College was considerably extended between 1890-1900 and in 2002 was the subject of extensive refurbishing and upgrading.

Miss Beale formed a close friendship with the Middletons. As well as being an elected member of the College Council and a shareholder it will be recalled that John Middleton was also a member of the ‘Friends in Council’ at which Dorothea Beale was frequently present. This makes it all the more puzzling that the *Ladies College Magazine* contains only a brief mention of Middleton’s death in February 1885. The Autumn edition includes only the following entry:

‘With unfeigned regret we record the death of...’

and there follows verbatim the text of *The Cheltenham Examiner’s* report of his death, without any specific Ladies’ College tribute. This is most surprising when one reflects on the vast amount of work he had done for the College as designer of its permanent home in Bayshill.

## ***References Chapter X***

### ***Cheltenham College***

1. Little, ‘*Cheltenham*’ 1951
2. See Minutes of Board of Directors. 12<sup>th</sup> August 1861. ‘JH Middleton balloted for and admitted on the nomination of John Middleton esq’. This suggests that Middleton senior was a shareholder.

3. See later chapter on John Henry Middleton.
4. GA D2970 1/30 College Extension: Plan No 1, Design for the proposed addition to the Cheltenham College for the Juvenile Department. Six plans are included, all signed 'J Middleton.' The information about the development of the junior building is reproduced from the appropriate Minute Book of the College Council.
5. As above, Plan 4. West elevation shows a central fleche on the main roof, with a shorter one to the north and a shorter but broader one to the south. The central design is the one that was used.
6. As above. On Plan 1, the room designated 'Principal's Room' has had the word 'Principal' crossed out and is replaced with the word 'Head Master' in pencil.
7. *Cheltenham College Register* to 1889.
8. GA D2970 1/29. Signed J Middleton, Cheltenham 1867. Three plans, side, front and ground. The reverse is endorsed by the builder, Bain (?) and Channon.
9. GA D2970 3/9. Contract No 1, Boarding House for Cheltenham College Boarding House Company Ltd. Messrs WC & L Channon Contractors, Glos 1867. £3,348. The accounts were open from February 1868 – March 30<sup>th</sup> 1868.
10. GA D2970 3/1 Middleton was also called upon in 1875 to examine and report on the condition of the balcony of the Gymnasium with a view to rebuilding it. This was a small contract with an estimated cost of £133.13.8. No evidence is available to suggest that this was completed.

### ***Cheltenham Ladies' College***

11. Steadman
12. GA D2970 1/84 & D843 4/1
13. Clarke, AK
14. Pakenham.
15. Little: '*Cheltenham*' 1951
16. *Cheltenham Examiner* 6<sup>th</sup> December 1872
17. *Cheltenham Looker On* 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1873. The Cheltenham Ladies' College took possession of the new schoolroom at the Promenade entrance to the Bayshill Estate last Monday. It is a building certainly not the least ornamental in the town. The unfinished state of the exterior and the Principal's house will take some time to complete.
18. Raikes
19. Raikes
20. GA D2970 3/7. The house was altered and enlarged a short while afterwards probably to make way for the new Art and Music wing of 1882.
21. Raikes:
22. GA D2970 3/1
23. As above. D2970 3/9. This site was not continued as the Sanatorium after 1895 by which time, Middleton's successors had converted a house in Parabola Road into a new sanatorium at a cost of £2,754, an account settled in 1896.
24. GA D4858 2/4 3 1964
25. GA CBR C5/6/1/1/1 New Buildings Register.
 

349	March 18 1881	J Middleton for new lodge at Ladies' College. Approved 29 <sup>th</sup> March.
350		Alterations to Ladies' College. Approved
351		Alterations to Lady Principal's house
496		April 21 <sup>st</sup> 1882: Additions to Ladies' College
663		November 21 <sup>st</sup> 1883, Science Room at Ladies' College.
26. *Cheltenham Examiner* 6<sup>th</sup> December 1882
27. de Morgan was a contemporary and associate of William Morris.
28. *Cheltenham Ladies' College Pictorial History*
29. *Cheltenham Examiner* 11<sup>th</sup> July 1883
30. GA D2970 3/7
31. GA CBR C5/6/1/1/1 New Buildings Register: No 698, 17. April 1887, 'Miss Beale Boarding House in Western Road, Approved.'
32. *Cheltenham Examiner* 16<sup>th</sup> April 1884

## CHAPTER XI

### *Delancey Fever Hospital*

Apart from his five churches, the Junior Boys' College and Cheltenham Ladies' College are the most significant reminders of Middleton's contribution to the town's architectural heritage. However as well as these churches and schools, one further and important legacy which Middleton left to Cheltenham was the Delancey Fever Hospital, at Leckhampton.

Infectious diseases, as the name implies, are very easily passed on from one person to another. In the Victorian period, isolation hospitals were built to attack the spread of diseases such as smallpox, diphtheria, cholera, typhoid and scarlet fever in order to prevent epidemics. These hospitals were usually constructed outside towns in an area well open to fresh air and free of pollution. One of the earliest Fever Hospitals as these establishments were familiarly called, had been established at Stow-on-the-Wold by 1836. There was a country wide cholera epidemic in 1848/49 and another in 1866 followed in 1870 by the worst epidemic ever of smallpox. The 1866 epidemic may well have prompted the building of the Cheltenham Fever Hospital, which followed the typical design pattern of such hospitals at the time. Quite small buildings were constructed to which ward blocks were added at a later date, as need arose. (1)

The need for a fever hospital had been under consideration in Cheltenham for many years and just after the opening of the General Hospital in 1849, the managers had toyed with the idea of building one in the hospital grounds. For various reasons the scheme never materialised. However in 1866 an eccentric local resident who lived in a suite of rooms at the Plough Hotel in Cheltenham, made clear to her doctor that when she died, £5,000 of her estate was to be used to provide a fever hospital for the town. Nothing was put into writing and after her death her heirs contested this oral bequest. In 1870, an Appeal was heard at the Court of Chancery which found in favour of the legatees, but a month later, they agreed to comply with the deceased's wish on condition that the proposed hospital should bear the lady's name – Delancey – and that work on the hospital should begin at once. A local benefactor, the Reverend JH Gabell, put down £1,000 for the purchase of a site at Pilley, in Leckhampton, and six acres were bought for £1,200. *The Cheltenham Examiner* described the site as a 'very healthy one, while it is sufficiently retired to prevent the unnecessary intrusion of the building upon the sight of those who are unwise enough to see in such an institution an object of dread, rather than, as it is, an additional security against the outbreak of epidemic.' (2) Other contemporary reports refer to its prime position near the foot of the Cotswold Hills and bounded on two sides by a public highway and enclosed by hedges only. A gardener's cottage was included in the purchase price of the site.

The Delancey bequest, in effect £4,135, (3) was not touched at this stage and running expenses of the Trustees were paid through charitable donations amounting to some £2,400. Trustees who were invited to administer the Delancey Fever Hospital had to live within 15 miles of Cheltenham Parish Church. At their first meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1871, officers were appointed and a sub committee was elected to deal with the building side of the project. This comprised three doctors and the Reverend Mr Gabell. (4)

The building of the fever hospital demanded specialist designs and the Trustees decided that three separate blocks, one each for smallpox, scarlet fever and diphtheria should be built, together with a convalescent ward and resident Superior's house. (5) They also agreed that the advice of an architectural firm which had had experience in such projects should be sought. By June 1871, rough plans and estimates had been received from the firm of Andrews and Pepper of Bradford. The Trustees had placed a ceiling on costs of £5,000 with accommodation for a maximum of 50 patients but with the possibility of further additions at a later date. Dr Wilson, (6) secretary to the Trustees, made a visit to Bradford to discuss the specifications and plans with the architects, and on his return the committee raised fifteen points for clarification. They invited Mr Pepper to Cheltenham to discuss these issues before making any final decision. The main concerns were the costs which seemed at the time to far exceed the agreed ceiling of £5,000. The response was that the firm hoped to be able to keep within the budget and in March 1872 tenders were invited. Replies ranged from £8,690 to £10,978 giving rise to much alarm and uncertainty amongst the Trustees. At this point the architects were challenged to find a contractor who would work for £5,000 whether or not he covered all the architect's instructions, a rather dangerous compromise. The architects declined this instruction but offered to produce alternative plans. The Trustees met on April 19<sup>th</sup> 1872 and passed the following resolution:

It is resolved that the Trustees having ceased to have confidence in the Architects therefore cannot countenance to employ them as Architects but will keep their plans and pay a fair remuneration.

There followed naturally, some unpleasant correspondence between the Trustees and the architects over 'fair remuneration' but in May of that year it was confirmed that the plans could be bought for £461.4.0 but that the copyright should remain with the Architects' Practice. (7) The Trustees then resolved to employ a local architect to amend the specifications and adapt the plans to meet local requirements. They also decided to make use of less expensive building materials from local sources and to disregard the costlier materials contemplated in the original specifications. (8)

At a meeting of the Trustees on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1872 it was resolved that 'JH Middleton be and is hereby appointed Architect of the proposed hospital.' (9) A week later, it was recorded in the minutes that 'Mr Middleton is willing to become the Architect for the proposed fever hospital,' and his estimate would allow for 10% either way. The plans were to be redrawn and his commission would be 5%. This presents us with a very confusing situation with regard to which of the Middletons actually was the architect – father or son? Hopefully the following evidence taken from the existing archives will help to unravel the mystery. The Middleton archive in the Gloucestershire Record Office contains several plans and drawings for this hospital project, most of which are signed Middleton and Goodman 1872. One undated, pen and ink drawing of the proposed finished building is signed Middleton and Son. It was not until about 1874 that Goodman finished his partnership with John Middleton and then the practice became Middleton and Son. It is most probable that Middleton senior delegated to his son John Henry, the responsibility for attending some of the meetings with the Trustees and negotiating on the firm's behalf. In not one of the press accounts of the whole undertaking before the late 1880s is John Henry Middleton mentioned, the architect always being referred to as Mr Middleton or Mr John Middleton. It therefore

seems safe to assume that father and son worked closely together on a project which was well planned before Mr Goodman moved on to fresh pastures and that some of the supervisory and liaison responsibilities were accepted by John Henry.

Later in the year, Mr Middleton laid his tenders for the work before the committee and again they were considered too costly. This was partly explained by the rise in the cost of labour and materials. The Trustees therefore felt that they were not justified in proceeding for the present with the erection of any part of the proposed building and that the whole project be postponed. The Town's Commissioners intervened and asked Middleton to confer with the building contractors to seek their help in arriving at a satisfactory solution. The high costs appeared to relate to the style of the building and on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1873, Middleton wrote from his home, Westholme, that a cottage style would be the cheapest and would be consistent with the sanitary and heating standards requirements. This letter was signed 'J Middleton' whereas the son usually signed his correspondence J Henry or John H Middleton and even Henry Middleton. Furthermore, the handwriting in the letter is the same as that in other extant correspondence written by Middleton senior. On 20<sup>th</sup> January the Trustees agreed to proceed at once with the smallpox block only, excluding the corridor, disinfecting apparatus, laundry, Dead House, drying shed, drainage fences and roads as originally planned. (10) The estimates of Mr Channon, the builder, were to be followed but were not to exceed £3,500 and by 19<sup>th</sup> March 1873, Mr Channon had received his first payment of £560. (11) The deadline set for the opening was 6<sup>th</sup> June 1874 and this was actually realised on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June. *The Cheltenham Examiner* commented: 'Mr Middleton so far as we can judge, has admirably carried out his instructions. While preserving the specialities of the plans entrusted to him, he has entirely remodelled their architectural proportions and has prepared a design which, while far more sightly and far less ponderous than the original, will be produced at much less cost.' This report confirms the intention of the Trustees to make use of the original plans bought from Andrews and Pepper of Bradford, but also emphasises the fact that Middleton adapted them considerably and produced a very personalised result. The block opened on this occasion was that for small pox and disinfection. (12) It will be observed that Middleton exceeded the restrictions on the building agreed by the Trustees at the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> January, when only the smallpox block was to be attempted. *The Cheltenham Examiner* described the work in great detail:

'It is complete in itself. It will contain eight beds for general patients in two wards at either end of the building, two private rooms and accommodation for four convalescents, plus a nurses' room and a small surgery for mixing necessary medicines. It has its own cooking and kitchen arrangements, bathroom and offices and will therefore be entirely independent of the main buildings which will form part of the scheme. The block consists of a long building one storey in height, built of red brick made in the neighbourhood with black bands and high sloping roof of dark brown tiles. The window mullions and tracery are of stone. Internally the rooms are partially lined with white glazed bricks, the passages with plain glazed bricks in patterns – the intention being to use materials that will least harbour germs. The passages are stone paved and the floors of the wards carefully tongued and varnished – again to deter the harbouring of germs of disease. The rooms are airy and spacious, well lighted and cheerful. The windows open inwards and downwards by means of rods and cranks and are easy to work Ventilators in the roof and chimneys carry off foul air and supply new. There are open fireplaces to all the rooms and the rooms are

lit by gas. The laundry stands a short distance from this block. In the basement are the boiler and coldstore and a separate disinfecting room large enough to contain beds and mattresses. On the floor above are the large wash-house, to which the clothes from the floor below are conveyed by means of a lift; a nurses' wash house and a laundry and drying room for ordinary hospital linen. Close by is a further drying shed. Some distance from the laundry is a small mortuary. No one can inspect the buildings as yet completed without acknowledging the excellence of their arrangement; and we have the authority of Dr Buchanan, the well known Government Inspector, when we say that if carried out in their entirety, the plans will produce a hospital which will be a model to the country.'(13)

What greater incentive could there have been to proceed than this endorsement of Middleton's achievement so far? The cost was in the region of £3,000, exclusive of the land value, but including sewerage and drainage. In addition to the building work completed by Messrs Channon, the furniture had been supplied by Debenham and Freebody of Cheltenham; Messrs Marshall had supplied the iron casements; Mallory and Green the hot water system; Letheren the grates for the larger wards and Jennings of London the sanitary fittings.

The Rector of Cheltenham performed the opening ceremony on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1874, in the absence of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese who was sitting with the Lords in Parliament. Among invited guests to the opening luncheon were the local MP, Mr Agg-Gardner; William Nash Skillicorne, Chairman of the Trustees; Canon Fenn of Christ Church; Mr Davies, Chairman of the Improvement Commissioners and of course Mr John Middleton, the Architect. During the course of the customary speeches reference was made to the fact that the hospital had facilities for the more wealthy patient, 'provided with every essential comfort, and where he could, if he wished, be waited upon by his own nurse and attended by his own medical man.' (14) There were also exceptional facilities for those living in the more densely populated parts of the town where disease spread so quickly, carried, as at Stroud recently in rags or some other manner. The epidemic has already reached Gloucester – almost at our doors – 'and without this building what would we have done, considering that even a few years ago, the idea of a fever hospital would have been impossible in Cheltenham, when even the appointment of a Medical Officer was considered dangerous to the reputation of Cheltenham as a health resort!' (15)

Up to this point the Delancey legacy had not been touched, the Trustees having kept it to pay future annual expenses and having used charitable donations to fund the work so far. (16) The remaining blocks would cost £5,000 in all, as facilities which they would need had already been included in the present project. April 1877 saw the opening of the scarlatina block which had been agreed on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1875 (17) Middleton had been consulted and tenders were accepted in September that year. This new block was at some distance from the three year old smallpox block and its opening marked the completion of phase two of the three or four blocks of which the finished hospital would consist. The new block's exterior style matched that of the original block – 'a long building, but two storeys in height with provision for a connection to a wing at either end if needed in the future.' It was in similar brick to the original with black brick bands, a high sloping roof and pointed gable ends. The window mullions and tracery were of white stone. There were two entrances, one at the centre of each front and a passage connected the two at right angles to the passage



which ran from end to end of the building. Passage walls were tiled with white and plain bricks and the wooden fittings and staircase were of polished pitch pine, 'giving the whole an appearance which was cheerful and un-hospital like.'

The ground floor had seven private wards, accommodation for two nurses, and kitchens, bathrooms and lavatories. The upper floor had two large seven-bed wards, a large consultants' room with a screen dividing it into dining and sitting room. There were also a bathroom, lavatory and linen room. The two storeys were additionally connected by a spacious lift. Each ward had an open fireplace with underfloor water pipes heating the passages. Each of the smaller rooms allowed for external cool air ventilation by means of ventilators and similar ones above the fireplace allowed warm air to enter from a chamber at the back of the grate. The large wards also had extractor fans in the centre of each ceiling and every room was lit by gas. The linen cupboards were heated by warm water pipes and all water in the cisterns passed through carbon filters, thus reducing the spread of infection. Nothing which could address the needs of the patient had been forgotten. The building was a marvel of hospital construction. The planned wings would later provide wards for public cases and the current open wards would then be used for convalescence. (18)

This block was named after the Reverend Gabell whose initial contribution of £1,000 enabled the site to be purchased and who had made further considerable donations as the work progressed. Two stages towards completion were finished just after John Middleton's death – the boundary wall and gates and the Porters' Lodge, both accounts having been settled by September 1885. (19) November 9<sup>th</sup> 1892 saw an appeal for the completion of the hospital according to the original plans with a new wing of 24 beds for public scarlet fever cases, and isolated wards for diphtheria. 'Depending on the need, £1,000 has already been given' (20) and the further £1,000 which was necessary was soon raised. Obviously the hospital has been added to or adapted over the years and well in to the twentieth century, John Middleton's successors, Prothero and Phillott and later LW Barnard, continued as architects to the hospital Trustees.

This was by far the largest of Middleton's hospital contracts. Much of it remains today, and his contribution is easily identifiable in spite of the many additions made in later years, although the first block – for smallpox cases – has long been demolished. The main entrance when first opened was in Pilley Lane, but after the addition of the administrative block and the Wilson and College blocks in the 1890s, the main entrance was changed to Charlton Lane.

A Parliamentary Report on the Use and Influence of Hospitals for Infectious Diseases, 1882, devoted considerable time to Cheltenham's Delancey Hospital. A concise history of the founding of the hospital was given and the staged development of the various departments was described in great detail. Of additional interest is the information that 'there are but few dwellings in the vicinity of the Delancey Hospital. The nearest houses to the smallpox pavilion are to the east of the site in the hamlet of Pilley and lie at a distance of 120 feet from it. Others lying to the north west of the site are 168ft and 225 ft from the administrative block and scarlet fever pavilion.' The Report also acknowledges the existence of 'two private hospitals, one belonging to the Ladies College and the other to the College for Boys, recently established for the reception of any cases of scarlet fever that may arise.' (21)

## **References Chapter XI**

### ***Delancey Hospital***

- 1 English Hospitals *Royal Commission Report*
- 2 *Cheltenham Examiner* May 1870
- 3 GA CBR D3/1/1
- 4 *ibid.*
- 5 *ibid*
- 6 Dr ET Wilson was father of the Antarctic explorer Dr Adrian Wilson.
- 7 GA CBR D3/1/1
- 8 *Cheltenham Examiner* 17<sup>th</sup> June 1874
- 9 GA CBR D3/1/1 and Plans D2970 1/53: Proposed site plan .M&G Architects:  
Smallpox ward, back elevation & smallpox ward front elevation, Middleton and Goodman 1872.  
Large drawing of proposed completed hospital, Middleton & Son, n d.  
Ground Plan, smallpox wards Middleton & Goodman 1872  
Delancey Administration Block Middleton and Goodman 1872
- 10 GA D2970 3/9 No 12. Smallpox, Laundry, Dead House, drying shed and corridor April 1873 .  
..... £2,773.
- 11 *Cheltenham Looker On* 26 April 1873: The Delancey Hospital whose erection was postponed. .  
.. last year on account of the high price of building materials appears now to be making satisfactory  
.. progress. The walls of the smallpox block were commenced a few weeks ago and are rising above  
.. the fences which enclose the land and look like being completed ahead of time. Lots will need to  
.. be done before the original design is complete. The scarlet fever and typhoid wards are not yet ..  
.. begun but lack of funds is holding progress. The Improvement Commissioners have erected ..  
.. temporary wooden buildings for smallpox patients until the buildings are ready. The good news is  
.. that no patients are waiting and the epidemic which gave rise to the erection of the hospital has ..  
.. already disappeared from the Borough.
- 12 *Cheltenham Chronicle* 16<sup>th</sup> July 1874
- 13 *Cheltenham Examiner* July 1874
- 14 *ibid*
- 15 *Cheltenham Chronicle* 16<sup>th</sup> July 1874
- 16 *Cheltenham Looker On* 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1875 Delancey is to be completed in entirety. The Trustees ..  
.. decided to proceed with the scarlatina block in order to perfect the original design. Reverend .. ..  
... Gabell gave £2,000 a few weeks ago provided the public gave £1,500. This has been fulfilled.
- 17 *Cheltenham Examiner* 11<sup>th</sup> April 1877
- 18 *Cheltenham Looker On* 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1880. Delancey is at an advanced stage. The Administration  
.. block has been completed through the generosity of Rev. JH Gabell. He has defrayed the entire ..  
... cost of the building. Hopefully the public will raise the necessary amount for furnishings.
- 19... GA D2970 No 26 Boundary walls and gates, Delancey Hospital May 1885 AC Billings.  
No 31 Lodge for Delancey Hospital July 1885-September 1885 £524. Plan 1/53  
.....Middleton Prothero and Phillot AD 1885.
- 20 *Cheltenham Examiner* 9<sup>th</sup> November 1892
21. *Parliamentary Report 1882* in author's possession.

## CHAPTER XII

### *Private residences*

Although Middleton's contributions to urban and rural communities survive mainly in the form of public buildings – schools, hospitals and churches – his more domestic commissions merit special mention. This side of his professional expertise is evident in the contracts he completed for those who wanted an individually designed home which perhaps revealed something of their financial and social standing. Two examples which reflect his style and which have already been described are almost unaltered externally – Hillfield and The Granleys at St Mark's, Cheltenham. (1) It will be remembered that Middleton's first home in Cheltenham was 13, York Terrace, St George's Road, where he lived from 1860. He then decided to combine all his professional and artistic talents and build for himself a dream house, a French-Gothic pre-Raphaelite Villa the 'like of which was a complete innovation in Cheltenham's domestic architecture.' (2) A one acre site was acquired on the Bayshill Estate (3) and he began designing this 'personalised' home. The plans are signed J Middleton, Architect and dated 1866 (4) The house was close to Christ Church with which he was so involved and it soon became evident that his house was to become one of the most elaborate residences in the town. Rumour has it that he spent upwards of £80,000 on the building, a considerable sum in the 1860s. Externally, like his Cheltenham churches, it was not strikingly attractive, being a rock-faced structure of rusticated stone, with freestone dressings. Most of the windows were of two or three lights, with Gothic tracery. There was a small pointed oriel on the first floor at the back of the house overlooking Christ Church Road and a similar one on the first floor of the tower above the main entrance. The external appearance of the house however created an impression of spaciousness that was not in fact the case.

The steep pitched roof and pointed tower at the front of the house added to its austere and sombre appearance. The frontage to Overton Road was railed and the approach drive to the house was entered between stone pillars. However internally the house resembled something from an Arthurian legend – beautiful carved stone and plasterwork; Gothic ornamentation; carved stone angels just above eye level; Morris and Burne-Jones tiles around the fireplaces and ceiling panels in rich brown-red Oregon pine, with paper transfer work in green, cream and gold. The internal walls were papered and stencilled – possibly to designs by Morris – but also displaying the skill of the best of Cotswold artists as well as continental – reputedly Italian – craftsmen, as were employed on the church at Oxenhall. The whole effect was medieval, romantic and sumptuous, with some intriguing innovations designed by Middleton himself. (5) John Middleton, his wife Maria and son John lived there in the house they named Westholme, for sixteen years from 1868 and the 1871 Census showed that they employed a cook, a lady's maid, and a housemaid, although there were probably other non-resident staff. (6) Caroline, Dowager Countess Dunraven, had lunch at Westholme late in 1868 and in her diary she wrote, "The architecture of his house was beautiful, and the fitting up perceived to be perfect." But this was not to be Middleton's final Cheltenham address. In 1884, John Middleton completed a surveyor's report on a property in Bayshill, 1, Fauconberg Terrace. (7) The house has now been demolished and the site is part of the Ladies College. The survey gave the specifications for the repairs which he considered necessary and these were sent to his

client, Mr AC Bruce Pryce, of Dufferyn, Cardiff. (8) Also in June 1884 a house came up for auction in St George's Road. Gresham House was advertised 'On the summit of Bayshill. Drawing room, dining room, three bedrooms, dressing room, three dormitories for staff etc etc.' (9) In August of that year, the local press reported that the house had not been sold at auction and was therefore open for sale by private treaty. (10) In January 1885, a large advertisement in the Cheltenham Examiner gave the following notice:

WESTHOLME, Overton Road, Cheltenham. Attractive sale of high class FURNITURE of chaste and elegant design, carpets, choice ornamental items etc. Engall Sanders and Co having received instructions from John Middleton esq. (who has disposed of his property) to SELL BY AUCTION upon the premises as above on Tuesday January 27<sup>th</sup> 1885 commencing at 11 o'clock precisely .....

and there followed a long list of 'unique items all superior, elegant, handsome, luxurious, elaborate, finely worked' One item which perhaps illustrates the quality of what was for sale was a 'noble pitch pine wardrobe of medieval character and superior workmanship.' Because of the large number of lots, the sale began at the early time of 11 am. It is not difficult to see where this leads but it might make the reader ask what the circumstances were surrounding this important furniture sale.

From the beginning of 1885 Middleton and his family had moved to Gresham House in St George's Road, referred to above, and he took with him the name of the house which he was leaving – Westholme. This name is still just visible in 2004, painted on the left hand side of the house. From April 1885 Alan Cameron Bruce Pryce became the owner-occupier of Middleton's former home, which he renamed Abbeyholme. (11) Alan Cameron Bruce was the elder son of John Wyndham Bruce, and was born in 1836. He was educated at Exeter College Oxford becoming MA in 1862. He was called to the Bar and later became Law reporter for the Times newspaper. He eventually succeeded to his grandfather's Glamorgan Estate on condition that he assumed the name Pryce. He had little to do with the estate and arrived in Cheltenham about 1884, when he was still under 50 years of age. He was keen rider and hunter, a member of the Cheltenham College Council for a short time, and a member of the New Club, but he never became very involved with local affairs. (12)

Bruce Pryce was twice married and fathered seventeen children. I am grateful to his descendants for the subsequent information about Westholme which he did not drastically alter although a new wing was added during the family's ownership which lasted until 1945/46. By this time, maintenance was too costly especially after the house had suffered from an earth tremor in the area in the early 1930s.

One of Bruce Pryce's grand-daughters wrote to the Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle in 1983, and gave a fairly comprehensive description of Westholme as she remembered it. The description which follows has been compiled partly from her memories and partly from photographs of the interior supplied to the author by her son. The hall was entered under a Gothic arch much resembling the chancel arches of Middleton's churches. This was of alternating blocks of blue Forest stone and white Bath stone, and on either side of the supporting columns were doors leading into the Drawing Room. Facing one from the hall, was the staircase of stone at the foot of which slender stone columns with heavily carved foliated capitals supported the first

floor landing above. The Drawing room ran north-east/south-west and leading from it was a door through an arch into what was called the back Drawing room, and behind this was the Library.

The dining room on the opposite side of the hall to the right of the main door had an ornate panelled ceiling, and a carved stone Gothic fireplace with tiles around the grate. The mantelpiece was castellated and carved with flower heads. On either side of the

fireplace was a Gothic arched recess in stone resembling an ecclesiastical sedilia. The serving dresser fitted into a square recess on the long wall facing the windows and the top of the recess was aesthetically supported on two tapered stone bases from each of which rose a short marble column with carved capitals. Nearly all the woodwork in the house was carved, stencilled and painted. A large, possibly brass lantern, hung from the centre of the ceiling and which by the 1930s had been converted to electricity. Behind the Dining room was the pantry and kitchen which one approached by descending a small flight of steps and almost immediately ascending a similar flight opposite.

On the first floor landing was a doorway leading into a WC and a passage which wandered on and on turning back or going down steps at most unlikely moments, to a sort of spare room in which was a mahogany panelled bath raised on a small flight of steps. The WC was also set in mahogany with a coloured pan and placed at the top of a small dais which one reached via a small flight of steps. From the landing a further door on the left went into the oriel room, above the dining room, and so named because of the big oriel window. (13) Next to this room and facing one at the top of the stairs was a dressing room, next to which was a bedroom directly above the Drawing room. Alongside this door was another which led to a back stairway and eventually up to the maids' rooms, attics and the like. Bruce Pryce added a wing to the back and side of the house which contained bedrooms and WC with bathroom but compared to the main house this wing was unremarkable.

Miss Audrey Schuster, another great grand-daughter of Bruce Pryce recalled living there in the 1940s and gave the author a further description of the interior. She vividly remembered the glass panels on either side of the inner hall door, bearing on one side the words, 'Welcome the coming guest' and on the other side, 'Speed the parting guest.' Photographs taken at the time show that the Drawing room and the back Drawing room were separated by elegantly carved and stencilled wooden double doors. There was a fireplace in each room and the one in the larger room had colourful tiles around it, one of which depicted a dog which reputedly belonged to Middleton himself. In order to encourage the fires to light there were some black metal hinged flaps which were let down to encourage draughts - very ingenious, and they worked perfectly. Across the front of the fireplace was a screen of steel chains which prevented sparks flying into the room. In the smaller Drawing room was a deep marble mantelpiece backed by a huge mirror. The chimney flue was curved instead of going straight up and it was always thought unusual to have a mirror against a chimney breast. (14)

The bathrooms had painted ceilings as did the upstairs oriel room. The ceiling panels in the dining room were also highly decorated. The wall paper in the drawing room

was a light shade of turquoise, replaced by Bruce Pryce but an exact copy of the original and possibly also by William Morris. The bedroom above the smaller drawing room overlooked the flat roof of the extension and was the warmest in the house. There was also a brick walled well in the vegetable garden, not very deep, and possibly fed by springs.

Abbeyholme, as Bruce Pryce renamed the house, became a Rest Home after the Second World War and continued as such until the 1970s. It was not a listed building and in 1973 permission was given to demolish it and to build flats on the site. Every last minute effort was made by shocked Cheltenham residents and conservationists to stop the demolition and only by chance did the Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle hear of the impending fate of this Middleton gem. Emergency arrangements were made to come to Cheltenham to salvage some of the panelling, tiles and door frames as well as some of the stonework. These have been re-assembled in rooms at the museum. Cheltenham Museum too salvaged some panelling, stonework, woodwork and smaller objects such as door finger-plates. Many of the carved stone and other pieces were snapped up by antique dealers and the front door to the house now survives in a local antiquarian bookshop in the town, beautifully preserved and appreciated. However the penultimate stages of demolition saw fire raging through the shell of the house consuming all the combustible materials in its path, before final destruction, roof first, obliterated from the Cheltenham scene the personal monument to one of its most prolific and outstanding Victorian architects.

Another house which looks very similar to Westholme and which was built a little earlier, is Dewerstone, on the Thirlestaine Road. This house, although built as a private residence, has its origins in the development of Cheltenham College. On the foundation of the College the teaching was organised into two Departments, Classical and Modern. (15) The Reverend Thomas Alban Southwood was appointed to head the Modern Department in 1843, the year of his graduation from Emmanuel College Cambridge. Up to 1862 the Reverend Mr Southwood lived at Keynshambury House where he took boarders. He then moved to 4, Paragon Buildings until 1864 when he took possession of his newly constructed home, Dewerstone. (16) The house, designed by Middleton in the Gothic Revival style is of stone with ashlar dressings. It has a banded tile and fishscale roof, tall ornamented ridge stacks in twos and threes with cornices, and ornamental ridge tiles and end stack. (17)

Externally the house comprises two storeys and basement with attics in the gables. It has three bays with the entrance door in a projecting gable porch. This is approached by three steps with black and white tiles to a pointed plank door. This has a moulded surround on small columns with a hoodmould and face stops. There is a canted bay window on either side of the porch and above this is a triangular oriel with face decoration. The decorative bargeboards are an unmistakable feature of the house. The West front is of five bays with upper and lower canted bay central windows and to the East front there is a stained window at landing level. The rear of the house, a later extension bears a date shield for 1871. Above two ground floor windows on the west façade are the carved heads of a Victorian lady and gentleman – without doubt the Reverend and Mrs Southwood.

The sale particulars for 1901 state that the house was erected for the Reverend Southwood and occupied by him for many, many years until his death. (18) ‘The

architectural features are exceptionally attractive, forming a most charming and complete example of the Domestic Gothic Style, the details of which have been most carefully carried out, throughout.' The square vestibule to the East side originally opened on one side to a tiled conservatory. The entrance hall was lighted by a handsome stained window. The ground floor also contained the Drawing - room, measuring twenty three feet by fifteen feet, lighted by a wide bay and two other windows. This room had a period fireplace with carved timber surround, tiled inset and hearth and an ornate ceiling cornice. The Library, twenty feet by thirteen feet, also contained a bay window and the Dining room measured nineteen feet six inches by fifteen feet eight inches. These three rooms all contained massive chimney pieces, fitted cornices with centre flowers, and shutters. This ground floor included a self contained Housekeeper's room, Butler's Pantry and store rooms. The principal staircase is of stone and rather wide. The balustrades and handrail are of massive design and the stairs are lighted by a partly stained glass window on the half landing. There were four bedchambers on the first floor plus a bathroom. Off the back landing approached by a secondary staircase were two maids' bedrooms and on the top floor a good attic and store room. The basement contained domestic offices and cellarage, and the house also contained 'three well placed WCs.' There were stables in a paved yard and the grounds included a peach house, vinery with greenhouse and tastefully laid out pleasure lawns. The reserve price in 1901 was £3,000 and the house would have been largely the same as it was when first designed.

Since that time, Dewerstone has undergone many changes and when sold by the executors of the deceased owner in 1998 it had been sympathetically converted into seven self contained apartments. In 2004 the external appearance has changed little although the grounds are being developed to provide extra parking spaces. The reserve price when auctioned in 2000 was in excess of £400,000 (19)

Another house which Middleton designed for a very close friend, was named Bartlow. The friend and client was Major Robert Cary Barnard. Upon leaving the army he retired to Cheltenham where he lived first of all at Cambridge House, St George's Road, Bayshill, until 1868. He was of the same age as Middleton and their paths would have crossed as they established themselves in the town, both men having similar social and civic interests. Middleton was on the Council of the Ladies' College and from 1862 Barnard was a Botany Master there. (20); both were interested in archaeology and ecclesiastical architecture; both were members of the Naturalist, Geology and Archaeological Society – now the Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society; both were founder members of the Cheltenham Library: and both were members of the literary Friends in Council. Major Barnard's son wrote some forty years after his father's death, 'As a small boy I knew (Middleton) more or less, as he was a great friend of my father's and when his son grew up, I might say he was an even greater friend of my father's. He was Godfather to my brother Sedgwick.' (21) In view of this friendship which probably began as early as 1863, the year the proposals for the Cheltenham Library were first mooted, it is not surprising that Major Barnard should have approached Middleton when he decided to build a house on the higher slopes of Leckhampton Hill.

In Middleton's accounts for the house for Major Cary Barnard at Leckhampton, entries date from 1866 through to 1873. The plans are dated 1868 and the builder's costs for William Smith amounted to £1,365. (22) Additional costs for Godwin tiles,

from the factory at Pilley perhaps, and work by Boulton, Marshall and Letheren, brought the total cost to £1,840. Middleton's commission was 5% of this which he received in August 1871. A balcony above the main entrance and a conservatory were later-1872-additions. (23)

Major Barnard named the house 'Bartlow' after a Cambridgeshire village which had strong links with his family. He lived in his custom built house on Leckhampton Hill, until his death at the age of 79 in 1906. (24)

The house was set on a very commanding position, 670-760 feet above sea level, overlooking Barnard's beloved Leckhampton village. The external appearance of the house bore striking resemblance to two other brick houses by Middleton, at the Mythe in Tewkesbury and Eastholme in Wellington Square, Cheltenham. Bartlow was sold in 1916 and once again we resort to the sale particulars to provide an interesting and comprehensive description of the fifty year old house, structurally unaltered since first built. Constructed of brick with decorative bands of dark grey, it had a steep pitched tiled roof, with one large projecting gable and two smaller dormer gables. Originally the bargeboards were highly decorative and ornamental but after the sale of the house they were replaced by the new owners with rather plain ones. The upper windows had pointed trefoil headed lights and transoms and under the large gable was a two storey ashlar square bay. This housed three-light trefoil windows on the upper floor and a square three-light window below. Above the porch was the later stone balcony pierced with trefoil openings. The bay windows added £24 to the original cost of the house, and the internal stone staircase an extra £7.

The house was approached by a steep carriage drive and was screened from the main road to Birdlip by a walled terrace. Entrance to the house was gained through a massive heavy door leading into the tiled porch, with a further half glazed inner door leading into a large hall measuring thirty four feet by six feet wide. The Dining room to the left measured twenty feet by sixteen feet and had a tiled grate and hearth with marble chimneypiece. The ceiling in this room was panelled similar in design to that at Eastholme. A further door led into the serving room and cloakrooms. The Drawing room on the side of the hallway opposite the Dining room was larger in length than the Dining room by four feet, and was well lighted by mullioned windows. The chimneypiece in this room was of stone and the room again was decorated with a panelled ceiling. Folding doors allowed communication with the back Drawing room – as at Middleton's own house, Westholme - and this back room also had a stone chimneypiece. The conservatory mentioned earlier was attached to this Drawing room. Two steps down from the hall at the rear of the house were the domestic offices and there was a light cellarage under the house.

From the hall, the stone staircase with its pine balustrade led to a half landing from which access was gained to a bathroom and housemaid's pantry. The first floor contained a very spacious landing from which doors led to six or seven bedrooms of quite sizeable proportions, the master bedroom measuring nineteen feet six inches by sixteen feet. Each room had a fireplace. On the top floor there were four attic rooms.

Outhouses comprised coalhouse, woodhouse, wash house and furnace. The grounds were laid partly to lawn, with a kitchen garden and a heated greenhouse. There was also a pumping house for the supply of both spring and well water. (25)



As a result of severe subsidence the house had to be demolished in the 1960s.

Reference has been made to Eastholme, a house very similar in design to Bartlow, and situated in the northeast corner of Wellington Square just off the Cheltenham to Evesham road. Although the designs for this house are not available, it has always been accepted as being by John Middleton and appearance, design and circumstantial evidence would support this. The exact date of its construction is uncertain but the Cheltenham Borough register of new buildings contains a reference – Number 179, February 1867 – to ‘A villa in Wellington Square, builders NC & L Channon.’ (26) This is most definitely Eastholme. A land purchase deed, dated 31<sup>st</sup> October 1870 in possession of the 2001 owners makes reference to ‘No more than two dwellings will ever be built on the land, and must range in line in front with the messuage or dwelling house now erected by the said Ellen Bennett and Mary Bennett on the south side of the piece of ground firstly hereby conveyed and called Eastholme.’ (27) This house unlike any other in the Square is described rather unfairly, as being ‘as aggressively Victorian a house as one could ever hope to see.’ (28)

The house is of red brick with ashlar dressings. The front is decorated with seven rows of purple brick banding one of which forms an intricate pattern. The house is approached between the original gate columns and one reaches the pointed plank porch door with its original wrought iron furniture, via a flight of stone steps. The porch itself is laid with attractive mosaic red and black tiles. Above the main door is an arch of alternately coloured red and purple voussoirs. Above the main entrance which is to the right of centre is a single-light window and next to this a further bay with a two-light window above and a four-light window beneath. Both have cusped upper lights and coloured voussoirs above. The north garden front has a large rectangular bay. The decorative bargeboard and finials to the several gables are all original.

From the entrance porch one passes through the inner Gothic glass panelled door, into an impressive hallway with mosaic tiled floor and Gothic ceiling arch. Immediately opposite is the Gothic timber staircase leading to a half landing with mullioned window to the rear. To the right as one enters is the Dining room with Gothic mullioned windows and panelled ceiling on the ribs of which can still be seen traces of the original stencilled patterns. The room also contains a recessed buffet alcove with Gothic arch almost identical to the one Middleton designed for Westholme, and later, for Coleshill Hall in Warwickshire. The Drawing room on the opposite side of the hallway is about twenty-three feet long and twenty feet wide. It has a mullioned window to the front and a large, deep bay through a Gothic arch, overlooking the north facing garden. This room also has an attractive panelled ceiling. The rear hallway leads to the cellar which contains the original Victorian wine bins. The first floor comprises five good sized bedrooms and a bathroom. There are no outbuildings dating from the time the house was built. (29) The house was offered for sale in 2002 with a price guide of £725,000.

One house which does present the opportunity for further research is at Charlton Kings. Named Hetton Lawn, it was the subject of an article in the Charlton Kings Local History Bulletin 10/5 when it was suggested that it was added to the former Bolton House by John Middleton in 1862. The owner at the time was the Reverend

HG Liddell who ‘Lewis Carroll’ visited when in Cheltenham. The Reverend Liddell’s grand-daughter was the subject for Carroll’s ‘Alice’. It has not been possible to find conclusive evidence for Middleton’s connection with the house, but circumstances suggest that it may be his work. While Middleton was working on St John’s Church, Darlington, at the very beginning of his career, one of the subscribers to the Appeal Fund for completion of that church, was none other than the Reverend HG Liddell. They may well have renewed acquaintance when they met in Cheltenham. The present owners have an extensive file on the house but the lack of a Middleton archive for this part of his time in Cheltenham has so far made their research inconclusive.

## 27      *References Chapter XII*

### *Westholme*

- 1      See Chapter on St Mark’s Parish Church
- 2      David Verey *Building’s of England, The Vale and the Forest of Dean*.
  
- 3      Information supplied by Reverend Canon Maclean, great grandson of Mr Bruce Pryce. 1<sup>st</sup> Mortgage on property 19<sup>th</sup> August 1863 followed by later mortgages in order to finance building work.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Mortgage on Capital Messuage known as Westholme and land adjoining same for assuring aggregate sum of £2,500. 13<sup>th</sup> Jan 1882.
- 4      GA/D2970 1/20 Westholme:  
Plan dated 1866 John Middleton Architect. Approved Medland.  
We certify this is the plan referred to in the annexed contract. John Middleton; W Wingate & Son. Witness J Thomas Darby, Builder.  
(The fact that Medland ‘approved’ is probably because he was the independent assessor for the Bayshill Estate Company on whose land Westholme was to be built.)  
Another undated plan: Chamber and attic plan. Some rooms are shown with wood ceilings - landing, hall and Oriel room. Signed J Middleton, Architect.  
Another plan shows alterations for Mr Bruce Pryce and is dated 1904, Prothero and Phillott.
- 5      *Gloucestershire Echo*, 29<sup>th</sup> May 1973
- 6      John Henry Middleton is included, aged 24
- 7      GA/D2970 3/7
- 8      A letter from Westholme (impressed) addressed to Mr Bruce Pryce at 1,Fauconberg Terrace, ... Bayshill, dated September 1884, was signed ‘Yours faithfully J Middleton.’ This has kindly ..... been made available to me by The Reverend Canon Maclean. It suggests that work .....recommended by Middleton had not been completed and he had contacted Messrs Gilling to ..... enquire why this was so, and why apart from repairs the work had stopped. The letter also ..... suggested that the matter was in the hands of solicitors. Middleton mentions speaking to ..... Miss Beale, Fauconberg’s neighbour, who was willing to take £20 rent for the ‘stables’ and ..... to do all the repairs. Middleton concluded, “If you agree I’ll get the work started at once.”
- 9      *Cheltenham Examiner* 25<sup>th</sup> June 1884
- 10     *Cheltenham Examiner* 6<sup>th</sup> August 1884
- 11     Bruce Pryce’s great grandson still has in his possession a piece of paper on which Bruce ..... Pryce and his wife tried out various possible names for the house, finally settling on ..... Abbeyholme. This was the first choice of his wife. In all he had suggested 12 names, she had ... suggested 7.
- ..      *Cheltenham Looker On*, 18<sup>th</sup> April 1885, recorded the move of Bruce Pryce from ..... 1,Fauconberg Terrace to Westholme, Overton Road. The title to the property was registered ..... in his name on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1885, the £700 mortgage outstanding being paid out of ..... Middleton’s estate 16<sup>th</sup> September 1885.

.. A letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> January 1884 – misdated for January 1885, is addressed to Bruce Pryce at .....1, Fauconberg Terrace and is from the agents acting for the sale of Westholme. It invites ..... Bruce Pryce to meet them at Westholme ‘on Wednesday at 11 am to arrange valuation of the .... fittings etc.

12 *Cheltenham Looker On* 15<sup>th</sup> May 1909

13 During Bruce Pryce’s time this was the favourite room in the house. Canon Maclean, his ..... great grandson recalls that the statues and iconography in this room and in the rest of the ..... house had been inspired by Arthurian Legend.

14 The late Nigel Temple informed me that the mirror in fact hid an exterior window and that .....when the gadget at the side of the fireplace was activated, the mirror ascended to the floor ..... above, where it covered the upper floor chimney breast in the same way. This novelty ..... probably disappeared when the extension was built.

### ***Dewerstone***

15 Morgan: *Cheltenham College*.

16 In November 1871, Keynshambury was up for auction, ‘formerly in the occupation of Rev .....TA Southwood, and used by him as a College Boarding House.’ This may suggest that he ..... continued to own the house until 1871, which is the date on the rear of Dewerstone. However ..... ‘formerly’ may just suggest ‘at one time’.

17 Middleton it will be remembered had only just completed the new Junior College wing so his ... work would have been familiar to Southwood. From the *Cheltenham Examiner* 30<sup>th</sup> July ..... 1879 we learn that Southwood obviously had a reputation for being somewhat of an ..... authority on architecture. His obituary in the *Examiner* refers to this interest as follows: In all .....public matters connected with the school buildings it was to Mr Southwood’s advice and ..... assistance that the Council took themselves. He was the presiding spirit of gymnasiums, and ..... workshops and baths; of College boarding houses, of racquets and of fives courts.

18 Sale particulars at GA 1901, when the reserve auction price was £3,000.

19 Sale particulars in possession of the author. The author knew the owner well during the .....1990s and she was adamant that Middleton was the architect. Brooks says it *might* be WH ..... Knight and in view of Knight’s work on the College Boarding Houses and the workshops in ..... Thirlestaine Road, this must remain a possibility.

### ***Bartlow***

20 *Cheltenham Looker On* 1862. On Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October, Bye Classes Open at the Ladies .. .... College, for adult education and non-full-time girls. One class offered was botany with Major ..... Barnard.

21 *Ninety Years Past* op cit.

22 GA/ D2970 3/7 & 3/9 House for Major Barnard, 1868 - 1869 £1,365 plus extras.

23 The Barnards were in occupation by 1869 *Cheltenham Looker On* 18<sup>th</sup> December 1869. .... ‘Bartlow, Leckhampton Hill. Major Barnard will have vacancies for pupils after Christmas. .... Terms for day boys include conveyance up the Hill as well as partial board.’

24 *Cheltenham Looker On* 29<sup>th</sup> December 1906, where he is described as a liberal .....nonconformist.

25 GA/ D4858 2/3 1

### ***Eastholme***

26 GA/ CBR C/5/6/1/1/1.

27 Census 1871. Eastholme:

Eleanor Bennett Head 54 Unmarried born Ireland Interest on investment

Mary Bennetts Sister 45 Unmarried born Ireland Interest on Investment.

There were also three servants.

28 Blake, *Cheltenham Companion*

29 Sale Particulars in possession of author, 2002.

## CHAPTER XIII

*The Forest of Dean; Clearwell Church, mortuary chapel, hospital, and castle; Coleford.*

The vast amount of work which Middleton accepted in Gloucestershire was not confined to Cheltenham and its immediate neighbourhood, although that is the area with which his name is most readily associated. However, with one exception, the rest of his Gloucestershire work is concentrated on two other centres –Tewkesbury and Newent. The one exception is Clearwell, in the Forest of Dean where he carried out several commissions soon after completing St Mark's, Cheltenham, and while still working on All Saints.

Clearwell is a village and tithing formed in 1856 into an ecclesiastical parish from the civil parish of Newland in the Forest of Dean. The story of Middleton's work at Clearwell is slightly confusing in that he was responsible for two churches in the village, or rather, one parish church and a mortuary chapel. He built a cottage hospital, a village well, restored the c1300 village cross and made additions to the village school. He was also responsible for modest external additions to Clearwell Court/Castle and quite extensive internal alterations to fixtures and furnishings. All of this work was done at the invitation of the owner of the Court, Caroline, Dowager Countess Dunraven whose diaries suggest that Middleton was a personal friend as well as a professional architect. (1)

Clearwell Court or Castle as it was also known, dates from c1730, replacing an earlier Elizabethan house. It had been inherited by Thomas Wyndham of Dunraven Castle, Glamorgan. and on his death the estate passed to his son and then to his grand daughter Caroline. Caroline married in 1810, the Honourable Windham Henry Quin and in 1815, they assumed the surname Wyndham in addition to and before that of Quin. Windham Henry's father was given an Earldom in 1822 just before his death and he took his title from his daughter-in-law's family seat, Dunraven in the county of Glamorgan. On the death of his father in 1824, Windham Henry became Earl of Dunraven and Mount-Earl, Viscount Mount-Earl of County Limerick, Viscount Adare and Baron Adare of Adare of County Limerick, in the peerage of Ireland and a baronet of Great Britain, Most of their married life was happily spent restoring Adare Manor in County Limerick, where Windham Henry Wyndham-Quin, the second Earl Dunraven and Mount-Earl died in 1850. His widow Caroline thus became Countess Dowager of Dunraven and Mount-Earl. Five years later, their daughter Anna Maria Charlotte died in County Limerick and after forty years of happily married life in Ireland, the Dowager Countess decided to return to the place of her birth, Clearwell Court in the Forest of Dean. There she lived from about 1857 until her death in 1870. (2)

Caroline was described by a contemporary as being 'virtuous, bountiful and a supplier of many requisites tending to the welfare of the population.' This included in 1858, the village school for which she donated the site and half of the building costs. A parsonage house was also part of her gift to the village. (3)

Up to 1866 the thirty-year old church at Clearwell stood at the Coleford entrance to the village where the present mortuary chapel now stands (4) It served as a chapel of

ease to Newland and was surrounded by a cemetery. In 1863, the Dowager Countess recorded in her diary that she had spent a whole evening with Mr Middleton discussing her plans for a new church at Clearwell. Similar discussions continued throughout the following years with Middleton's name frequently appearing on the pages of her diary. His visits often included an overnight stay with visits to the site for the new church - or hospital, Castle Lodges, school or well, - on the following day. "Busy with Mr Middleton all day, (1864); went with Mr Middleton to both Lodges and the village, (1866); Mr Middleton came and I went about with him a great deal; went about with Mr Middleton and was very pleased with all he had done." (1868) Although the diaries do not give details about what was discussed, the Countess' interest and input are quite evident. She had petitioned for the demolition of the previously mentioned chapel-of-ease at Clearwell and for the rights to be transferred to the new church to be named after St Peter, and for the parish to be declared a Vicarage. This petition was granted on June 29<sup>th</sup> 1866 and the Countess was appointed Patron. (5) The new parish church was built on a site in the centre of the village nearer to the school and the castle and in September of that year a Faculty was granted to demolish the old chapel-of-ease and for it to be replaced by a new mortuary chapel.

The parish church, St Peter's, is built of local red sandstone with white Bath stone dressings very much in the French Gothic style of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. (6) It is largely unaltered since the day it was consecrated on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1866 and like its Cheltenham contemporary St Mark, this church was completed with tower and spire. (7) The tower is in three stages, the belfry having four two-light windows both deeply moulded. The broached spire stretches 120 feet heavenwards from an enriched cornice.

One enters the church through a wooden porch with heavy framing and very decorative barge boards. Similar boards are a distinctive feature on the gables of many of Middleton's domestic buildings. From this porch, one finds oneself in the south aisle and cannot but be impressed by the four bay arcades on either side of the nave, supported on piers of blue and white stone bands with moulded bases and richly foliated capitals. The division of each bay above the arcades is marked by a corbel with an angel supporting a marble shaft with again, a foliated capital. This in turn supports one of the principal trusses of the roof. Above the nave arches is a clerestory of rose windows fitted with delicate tracery. The nave and aisle roofs are of open timbers. Beneath the tower which opens into the south aisle, is the baptistry. The font is of Caen stone on a shaft of polished red granite and around the top of the shaft and the base of the bowl there is a deeply carved cluster of water lilies.

As one moves up the centre aisle one is aware of the moulded archway leading into the chancel, springing from a level lower than that of the nave arcades and supported by carved corbels with clustered marble shafts and richly foliated capitals. Above the arch are two medallions bearing a symbol Alpha or Omega, in between which is a richly carved foliated cross with passion flower terminations to the four extremities. (8) The walls are decorated with bands of blue Forest stone which are enriched with incised running patterns and foliations filled in with various coloured cements. The reredos is richly ornamented and was carved by John Roddis of Birmingham. (9) It consists of three panels with red and green marble shafts with enriched arches and gables which contain inlaid marble crosses. The centre one is surmounted by a cross

foliated with passion flowers. The piscina and sedilia match the decoration of the reredos.

On the north side, the archway leads to the organ chamber. The original organ was moved to the church from Clearwell Court in 1869 the whole project being under the supervision of Middleton. At the same time, the Dowager Countess was invoiced for the bell frame, bells and clock at a cost of £280. (10) In her diary for 1869 she wrote that she had attended the church at Clearwell where the organ was played for the first time. The painting and decorating of the nave, aisles and organ chamber added another £120 to the costs. The four-light east window was given by the Dowager Countess in memory of her son, Windham-Henry Wyndham Quin, who died in October 1865 (11) The reredos is likewise to his memory and was given by his widow, Caroline who was the sister of Gwinnett Tyler of Mount Gernos, for whom Middleton was to complete work between 1869 and 1877. (12) All the Chancel windows are enriched with ball flower carving in their arches. The chancel ceiling is panelled with moulded ribs, decorated in gold and colour. All the pews are open and those in the choir together with the clergy stalls are richly carved oak. The pews throughout the church retain their brass armed candle light standards.

In the arches and throughout the interior Middleton took full advantage of local materials – blue and red Forest stone and white Bath stone. These can best be seen in the polychrome decoration of the nave arches, the sedilia and the credence. Marble was also used to enhance the appearance of the interior. Examples from Derbyshire can be seen in the nave, and Irish and Italian marbles mixed with serpentine are to be found in the chancel. The contractor for the work was Wingate and Son of Gloucester and apart from Roddis' carving of the reredos, Boulton, then of Worcester, was responsible for the ornamental stonework. (13).

The church is a unique memorial to Middleton's architectural vision, in that it has remained undisturbed by succeeding generations and is very much as Middleton left it - a work of beauty indeed. But his work was not confined to the church itself, as has already been intimated. While the church was under construction Middleton was asked to restore the Village Cross of fourteenth century vintage. The steps and shrine are original, the shrine once having a niche sheltering a figure on each of its four sides. It is built of grey Forest stone and on the top of the pedestal is a block of squared masonry into which had been inserted the base of the shaft put there as a substitute for the original in the distant past. An additional piece had been added to it surmounted by a cock with bright red comb and wattles, some time before the Countess came to Clearwell. (14) The Countess had this monstrosity removed and at her own expense commissioned Middleton to restore the Cross to the style more in keeping with its original date.

'It is gratifying to find that the architect fearing to carry the work of restoration too far, has most wisely contented himself with doing as little as possible to the structure itself, thus preserving unaltered the original character of the work. The only parts that have been touched are one of the angle shafts which was much decayed and has been remodelled out of Yarworth's monolith for which purpose the stone was well suited, and the piece of the old shaft which has been carefully copied and lengthened and ornamented with a simple but elegant floriated cross as a finial, restored to the design of John Middleton Esq., Architect. The height from ground to the top is 20 feet.' (15)

In close proximity to the old cross the Countess commissioned Middleton to design a very picturesque shelter over one of the many springs which served the inhabitants of the village but which was open to pollution and ‘accidental defilement’. The attractive little building was ornamented with a bold Gothic arch and fitted with a substantial basin through which the stream’s pure, clear water could flow. This spring bears the title, St Anne’s Well. (16)

With the completion of St Peter’s, the site of the former chapel-of-ease only a matter of yards away, was retained as the village cemetery. The chapel-of-ease was demolished, and the Countess commissioned Middleton to design a Mortuary Chapel to replace it. This was completed in the style of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, by 1867 and it contains a fine rose window over the East door and a small bellcote. Also of red stone, the chapel is in a poor state of repair and for some years there has been talk of demolishing it, but this would be a great loss as it is an integral part of the closest we can come to a ‘Middleton village.’

The work done so far, church, mortuary chapel and restoration of the Village Cross, obviously met with the Countess’ approval and in 1868 Middleton was approached to design a hospital for the village. The Countess wrote in her diary that she went with Mr Middleton and Mr Parry to look at site for the hospital, and they found one that they thought would be perfect. The chosen site was on high ground near to and overlooking both church and Court. Middleton spent the following weekend making arrangements with the Countess and between October 1868 and December 1869 he made at least twenty-five visits all listed in his cash book at 17/6 a time. (17) By October 1869 plans and specifications had been prepared and work was well under way. William Beach was engaged as contractor and Letheren and Marshall of Cheltenham were given the contract for the ironwork and heating. (18) The work itself cost £535 and together with the designs and drawings, the personal superintendence of Middleton and the copying of the specifications, the total cost amounted to £713. The hospital is similar in design to the one built at Tewkesbury and is now a private home. It has been added to, but it has not been drastically altered internally. There is some doubt as to whether it was ever used for the purpose for which it was built – the hospital was completed in 1869 and the Countess died in May 1870.

During the time that the Countess lived with her husband in Ireland – a period of forty years – Clearwell Court had suffered as a result of neglect. Upon her return she set to work immediately to make the family seat habitable, using local labour and resources to that effect. (19): She then engaged Middleton to undertake extensive works of restoration, additions decoration and furnishing. His Ledgers give some indication of the range of work for which he was engaged:

To Hyetts contract and 16 visits to Clearwell. Design, working drawings, specifications and superintendence for the erection of the additional rooms at Clearwell Court;	£393 at 5%	£19.13.0
To design, drawings and superintendence of conservatory	£623 at 5%	£31.03.0
To superintendence, erection etc of new beams over drawing room, and repairing floor beams throughout Clearwell Court (examined Aug 1869)		£26.05.0
Superintendence of decoration of dining room, entrance hall, staircase, Wyndham bedroom and dressing room	£337.01.09 at 10%	£33.14.0
General repairs, plans etc	£1377 at 5%	£68.17.0

Plans and repairs	£04.04.0
Designs for furniture for dining room entrance hall, bedrooms etc	£15.15.0
6 contracts for minor works	£12.12.0
Travel and postage	£39.18.6
Removal of organ from Clearwell Court to Church	£05.05.0
Account paid by cheque October 8 <sup>th</sup> 1870.	
and	
July 1869 Expenses to London for Lady Dunraven	3.6
November 1869 as above for glass (20)	£02.10.0

The conservatory referred to was added to the Court between the two castellated wings and bore striking similarity to those on photographs of her husband's ancestral home in County Adare. This would appear to be Middleton's only significant external addition although the Countess' diary does record visits with Mr Middleton to the lodges but does not say for what purpose. The sale particulars of 1908 (21) gives a more descriptive picture of his work and suggest a considerable contribution made by his son, John Henry:

'Entrance Hall with open fireplaces, richly carved chimney piece deeply cut with emblems of the chase; Drawing room with finely carved fire place and coffered ceiling; Dining room ornamental fireplace and decorated ceiling. All the chimney pieces and coffered decorated ceilings were designed by the late JH Middleton, the well known architect.' (22) This reference to JH Middleton is one of few found in the Middleton archive to which actual contracts can be matched, but the work at Clearwell, especially in the design of chimney pieces ties in exactly with later work he designed for exhibition and which was crafted for him by the Cheltenham firm of Martyn and Emms. On the other hand this may be an error on the part of the auctioneers who had memories of JH Middleton as he had died only ten years previously, and his name would have been still fresh in their minds. (23)

Sadly the Dowager Countess did not live to enjoy the many contributions she had made to the village, a village she so obviously loved, and to the Court which was very much her home. From about 1867 her health had been a cause for concern and in March 1870 she had two serious attacks of paralysis from which she did not recover. She died in the house of her birth on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May 1870 at 11 o'clock in the evening. The following Monday her body was taken by road to Lydney, escorted by many tradesmen from Clearwell and Coleford. From Lydney it was conveyed to Ireland and after lying in state for a period of two days in her favourite room in Adare Manor, she was buried alongside her late husband in the family vault of the Quins in Adare parish church.

Since the Countess' time, Clearwell Court has undergone many changes both intended and accidental. In 1929 it was gutted by fire and much of the interior decoration was destroyed. In 1948 it was vandalised by the owner at the time who removed much of the stone and lead roofing. It is encouraging to know that it has been extensively restored and now functions as an hotel with conference facilities.

Another project in the Forest of Dean for which Middleton submitted designs was for a new church at Coleford, only a short distance from Clearwell. In 1869 he was engaged to draw plans of the existing church in the town and to carry out a thorough



inspection of the building. Many repairs and alterations were recommended and it was presumably decided to explore the possibility of building of a new church (24) Working drawings, specifications and the invitation of tenders for this proposal at a cost of £6,558 were put in hand and Middleton was still involved with the project as late as 1871 One must assume that the money was just not available at the time, or that Middleton's plans were too ambitious. (25) The new Church of St John was eventually built in 1880 to the designs of the diocesan architect FS Waller.

### **References, Chapter XIII**

- 1        Micrifilm of the diaries at PRONI. D/3/96/E, Mic/640/5
- 2        *Landed Gentry of GB & NI* and *Gloucester Chronicle* 4th June 1870 p3.
- 3        Nicholls: The original school was built by and to the design of Mr Henry Spring of Painswick .....but his plans were later amended by the Government Architect. John Middleton added another .....schoolroom opened by the Countess in 1867 and he surveyed the school and carried out repairs .....in 1869. GA D2970 3/1.
- 4        GA P88 CW/3/1
- 5        *ibid* P88 IN/3/6 and IN 3/1
- 6        Dixon and Methuseus
- 7        *The Builder* 7<sup>th</sup> April 1866. Also *The Church Builder* Vol 20:Consecrated 5th April, 1866, ..... erected at the sole cost of the Countess Dowager of Dunraven. The architect was Mr John ..... Middleton.
- 8        Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet: 'The beginning and the end.'
- 9        Roddis of Birmingham did much work for Middleton – in particular at Holy Apostles, Charlton Kings.
- 10       GA D2970 3/1 and *Victoria County History*. The organ came originally from the family home in County Adare in 1866. Also diaries of the Countess *op cit*.
- 11       Captain in Grenadier Guards born 2.11.1829. Married 1856, Caroline, third daughter of Sir George Tyler of Glamorgan.
- 12       See Chapter XX The name Parry frequently appears in the diaries, often in company with Middleton. Parry was the name of the in laws of Gwinnett Tyler into whose family the Countess daughter had married. However it could also refer to Thomas Gambier Parry of Highnam Court, near Gloucester. The Countess refers to her mother's friendship with that family and visits to Highnam.
- 13       Brasswork by Hart of London; Ironwork by Cornell of Tivoli, Cheltenham; Gates by Marshall of Cheltenham
- 14       Cooke, Arthur, quoting Charles Pooley writing in 1868.
- 15       Pooley. Yarworth was the restorer of the cross who erected the cock, plume and wattles.
- 16       *Gloucester Chronicle* June 4<sup>th</sup> 1870 p3. The 1867 diary records a visit to the well.
- 17       GA D2970 2/2 and D2970 3/9 No 3.
- 18       *ibid* D2970 3/9 and 3/1
- 19       *ibid* D2970 3/1 and *Gloucester Chronicle* June 4th 1870 p3
- 20       *ibid* D2970 2/2 & D2970 3/9 No 7 'Sundries to Lady Dunraven' mainly for greenhouse expenses.
- 21       GA Sale Particulars in Bruton Knowles archive 1908
- 22       Kingsley, Vol II pp104-105: 'Middleton provided a set of superb classical chimney pieces and .. ..... Palladian style compartmented ceilings, modelled on those in James Gibbs' *Book of Architecture*, published in 1728.These (chimney pieces) seem to have been removed after the .....1981 restoration.'
- 23...    JH Middleton's life and career is covered in chapter XXII. A similar situation in which his .....name is quoted instead of that of his father was for the design of the original buildings which .....were the beginnings of Cheltenham's Delancey Hospital.
24.       GA D2970 3/1: 1870 Working drawings, specifications, obtaining tenders for the erection of .....the new church. £6558 @ 3% £196.14.0
25.       GA D2970 1/38 Seven drawings show an elegant church structurally in the style of All .....Saints in Cheltenham, with features later used in St Stephen's Cheltenham, (West end) .....and ChristChurch, Cheltenham, (the apse by JH Middleton.).

## CHAPTER XIV

*Newent: Stardens, St Mary's Church. Oxenhall, St Anne's Church. Dymock, St Mary's Church. Kempley Church and Vicarage. Bromsberrow School.*

It was suggested in the previous chapter that much of Middleton's local work was clustered, that is concentrated within specific areas of the county. Sometimes this was work for one client, as at Clearwell, and sometimes it developed no doubt, because of personal recommendation. The two main areas outside of Cheltenham and Clearwell, on which his work is centred are Newent and Tewkesbury. In both cases ecclesiastical as well as public and domestic work was undertaken.

Newent is a small town only a few miles north west of Gloucester. It has a fine 14<sup>th</sup> century church and a 17<sup>th</sup> century market hall. One of the most well known early families connected with Newent was that by the name of Wintour. The Wintours were ardent Royalists and Sir John Wintour owned an extensive estate in the town and a house named Stardens. (1) The estate and Stardens together with manorial rights passed from the Wintours into the Foley family. Archdeacon AA Onslow who was Vicar of Newent from 1850 until 1864 had married into the Foley family and thus acquired a considerable amount of property in the area. (2) Upon the death of the Archdeacon, his son Richard Foley Onslow inherited the estate and became local Squire and Lord of the Manor. He was a typical Victorian Squire, riding to hounds and with a definite awareness of his position in society. He was also a man who spent freely, hoping that he would make a vast fortune out of the coal and iron deposits on his inherited property. (3)

Archdeacon Onslow lived near to the Parish Church but on his death, his son Richard decided to make Stardens his country seat. It was not an architecturally remarkable house, consisting of three storeys, a high-pitched roof and three bays. A painting of the house by one of the family in 1840 is reproduced in Douglas' 'Historical Notes On Newent' and it is interesting to compare this with the house after Middleton's alterations and additions. (4)

Middleton was consulted in 1863-1864 and his plan is signed and dated J Middleton 1864. (5) His brief had been to convert the estate house into a Gothic style mansion through alterations and enlargement. Included in the contract was provision for stables, a coach house, offices and servants' quarters at the rear. All of this added considerably to the cost and must have contributed heavily towards Richard Onslow's eventual financial difficulties. The result of Middleton's design is basically the original house with two large new wings in Gothic style, one either side, forming an irregular H-plan. The south elevation gives the best view of the original house with all its windows altered to Gothic and a projecting gable bay on each side, indicating the extent of the additions and alterations. The west bay has an impressive triangular oriel centrally situated in the wall under a cusped circular window. The east wing is even more impressive both on account of its proportions and also the single storey square bay with very elaborate stone tracery and heraldic animals on the upper corners. The east elevation of this eastern wing comprises a gable which buttresses a tower of three

storeys. The tower contains the main entrance porch and to the right, a slightly recessed two bay, two-storey continuation.

Richard Foley Onslow nearly bankrupted himself in creating this Gothic mansion and when he died at Stardens in March 1879, his personal estate was valued at under £14,000 (6) His son, Andrew succeeded him, but he chose not to live at Stardens and leased the property. The family managed to keep the estate going until 1910 when it was put up for auction on the death of Captain Andrew Onslow.

The sale particulars at the time, prepared in 1910, give some idea of the internal proportions and decorations which Middleton provided. (7)

The entrance hall which one enters via the tower porch, had a large stone fireplace with hipped top and foliate capitals. The one in the room immediately on the right had marble columns and castellated top. This room was the dining room and had a panelled ceiling with timbers on carved stone corbels, an oak floor and a service room leading off. The drawing room which had the magnificent south facing square bay, measured 28 feet by 17 feet, the bay itself measuring 9 feet by 5 feet. The ceiling in this room was also panelled with a rich and ornate cornice.

A moulded stone arch from the entrance hall led to the staircase hall and the morning room. This too had a wooden panelled ceiling, parquet floor and a traceried mullioned window. The height of all the ground floor rooms was 11 feet six inches from floor to ceiling. The principal staircase was five feet wide and the first landing window was coloured with armorial painted glass. The ceiling above the landings was boarded and divided into arched panels. On the first floor there was a large boudoir, two dressing rooms, two bathrooms, day and night nurseries, box room, work and storerooms, two WCs and a housemaid's closet. On the second floor there were a further ten bedrooms. The grounds contained all the stables, horse boxes and coach house previously referred to.

Since the sale in 1913, the house has changed hands several times and in more recent years been used as a Nightclub, and a Country Club. In 2000 it was converted into private apartments.

Further domestic work was completed by Middleton in Newent on a property named Newent Court or New Court which had been built circa 1810. (8) Middleton was engaged by a later owner, in 1882-1884 to make alterations to the mansion which stood in extensive grounds. His work amounted to an enlargement of the service block and the extension of the large bow window in the dining room, so that it extended to the full height of the house. (9) The original house contained twenty-one bedrooms, four reception rooms a billiard room and all the usual offices, but was demolished about 1970. (10)

Towards the end of his career, Middleton was consulted about restoration work on the Church of St Mary the Virgin at Newent. It is a large church which has been much altered and repaired over the centuries. The church retains its fourteenth century tower although the nave dates from 1675 when it was rebuilt after the collapse of its predecessor a year earlier. During the early part of the eighteenth century, the emphasis in public worship was firmly placed on the pulpit. This stood against the

north wall and the high square pews were so arranged that everyone faced the pulpit. There was a gallery along the south wall above the doorway into the tower, another between the windows at the west end, and a third long one across the chancel and Lady Chapel. Major alterations were completed at the beginning of the nineteenth century when the south and west galleries were replaced by one continuous gallery around the west and south walls of the nave, and in 1865 the gallery across the chancel and lady Chapel was removed completely. In 1878 Gilbert Scott was invited to submit plans for the church's restoration (11) The Diocesan architect, FS Waller, submitted further plans following a diocesan survey in 1879, which recommended the removal of the roof of the chancel and the whitewash on the walls 'all of which produce a monotonous and cheerless effect which is so striking on entering the church' (12) Waller suggested panelling the roof of the chancel, cleaning and repair of the tower – 'a very unsatisfactory and dirty condition' – inserting a new arch in the east wall of the Nave and opening a doorway, with window above, in the west wall

Whether Waller completed the chancel ceiling and West end alterations, and then money ran out, it is not certain, but Middleton was invited to survey the church in 1880 (13) and at the same time, he drew up plans for the 'Onslow Window' at the east end. For these two contracts he received fees of £51 10.0 and £12.11.0 respectively. The east window had fallen out in 1751 and had not been reglazed, the opening being merely bricked up. It remained so until 1880 – 1881, when the present reticulated Gothic window was commissioned by the children of Richard Foley Onslow in his memory, and also in memory of their grandfather, Archdeacon AA Onslow.

Middleton then undertook extensive restoration of the church which was completed in 1884 and took only a few months. The re-opening was celebrated on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December 1884 and cost a total of £1200. (14) The main work involved removing all the plaster from the interior walls which were left rough, 'securing a handsome and appropriate appearance similar to that seen at Dymock, Hartpury and Standish.' (15) Verey in 1965 challenged this by describing the walls as 'horribly scraped of all plaster probably by John Middleton, who had an exaggerated feeling for texture.' The report of the opening also informed its readers that the old oak seats were made uniform and the doors removed. (16). Scott had earlier suggested their complete removal and replacement with new ones. The plaster ceiling in the nave was replaced by one of panelled wood perhaps to complement Waller's chancel ceiling, and the old chapel in the south aisle was 'thoroughly restored, all three architectural styles being maintained, in this work of entire conservation.' (17). The report of the opening heaped unashamed praise on 'Mr Middleton, FRIBA of Cheltenham who deserves credit for the way in which he has restored the church without destroying its special characteristics,' - a sharp contrast to Verey's criticism.

Kelly's Directory for 1896 added that the nave ceiling had been enriched and restored with wood from the existing oak beams and boarding, and that during the restoration an ancient piscina was discovered in a wall in the old chapel. (18)

About two miles from Newent is the parish of Oxenhall. There was a church in the village by the 14<sup>th</sup> century but this was probably rebuilt in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. However the embattled tower and Norman tympanum over the main door were retained (19) but the latter disappeared during Middleton's work in the 1860s. (20) Internally there had

been a west end gallery erected in 1743 and the pulpit is dated 1632. The manorial rights of Oxenhall had passed – as at Newent – through the Foley family to the Onslows and it is due in no small measure to Richard Foley Onslow of Stardens, that major restoration, was achieved. The chief benefactor was Onslow himself, to the tune of £225. Wall memorials in the nave show the link with Richard Foley Onslow and his wife Catherine, and with George Onslow.

It was realised as early as 1861 that major work was necessary on the church but it was not until 1865 that a Vestry Meeting proposed raising a parish rate for making urgent repairs to the tower and spire, and for rebuilding the nave and chancel as soon as sufficient funds became available. Plans were prepared by Middleton (21) and as a result of a proposal passed at the Vestry Meeting, forwarded by Mr Richard Foley Onslow and seconded by Major George Tennant, Mr John Middleton was requested to undertake all the necessary arrangements.

The church was in a dreadful state of repair and the Faculty referred to ‘the walls considerably out of perpendicular, the window of the most common description, the objectionable gallery and the whole building in an unsatisfactory state.’ The Faculty was granted in March 1866, and work was able to proceed according to the plans submitted by Mr Middleton. (22) Work on the tower was addressed first of all. The contractors engaged for this work were Mr Daniel Spring and Son of Painswick. Middleton made use of local stone right on the church’s doorstep quarrying it to the east of the church where the car park is now situated. His restoration amounted in effect to a total rebuilding. As with St Peter’s, Leckhampton, the whole church apart from the tower and spire was demolished with little of the original church remaining. The present church is a few feet larger than the original (23) and is in the Early English Decorated style, so loved by Middleton.

Middleton’s church is built almost entirely of red sandstone with Painswick stone dressings and a tiled roof. It stands prominently on raised ground with a west buttressed tower, a south porch and north-east vestry. The porch is gabled on a stone base, with open timber work and carved barge boards. The buttresses indicate a four bay nave and two bay chancel. Internally the roof is supported by corbels with rich carvings of leaves, flowers, fruit and birds. The chancel arch is moulded with alternate red and two white voussoirs on polished black marble shafts with deep cut foliated capitals. These are supported on corbels of finely sculptured angels of Caen stone. The east window is in memory of Catherine, wife of Richard Foley Onslow. She died suddenly in 1866. The fine tracery was carved by John Roddis of Birmingham. (24)

The chancel roof is barrel vaulted and panelled with deal. It too is supported by angels, each holding musical instruments – as at Coberley – and the stone reredos, again carved by Roddis, is of diapered arcading rising to the level of the shelf under the east window. (25) The sanctuary wall carries a dado of vine leaf mouldings and all the stone carving apart from that worked by Roddis, was completed under the supervision of RL Boulton of Worcester, but some Italian workmen were also employed. (26) Middleton replaced the old, high-backed pews with the present deal ones.

Consecration by the Bishop of Gloucester took place on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1867 although further work was continued as funding became available. This included the addition

of the porch and the carving in the chancel. Middleton was church architect up to the year 1878 and invoices for internal carving and the new altar rails were delivered in that year.

An amusing appraisal of Middleton's superintendence of the work has been made by a twenty-first century churchwarden. The door from the chancel to the vestry is fixed on rising hinges. There is a clearance of several inches above the door and a lever or crowbar placed underneath the door easily lifted it from its hinges, the latch type handle allowing easy access to the vestry even when the door was locked from the inside. Happily this oversight has been rectified. (27)

The Lychgate is also by Middleton and completed as part of his contract. The front design facing the road is repeated on the side facing the church. It is constructed on squared coursed sandstone with white ashlar dressings. It has a cantilevered hipped roof with moulded risings off corbels. There is a simple cross on a square base on the apex.

This is a very effective and attractive rebuilding of an ancient church with some beautiful internal decoration. However yet again, as at Charlton Kings, Middleton seems to have been ruthless in his destruction and discarding of ancient craftsmanship. The Norman stone tympanum mentioned above was not re-used in the restored church and its whereabouts are not known.

In the same part of the county of Gloucestershire is Dymock, on the road from Gloucester to Hereford. The ancient parish church of St Mary consists of chancel, large nave, north and south transepts, south porch and embattled western tower with spire. The church has undergone many major restorations, the 1850s, 1870s and 1880s being the most significant. Middleton's contributions, more functional than aesthetic, were part of the 1870s programme. It would appear from the Faculty issued for the work to be carried out, that there had been concern as early as 1861 over the defective state of the flooring of the nave and transepts and the seriously deteriorating condition of the pews. (28) It was not until a Parish meeting was called in 1869 that a restoration committee was appointed and the decision made to apply for a Faculty to refloor and reseat the entire church in accordance with the plans prepared by Mr Middleton. Middleton was present at this meeting and produced the plans for approval. The work included covering any graves which might be found inside the church, or any which it was considered necessary to disturb in levelling the nave floor. It was agreed, should such an eventuality present itself, to disinter any bodies and rebury them as near as possible to their original resting place. Any gravestones or slabs disturbed, during this work, would be removed and re-sited.

The actual 1869 estimates presented by Middleton and Goodman for this contract were as follows (29):

Taking up floor, levelling, lowering soil, cutting and relaying new floor,	£260
New seating and sundries	£290
Heating and additional seats	£130

with a £20 allowance for reusable materials (30) The estimate was based on a survey made in May 1869 and summarised in a letter dated 31<sup>st</sup> May:

Gentlemen,

As requested we have examined the church at Dymock. The roof is sound and the outer covering in good repair. The ceiling is sound and the walls in very good repair. Some old windows require slight restoration and we suggest you remove two modern windows that now disfigure the north aisle and replace them with others more suited.

On entering we were struck by a damp unwholesome smell. The walls of the aisles and chancel which are of brick and stone were saturated with moisture. They rest on wet soil which are (sic) not even bedded on sand. The boarded floors under the pews are not very good, the joists rest on the soil and the boards are therefore in contact with damp earth and the joists and boards are decaying. There are many vaults under the floors and many are imperfectly arched or covered over, emitting gases more dangerous than the damp smell.

We suggest the floors to be taken up, soil to nine inches deep to be removed, the arches to the vaults to be examined and then concrete to nine inches to be spread over, on which the sleeper walls be built to carry new floors one foot higher than the present level. Airbricks will be inserted to allow for airflow.

The cost of this including the fixing of old pews will be as in the accompanying estimate. Whether you allow the old pews to disfigure your beautiful church, you will need to consider. Therefore we have prepared a plan for reseating the church, and doing away with the unsightly gallery – but this is only a suggestion and may be modified as wished.

We have the honour to remain, gentlemen, Yours obediently, Middleton and Goodman.

This detailed, alarming, and challenging survey, is obviously the work referred to in the Faculty, but there followed a ‘Memoranda of work to be done in the chancel.’

The work suggested a five inch step up to the chancel and a similar one to the altar rail; soil to be excavated to one foot nine inches below the chancel floor level and the whole to be relaid with concrete to nine inches deep. The chancel would then be laid with flagging resting on sleeper walls of rubble, one inch lower than the level of the steps so as to be able to receive tiling. Brick passages would be prepared under the flagging for hot water pipes, opening into the church through perforated iron gratings. The plaster would be made good up to one foot above the present pews. The stalls would have pitch pine framing with white deal panelling, and ebony columns. They would rest on a boarded floor with four coats of varnish.

Collins and Collins of Tewkesbury tendered for the contract and offered to complete the work ‘exactly according to Mr Middleton’s plans.’ (31)

An additional tender in May 1870 for inserting a new window according to the design of Middleton and Goodman amounted to £41. In August, 'for Mr Raikes, Churchwarden,' they tendered for the work to be completed according to Mr Middleton's plans, 'to strip plaster and colour from all walls except the chancel and arch, and repoint with dark mortar for £49.' Further work was tendered for in December which consisted of removing the gallery and repointing the exposed walls where necessary. The work advanced well into 1871 when Middleton's fees and Collins' very detailed invoice were paid in full. (32) As with most of Middleton's contracts, he made a personal donation towards the Appeal fund.

The work was planned to take just twelve months during which time the Bishop authorised services to be held in the school – apart from marriages. The Incumbent, the Reverend Newbolt, took the first schoolroom service in November 1870, but by December the church was considered sufficiently ready for use again although the work was far from complete. The incumbent was not entirely happy with the way things were going and wrote in his diary, 'The church is undoubtedly over-seated for the congregation. It is very badly heated and the windows added considerably to the cold. This caused complaints.' (33) Concerning the gallery, he wrote for January 12<sup>th</sup>, 'Demolition has begun, a man in the village has offered to take it down for nothing.' This saved the £10 itemised in the tender and obviously removed the 'unsightly gallery' referred to by Middleton.

Undoubtedly funds were not immediately available to do all the work in one fell swoop. Middleton's accounts indicate how the work was phased, with an additional £235 for the erection of a vestry and organ chamber in 1873 (34) Further work was undertaken, not by Middleton, in the late 1870s – 1880, when FS Waller and Son, Diocesan architect, completed work very soon after Middleton's work had been finished. Perhaps the incumbent expressed dissatisfaction with what Middleton had done. In August 1879 Waller's survey remarked in exactly the same terms used for Newent, on the monotonous and cheerless building, with chancel ceiling and walls all whitewashed. (35). He recommended the plastering of the chancel be removed – in complete contrast to Middleton's suggestion of 1870, and that the chancel and transept ceilings be panelled. Oak choir stalls were also provided for the chancel, the total cost of the work being £620. (36)

Dymock is not one of Middleton's more aesthetically pleasing restorations but it did address the physical needs of the congregation at a time when these were often neglected.

Only a mile or so from Dymock is the village of Kempley where Middleton and his son John Henry were involved in work which was not one of their routine contracts. The ancient church at Kempley is constructed of local sandstone with a twelfth century doorways and chancel arch. Its importance and attraction is due to the wealth of unusually complete medieval wall paintings. During the Reformation, as in other churches with similar decorations, the walls were completely whitewashed to obliterate what were considered to be idolatrous images. (37)

The Reverend Arthur Hislop Drummond was appointed Rector of Kempley in 1871. He was an avid diarist and he recorded that he began his actual ministry in the parish in June 1872. The parish had a church which he considered to be sadly in need of



repair and restoration and which was much neglected by the parishioners. He immediately corresponded with the Patron of the Living, Earl Beauchamp, who more or less told him to go ahead and do what he thought necessary. (38) He therefore arranged for a builder to come and survey the church and during this survey, some colouring beneath the whitewash was noticed. The following day, 'Mr Middleton the architect came over to the church and expressed great pleasure in it, believing the stone roof to be genuine,' but no mention was made of the colouring. Middleton recommended that a Faculty be applied for in order to allow work to begin, but a week after this recommendation, work had already begun on scraping the whitewash. On 21<sup>st</sup> August the first painted figure was revealed. On 22<sup>nd</sup> August the figure of a Bishop became clear, and on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Drummond's diary recorded, 'The twelve Apostles are appearing in the chancel.' In all, the scraping and stripping took twenty-four days, extending well into winter. (39)

John Henry Middleton recorded the events leading up to the revealing of the frescoes in an article which he wrote in 1878 (40) It would appear that they aroused the interest of Mr Gambier Parry of Highnam Court (41) who came over to see them in the October and estimated their date as 1180 (42) In November, John Henry and a clerk, Mr Young, visited the church and after Middleton's departure, John Henry and Mr Young took measurements of the church and copied the frescoes. John Henry moved on to Ross-on-Wye the following day, but Mr Young remained and continued drawing the frescoes. John Henry had made a thorough study of the frescoes which he recorded in his paper for the Woolhope Field Club. At this time he was still in his twenties and his international reputation lay years ahead, which may account for several errors and omissions which were noticed in his paper. It is beyond dispute that the Middletons were responsible for the restoration of the frescoes, and this is verified in Drummond's diary where he makes it quite clear that John Middleton senior was the chief restorer. (43) The father and son were able architects and John Henry especially, had a sound knowledge of ancient buildings. In spite of this, their restoration of these particular antiquities was not as professionally competent as John Henry suggested in his paper. Their method of coating the frescoes for preservation was much criticised in later years and the plasterers whom they employed were not as skilled or conscientious as would have been expected. Middleton did complete further survey work on the church and made designs for a new altar in 1873 – 1874.

The Kempley Vicarage at the time of the Reverend Drummond's arrival in the parish was a very large rambling house almost opposite the church, totally inconvenient because of size and also because of its distance from the centre of population. In 1873, the Patron, Earl Beauchamp authorised the building of a new Vicarage. The final account was settled in February 1874 for '5% commission on £2,154 for working drawings, specifications and superintendence of the new Vicarage,' with a later invoice for stables and coach house at £275. (44)

The Ecclesiastical Dilapidations Act 1871 was the reason for a survey of the Vicarages of the Diocese in 1886, when it was noted that Kempley was 'built about twelve years ago,' (1874) and there follows a long list of work which is recommended to be done! (45). Middleton's visits to the site spanned the period April 1872 to May 1873.

Middleton's Ledgers contain several references to schools in the county of Gloucestershire and further afield, mainly dating to the 1870s but documentary evidence is insufficient to be able to say with certainty what was actually built or altered. In most cases, designs are not available. However in the area around Newent we do know that he made frequent visits to Bromsberrow between February 1870 and 1873 (46) The residents of the village wanted a proper day school providing a full time education and at a meeting in 1863, they had proposed that a Parish School should be built. (47) In March of that year the Rector and Churchwardens were authorised to superintend the erection of the proposed schoolroom. As with many such projects work depended upon the availability of funds and often there were long delays between the time of a proposal and the eventual start on the work. However the Parish subscribed £475.15.11 and the National Society made a grant of £21. (48) The total cost of schoolroom and master's house amounted to £579.1.4 with legal fees and architect fees totalling £34.0.9. (49) Middleton's accounts show the figures for travel at 9/6d per journey as well as contract, superintendence, and postage fees.

Another school in the vicinity with which Middleton was involved and which opened just six months after that at Bromsberrow was the school at Gorsley. (50). This was a Board School with places for 100 pupils. Middleton's accounts show 'Commission £50.14.6 being 5% of the cost of £1,014 13.0 including agreement and stamps, received August 26<sup>th</sup> 1872'. The stone building is L shaped and has a bellcote. References are also made to a teacher's house and an apse. (51) The latter was added in 1877, but not by Middleton, when the school was being also used as the church The school's log book makes mention of the addition of a porch and other alterations in 1884 but the architect is not named. (52)

Other schools which are mentioned in his account books include an addition to the rear of Picklenash School at Newent, (1871), and alterations at Pinkerton, (1872), and Pucklechurch (1872). (53)

## **14     *References, Chapter XIV***

### ***Stardens:***

1.     *Historical Notes on Newent with Oxenhall & Pauntley.* JC Douglas 1912 Gloucester Local Studies Library R212.43 ( Now GA)
2.     Bick 1992
3.     *ibid*
4.     Douglas *op cit*
5.     GA D2970 1/131 – shows East Tower elevations only.  
          D2970 2/2 and 3/1 give some of the details.
6.     GA D1882 5/1 part 2.
7.     Gloucester Local Studies Library. Sale Particulars 24.9.1910. ( now GA)
8.     Kingsley. Vol III p287
9.     GA D2970 3/1,9. D2593 2/547. PA 225/2 and PA225a MI 1/8-9.
10.    Bick *op cit.* who also states that Middleton built a billiard room and an additional bedroom for A Knowles.

### ***Newent;***

11.    GA P225 CW 3/5
12.    *ibid* P225 VE 2/4

13. Examining roof, fair working drawings, superintendence and repairs, travel costs and contract, and specifications.
14. *Gloucestershire Notes and Queries*, Vol V p 189
15. *ibid*
16. *ibid*
17. 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.
18. Kelly also attributes the work to JH Middleton FRIBA but it was Middleton senior who was FRIBA and who did the work. This may be another of the occasions on which the son's reputation as an antiquarian of national and international repute, eclipsed that of his provincial father.

### ***Oxenhall***

19. The top of the spire was removed 1972 and the remainder demolished 1985.
20. *Gloucestershire Historical Studies* Vol 2. Brian S Smith 1968
21. GA P241 VE 2/1 and subsequent details.
22. GA March 1865 P241 CW 3/3
23. *Gloucestershire Historical Studies* Vol 2 as above.
24. *ibid*
25. Listed buildings description.
26. Mr Baldwin, Churchwarden 2000, was told by his grandfather that Italian workmen were used to do much of the stone carving. They were well known in the neighbourhood pubs of Newent where they filled up on liquid refreshment before starting work at the church.
27. Conversations with Mr Baldwin.

### ***Dymock***

28. GA P125 CW 3/14
29. *ibid* P125 CW 3/2
30. GA D2970 3/1. Middleton's fees were 5% all paid by December 1871
31. GA D843 4/1, pp215,218,235.
32. *ibid* D843 1/2
33. *ibid* P125 4/19
34. *ibid* D2970 3/1 and 3/9 no 14. Organ Chamber and vestry to Dymock Church, Lord Beauchamp October – February 1873
35. *ibid* P125 VE 2/4. Comments about the plastered walls are confusing but Middleton's agreement had been to strip plaster from the walls except the chancel and arch. Middleton was only too keen to remove plaster and reveal bare stone, something which GG Scott condemned. (*The Builder* 1874).
36. Kelly 1896

### ***Kempley***

37. Nearly all of the information contained in this section is taken from "*Kempley and Its Paintings*," Vol 1 1872-1958 by the Reverend E Gethyn-Jones. 1961.
38. Middleton worked also for Lord Beauchamp at Woolstone Church.
39. In November Mr Middleton and his son are mentioned.
40. *Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club Journal* 1878 p80
41. Gambier Parry, owner of Highnam Court.
42. *Transactions, Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society* Vol 10 p247
43. *The Diocesan Magazine* 1911. Mr E Conder dates the uncovering as 1871 and Middleton junior as the restorer in chief.
44. This building is today named Kempley House.
45. GA D1381/95

### ***Bromsberrow***

- 46.....GA D2970 2/2. Middleton and Goodman drawings are in D2186/16 signed Middleton & .....Goodman, 1870 and include the teacher's house.
- 47.. *Bromsberrow* by FF Rigby p46
48. The National Society was the Church of England's Education Mission.
49. Kelly 1890 National School and Residence 1871. There was a delay from the time of the resolution to the actual building, due to lack of funding.

- 15**     ***Gorsley***  
50     GA School Log Book 1<sup>st</sup> July. The Vicar's Journal gives 14<sup>th</sup> August.  
51.     GA D2970 3/1  
52     GA P155 SC/1/1 School Log Book. Brooks names E Swinfen Harris as the architect of the apse.  
53     GA D2970 3/1 and 3/7

## CHAPTER XV

*The Tewkesbury area – Walton Cardiff; Twyning; Forthampton; Woolstone; Leigh; Tewkesbury Hospital; The Mythe ; Beckford Hall and Bredon Church.*

Having looked at the work Middleton completed in Newent and district, we now come to the other main centre in and around which he completed several ecclesiastical, domestic and public contracts. It was in Tewkesbury that he built the first Rural Hospital for the town and designed the pumping station and engineer's house for the water company at the Mythe. It was near the town that he undertook a complete rebuilding of Walton Cardiff church, made additions to Forthampton church and carried out partial rebuilding and alterations at both Twyning and Woolstone. Restoration work was also undertaken at Leigh to Middleton's designs although this was not completed until after his death in 1885. To begin with, we shall look at the work he completed at Walton Cardiff of which today there is no trace.

Walton Cardiff is a small village and parish now served from Tewkesbury but in the 1860s it was an ecclesiastical parish annexed to the Vicarage of Tewkesbury with its own church. The original church had been a plain oblong structure dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> century and built on very low lying ground, liable to flooding. This original church was replaced in 1658 (1) and by 1863 this replacement was so dilapidated that the roof tiles were falling through the rafters and some of the walls were in danger of collapsing. A parish meeting was called for February 17<sup>th</sup> 1865 to discuss the condition of the building based on a survey which had been carried out by Collins, Cullis and James, building contractors. At this meeting the Rector (*sic*) of Tewkesbury was asked to approach Mr John Middleton of Cheltenham requesting him to make as accurate a report as possible with a view to building a church of similar dimensions, using where suitable the old materials. (2) The instructions were that the building was to be inexpensive, but neat, durable and free from flooding. (3) Middleton's estimate needed to take into account that the proposed new church was to be built some 600 yards from the site of the present one, so new foundations as well as cartage of materials needed to be taken into account when estimates were made.

In just over two weeks, by March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1865, Middleton's plans had been produced for the Rector and Churchwardens showing a cost for erection of between £400-£500. Ten days later these plans were approved by the parish meeting. It was further resolved to solicit the co-operation of Mr Samuel Higgs Gael of Charlton Kings, (4) in exchanging the land where the present church stood for other land of his nearby where a church could be built above flood level and where there was sufficient dry land to allow for a burial ground. No reply was received from Mr Gael, so left with the current site, Middleton suggested raising the floor level of the proposed church to prevent it being flooded. In November Middleton was instructed to proceed. Grant assistance was sought from the Diocesan Church Building Association, the Warneford Charity and the Government, to whom application was made for a loan to be repaid by mortgaging the church site.

Tenders were invited by the end of the month. (5) There was not an overwhelming response and quite a delay ensued, due in no small measure to the relatively low cost

of the contract, the difficulties presented by the site and the tardiness with which grant aid was received. A Faculty Petition was not submitted until April 1866 and it described the church as,

‘having defective foundations, four walls falling outwards, the roof falling in and continuous repairs would be a useless outlay of money.’<sup>(6)</sup>

In fact so dangerous was the building that for some two years previously services had been held in a house in the village. James Allsop and Son, of Stourbridge, submitted a tender in June 1866 for £1,241.9.0 for the basic building but an extra £63.10.0 needed to be added if a bell turret was to be included. <sup>(7)</sup> This quotation did not include carving, and yet it was still two and half times greater than Middleton’s estimate. Only one other tender was received. The plans <sup>(8)</sup> show a slight variation from what was eventually produced and it may be that Allsop’s tender was accepted as an appeal was launched for £750, the sum outstanding in order to be able to complete the work. This amount would be accurate taking into consideration the positive response made to applications for grant support mentioned above. However what is puzzling is that Collins and Cullis were employed for the boundary walls and other work, as we shall find later.

A public appeal was started to support a building fund, the eventual cost far exceeding the capabilities of the 68 parishioners who were mainly farmers and labourers. John Middleton was among the first of the subscribers with a donation of £10. Another early subscriber was the Reverend GP Griffiths of St Mark’s, Cheltenham.

The appeal literature explained that the church would be plain, substantial and architectural, ‘ after the designs of John Middleton of Cheltenham.’ This appeal did not meet with an immediate positive response and the Tewkesbury Advertiser announced in November 1867 that a special Appeal service was to be held in the Abbey at which the preacher would be the Principal of Cheltenham College, Dr Barry. The fund was still short of the required sum and it was emphasised that when the church was complete it would provide an attractive alternative venue for Sunday afternoon service for Tewkesburians.

The church was completed in 1869 and was dedicated to St James. It was a small building in the Franco-Norman style built of brick with stone facing on the outside and rendered inside. The roof was tiled and the ground plan comprised nave, small apsidal sanctuary and at the north west corner, a bell turret. <sup>(9)</sup> Seating was provided for 73 people. The nave was of three bays with three lancet windows in the South wall, and two in the north wall. The entrance was at the south-west end of the north wall. The sanctuary was lighted by five lancet windows of the same design as those in the nave and the east wall contained a rose above two lancets. The pointed sanctuary arch had short marble columns supporting it on deeply carved capitals by Boulton, and the shafts were supported by inward facing angels bearing heraldic shields so familiar in Middleton’s work. A wooden screened vestry area with open arcading was provided at the south west corner of the nave.

In November 1870 Collins and Cullis were paid £70 for erecting the boundary wall and 8 guineas for carving the chancel arch and entrance doorway. <sup>(10)</sup> Sadly the church was closed in 1963. ‘It’s all gone to rack and ruin. Kids have smashed it up

and the doors have been left open for cattle to get in. But there's only a small part of the roof gone. Services had been held only once a month up to 1963,' were the memories of a former resident of Walton Cardiff. (11) Due to continued flooding, relocation of the parish population and increasing dilapidation and vandalism, it was decided to demolish the church and this was completed in 1970.

At approximately the same time as Middleton was working on Walton Cardiff, he was also engaged on the restoration of the Church of St Mary Magdalene at Twyning, just two miles north of Tewkesbury. The Norman church had been altered, repaired and enlarged through the centuries and in 1830 the interior had been extensively repaired and the walls plastered. However by 1867 the church 'was in an unsightly and comfortless condition.' (12) A committee was formed to consider restoration. An appeal brochure was prepared which indicated the extent of the proposed work but few actual details were included. To understand what was in fact envisaged we need look no further than the specification drawn up by Middleton which shows just what a major restoration was undertaken on the chancel, the nave and to some extent the tower. (13)

The appeal brochure (14) concentrated on interior work, and drew attention to the large amount of beautiful oak carving which 'owing to the ravages of time, and the treatment the building has had from time to time by those hands devoid of architectural taste, it has been sadly disfigured.' The unsatisfactory seating, especially that for the poor, and the removal of the objectionable gallery received much prominence in this brochure. It was stated that a further 82 sittings would be added at ground floor level to compensate for the loss of the gallery seats. 'The parishioners have agreed to restore the church as far as funds can be raised and according to the plans of John Middleton, esq., Architect of Cheltenham. These plans involve an estimated outlay of £1,500 but Mr Middleton states that if they are carried out, this church will be one of the finest of its size in the County of Gloucestershire.' The eventual cost of the work raised by public subscription amounted to £2,300 and work began in 1868.

The main focus of the new work was the chancel where today, after Middleton's confident approach, very little of the church's original structure remains. The north east window is original, but the others in the decorated style are to Middleton's design. The roof trusses are supported by short wall shafts with corbels and capitals carved with deeply undercut foliage, all very typical of Middleton, and carried out by RL Boulton. The memorial tablets on the north wall had been removed by Middleton to the tower vestry but were replaced here in the early 1900s shortly after the chancel vestry had been built. Middleton was also responsible for moving the 16<sup>th</sup> century monument from its original position against the north wall where the vestry door is now, to its present position. On the east chancel wall can be seen two medieval corbel heads, which thankfully Middleton re-used. The Hancock Memorial in the Tower was also in the chancel prior to its removal by Middleton

Prior to this major restoration, there had been a large gallery above the south Norman doorway at the west end of the nave. The nave roof was coved and plastered above the tie beams and there were many wooden ornamental piers referred to in the Appeal literature. When Middleton made his initial survey he suspected that the roof was in danger of collapsing and saw that the plaster on the walls was crumbling. He

addressed these issues as a matter of urgency replacing the tie beam roof in 15<sup>th</sup> century style re-using many of the original beams. The whole of the nave floor was relaid during which work a stone coffin was discovered beneath the floor. The nave windows were replaced in typical Victorian Gothic style but traces of Norman window arches and nail head patterned stonework can still be seen. Similar re-use of ancient stone inserted by Middleton, can also be seen in the south entrance to the tower. The south wall of the nave was extensively rebuilt and some porch work is referred to in his accounts for Twyning although the present porch dates from the 1880s.(15) The pews were provided by Collins and Cullis to Middleton's design again re-using some of the early oak panelling. The base of the font was supplied by Middleton but the actual bowl is fourteenth century. The pulpit of Caen stone with red marble top, is also to his design and replaces the original one which stood at the opposite side of the chancel arch, the font then being near the position of the present pulpit. In the recess is a group of several figures representing the Sermon on the Mount. It also features carved angels and the heads of the Evangelists. It is not unlike the one at Boddington also reputed to be by Middleton

Twyning is one of Middleton's classic major restorations and may well qualify for the accolade which he predicted in the 1867 appeal literature.

Still within the Tewkesbury area and only three miles west of the town is the parish and village of Forthampton. The ancient church of St Mary is in the perpendicular style and carries obvious examples of Middleton's restoration and re ordering. The church consists of a nave of five bays with north and south aisles a south porch and a tower at the west end. The church had seen some restoration and reseating when Joseph Yorke called in William Burges (16) to enhance the sanctuary. The Yorke family had been Lords of the Manor since 1762 by marriage. (17) Augusta Emmeline the wife of John Reginald Yorke, died within weeks of the birth of their son and her father in law, Joseph, used Burges to design memorials to her memory. These took the form of the almshouses adjacent to the church, and within St Mary's the sculptured reredos, the triple-light east window and the rustic altar rail completed about 1866.

Middleton's work followed close on that of Burges with the addition of an organ gallery and other furnishings, which by 1869, gave the church the appearance which it has at present. The work for Middleton was carried out by Collins and Cullis of Tewkesbury who had also carried out the work for Burges.

Up to 1847 the organ had been at the east end of the north aisle with the vestry beyond it to the east. Middleton's commission was to enlarge the vestry space eastwards, open up the wall in the North aisle against which the organ rested and then replace the organ in what had been the original vestry. This he successfully did and enhanced the new opening in the north aisle wall by means of an elaborate traceried arch. In order to give access to the organ, the north wall of the chancel was opened up and entry was gained to the organ chamber through a newly created wide arch supported on corbels of groups of finely carved angels all playing musical instruments. The space under the tower at the west end was then converted into a vestry by the addition of a new oak screen across its width. Middleton also designed the stone and alabaster font and the stone pulpit (18) Within the chancel the low screen wall in oak, as well as the choir stalls and oak chancel ceiling are also to his design dating from about 1872, as are the supporting figures of St Peter and St John the



Evangelist. (19). However the unusual chancel arch is not Middleton's work, and was added at a much later date. Unfortunately Middleton's stencilled decoration of the East wall of the sanctuary is no longer visible.

The total cost for this contract was £1700 which included £96 for the chancel ceiling and £260 for the organ chamber. (20) Sir Stephen Glynne who visited the church in 1871 remarked somewhat critically, 'In recent years the church has undergone such frequent and thorough restoration that little of the stone building is of interest to the antiquarian.' (21)

We shall hear more of Glynne's opinion of Middleton's work as we now come to Woolstone, a small village five and a half miles from Tewkesbury. Glynne also visited this church in 1871 when it was actually in the throes of Middleton's restoration. 'The Church was undergoing new fittings and renovation and the chancel roof was off.' (22)

The Rectors of Woolstone had in the past been uncles of the Patron of the Living, George William, Earl of Coventry and Viscount Deerhurst. From 1868, the Rector, Thomas Henry Coventry had sought to raise funds for a complete restoration of the church which was then in a dismal state of disrepair. As a result of his untiring efforts, and those of his brother the Reverend G Coventry, who succeeded him for thirty seven years, the work was put in hand and Middleton was appointed architect.

This restoration between 1871 and 1873 cost in the region of £1,000 and was planned and supervised by Middleton and his partner Mr Goodman. (23) The work involved some major decisions and the opening report contained in the Cheltenham Examiner (24) praised both the Incumbent and the architect, Mr Middleton, 'for showing great judgement and preserving every item of the original architecture which in any way tends to accentuate the history of the building which has undergone many changes since its foundation.' This preservation no doubt refers to the two canopied niches either side of the east window which had been covered up since the Reformation and restored by Middleton. The one to the north is terribly mutilated but the southern one has a fine canopy in perpendicular style. Under the altar is a memorial slab c1652 moved to that position during Middleton's restoration.

Externally the work involved rebuilding the tower which was sinking to the west and south west and to which extra foundations had to be added. This was completed by Collins and Cullis of Tewkesbury (25) at a cost of £280 and in this price was included the replacement of three pinnacles on the tower to match the one remaining.

Prior to Middleton's restoration the roof was a coarsely made structure of rough wood, and plaster supported by four great oak tie beams slightly arched, placed upon the top of the walls. The floor was roughly paved with large irregular stone flags many bearing illegible inscriptions. The north wall of the nave contained a square-headed two light window and the chancel arch was crudely formed of rough bricks tied with a clumsy arched shaped oak beam. All the walls in the church were plastered. The pews were high backed boxes of black oak without carving or decoration of any kind and the pulpit, reading desk and clerk's desk were of the three-decker type, one above the other with a round sounding board above the pulpit level. This huge piece of ecclesiastical furniture was also of oak. (26)

Middleton's restoration was effective if somewhat severe. The walls in typical Middleton fashion, were stripped of their plaster. The nave window mentioned previously was filled in and two, two-light windows in Decorated style were inserted into the north wall. The roofs of the nave and the chancel were entirely removed and new ones of pine, with handsome trusses in the nave, were added. The old stone roofing tiles were reused. All furnishings were removed from the chancel and nave and new pine pews providing eighty sittings were installed, together with a new wooden pulpit, carved by Boulton.

A tower clock was privately donated, and this was installed in time for the opening ceremony. 'The architect, John Middleton, was present among the respectable congregation,' as were also the Patron, the Earl of Coventry and his Countess. Further work was carried out in 1877 with the erection of the South Porch at a cost of £101. (27) On the entrance to the porch is a sundial bearing the date 1648.

Some later alterations were made to 'Middleton's church' but looking eastwards from the back of the church, St Martin's must look very much as it did when reopened by Bishop Ellicott on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1873.

Still within the Tewkesbury area, on the old road from Gloucester to the Abbey town, is the parish of Leigh. The medieval chapel is recorded in Domesday and has been dedicated to St Katherine at least from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Over the years it had undergone much restoration with major work being completed in 1865. The perpendicular style church has a small chancel, nave, small south transept, south porch and an embattled west tower. (28) In the 1880s the Reverend AC Gabell was the Incumbent and may have known Middleton through his association with St Mark's in Cheltenham where he had been Curate from 1871-1881. He was appointed to Leigh in 1881 as Curate, becoming Vicar two years later. Middleton also worked with Mr Gabell's father at Delancey Hospital in Cheltenham where the latter was on the Committee and also a generous benefactor. This may have accounted for Middleton being asked to undertake the restoration of the church once the decision to proceed had been taken at a Parish meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1884. The interior of the church was said to be inconvenient for the proper, orderly conduct of Divine Worship. It was described as being 'unsightly in construction and quite unsuitable for the present age.' The meeting unanimously agreed to restore St Katherine's so that it would be more fitting for the worship and honour of Almighty God.

The work outlined in the faculty application was 'to be in accordance with the plans of John Middleton, architect of Cheltenham,' and involved taking up the floor of the transept, tower and vestry porch, and laying new floors throughout. The whole floor space in the church would be covered with underfloor concrete and the aisles and other floors then laid with tiles, some of them being laid on wood blocks. The box pews would then be replaced with new open seats which would rest on this new flooring. The tower would be separated from the nave by a screen – as at Forthampton, and the existing north porch and doorway would be reconstructed on the south side of the nave. The windows displaced by this move would be repositioned where the north doorway had been. The existing door in the south wall of the chancel was to be closed up as was the vestry door, and a new one constructed on the east side. The present arched ceiling of the church would be enhanced with boarded panels

and moulded intersecting ribs. New chancel seats, a new pulpit and a new reading desk were also planned. (29)

There were no objections to the published notice of intent and the Faculty was granted by the Vicar General of the Diocese on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1884. Perhaps due to pressure of work on the contractors or delay in raising funds, the work was not completed until nine months after the death of John Middleton the opening ceremony taking place on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1885 (30) The final completion certificate was issued on 16<sup>th</sup> December of that year. (31) All invoices were addressed to Middleton, Prothero and Phillott of Cheltenham, Cambridge and Newport Monmouthshire. Final payment was made in March 1886 (32) The firm's accounts ledger for the date July 16<sup>th</sup> 1885, records the agreed contract price of £560 and this is verified in the books of the contractors, Collins and Cullis of Tewkesbury. There was an extra charge for the additional work of colouring the walls and providing a footscrapers, amounting to £29.16.0. In October 1885 further work included underpinning the south wall of the nave and resiting tombstones at a cost of 12 guineas; supplying a vestment press, reading desk, glazing to windows and underpinning the south wall of the tower. The two latter items are not dated but presumably were completed along with the other work in the contract. (33)

The work specified in the Faculty application was completed as detailed with the exception of the ceiling. One of the most interesting features of the church is its trussed oak roof. This was uncovered and revealed during the restoration when the plaster ceiling was removed. Sadly Middleton did not live to see this work started yet alone completed and it was left to his son and his partners to continue and bring to fruition what Middleton had designed.

However, not all the work in the Tewkesbury area was of an ecclesiastical nature, and although supporting evidence exists for one of the projects the other relies on hearsay, deduction and comparison with a similar building in Cheltenham known to be by Middleton.

Tewkesbury Hospital began as a cottage hospital in 1864 when two cottages at Oldbury were fitted up and opened for patients in 1865. The establishment of a Rural Hospital was the initiative of a Major Surman who had encouraged the idea so as to make Tewkesbury Borough independent of Gloucester, Cheltenham and Worcester. (34) Visits were made to the village hospital at Bourton on the Water, and a Tewkesbury meeting was convened by private invitation of Major Surman. This was held at the Town Hall on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1865. After explaining that the establishment of a Tewkesbury Rural Hospital would provide an asylum for the benefit of those without proper care and attention, and after accidents, it was 'ultimately unanimously resolved that it is desirable to establish a Rural Hospital for the Borough of Tewkesbury and its vicinity and that a committee be appointed to devise a suitable scheme for the purpose.' (35)

A committee of local dignitaries was appointed which included Major Surman, Alderman of Tredington; Mr Yorke MP, of Forthampton; Dr Devreux and Mr Sergeant. They drew up and submitted rules for the proposed institution and at a meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup> 1865, rules almost identical to those observed at Bourton were approved. April 11<sup>th</sup> saw the first meeting of invited Governors and various officers were elected. Donations had already been made to the fund, to the tune of over £140

and annual subscriptions of £60 had been promised. By 16<sup>th</sup> April, the two cottages had been furnished throughout and the hospital opened with the first patient admitted. So popular was this provision for the Borough that the 1867 Annual Report was able to record the following statistics for the year 1866 – 1867:

Cured	45
Relieved	11
Incurable	1
Died	2
Remaining	7

Year after year the success of the efforts of the promoters of the hospital was recorded and the interest of the general public was so aroused that the Governors felt justified in suggesting the erection of a purpose built hospital, simple in architectural style, but so arranged as to meet the needs of such an establishment. (36) The 1871 Annual report outlined this intention of the governors to provide even better facilities in such a building, especially designed for the purpose. The meeting at which the report was presented was informed that an advantageous site had been purchased and that a design of ‘unpretending character’ had been supplied by an eminent architect from Cheltenham, Mr Middleton. The committee received and carefully examined his plans and suggested some modifications of which he approved. It was agreed that work should start as soon as specifications had been received.

Collins and Cullis were once again awarded the contract, this time for £1,017 (37) and the work commenced in November 1871. The foundation stone was laid on St Andrew’s Day, the last day of that month by Major Surman, it having been agreed that there would be ‘an unostentatious ceremony.’ The proceedings began with a service in the Abbey at 11 o’clock and it was later reported that ‘a congregation more devout we never saw within its walls.’ (38) After an eloquent, emotive and appealing sermon, a collection was taken which amounted to £15.15.5. Five hundred people gathered to witness the laying of the foundation stone, and Mr Middleton handed the presentation trowel to Major Surman who also received a beautifully made mallet from Messrs Collins and Cullis. In his speech the Major said, “No care has been spared to make this building fit and worthy of the object which it is intended to accomplish. The services of one of the best and most talented architects have been secured and when I tell you the building is to be erected by the firm of Collins and Cullis, that is a guarantee that everything will be done in an honest, upright and satisfactory manner.” The revised cost was given at £1,400 which included the purchase of the site.

The 1872 committee report expressed its thankfulness at the approaching completion of the project and gave a provisional date for the end of August. In the event, the actual opening took place on 31<sup>st</sup> July following another Abbey service at which the Te Deum was sung and the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, Bishop Ellicott, preached. (39) In his sermon, he announced the ‘ following happy results from the epitome of the cases treated....since 1865 to the present: cured 407; relieved 57; incurable 4; died 12; total 480 of which surgical were 392 and medical 88. The operations performed were some of the most serious ones in surgery, such as Lithotomy, various amputations and eye operations; extirpation of cancer and removal of tumours and dead bones.’ The offertory at this service amounted to £20. Among the guests at the official opening

were numerous clergy, ‘Major and Mrs Surman, the Yorkes of Forthampton and J Middleton, Architect.’ The Mayor of Tewkesbury, Mr WG Healing declared the hospital open, and in his address he extolled the merits of the architect and the great skills he had displayed. At a luncheon in the Town Hall which followed the official opening, Mr John Yorke, MP, proposed the success of the hospital, at the same time identifying the shortfall in the amount needed to pay for the project. “The committee has not wasted any of the available resources but all that has been spent has been spent in the best manner and the building is another of Mr Middleton’s triumphs ” The health of the architect and the builders was then proposed after which the architect and builders responded appropriately.

The building was fitted with every facility needed for the purposes of the hospital – bathrooms, operating room, dispensary – and the wards were large, convenient and admirably ventilated. In the basement there was a cellar and mortuary and on the ground floor was the entrance and surgery with an out-patients window. This same floor also contained a boardroom, two wards, a kitchen, larder, coalhouse, back kitchen and closets. On the first floor were two wards, an operating room, two bedrooms, bathroom and closet. The kitchen contained ‘a patent kitchener’ which heated water for the whole house and the fire grates were fitted with hot air chambers for heating the rooms. When closed, the windows were perfectly airtight. The interior wood was delicately stained pitch pine, the walls were painted light blue and sage green. Water was supplied by the Water Company at the Mythe.

The red brick building, which stands back from the road is in the gothic style. When opened in 1872 it was quite an outstanding building in that part of the town, shut off from the road by a substantial brick wall with dwarf palisading. The grounds were approached through two handsome gates supplied by Collins and Cullis for £188. (40). The brick structure is relieved by Bath stone dressings and mullions in the front portions. In the front elevation, are two three light-windows with stone mullions, the upper one having trefoil pointed heads with a quatrefoil above. There is also a two light stair window with pointed heads and a depressed gable. The remainder of the windows are of wood with stone sills, the upper ones being lean-to dormers. The whole of the building is relieved with blue brick string courses and over the arches of all the lower windows and doors are red and blue relieving arches.

The final cost of Middleton’s contract was more than anticipated - £1882, but this had been raised by April 1873 with a surplus of £37, enabling the porch and hot water system to be added. (41). The wing beyond the windows immediately to the right of the entrance was added in 1880. The hospital was further enlarged in 1892. In 2002 this former hospital provides sheltered accommodation but its external appearance has hardly altered.

Mention was made above of the Water Company at the Mythe and here we will look at a building, now part of the Severn Trent Water Company’s property, on the left side of the road as one leaves Tewkesbury on the A38.

An Act of Parliament in 1865 authorised the Cheltenham Waterworks Company to extract water from the River Severn at the rate of 12,000 gallons a day. At first the Works supplied only Tewkesbury but building began in 1869 (42) after the Company had purchased between five and six acres of the Brick Kiln Meadow on the south side

of the eastern approach to Mythe Bridge. The plans included a pumping station with a gothic style engine and boiler house and engine man's residence. 'The style is pleasing and will be carried out in red and black bricks and Bath stone dressings.' It is this building which LW Barnard in 'Ninety Years Past' testifies to having been designed by Middleton. (43) The external appearance is almost identical to a house in Wellington Square - Eastholme, - which is also believed to be by Middleton. (44)

The first stone of the Waterworks was laid by the Mayoress of Tewkesbury Mrs Blizard on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1869. The site chosen for the ceremony was The Mythe Tute, the rise just outside the town on the Worcester Road. The local Press report of the proceedings (45) makes a clear distinction between the two aspects of the works – 'tanks, filters and pumping engines etc. (sic) in the meadow by the riverside, and the water tower on the eminence above.' The Company's engineer Mr Lansborough is mentioned at the stone laying ceremony but there is no mention of John Middleton. However his work for the Company may well have been similar to the work he did earlier for the S&D Railway, where the engineers said what the requirements were and Middleton designed and planned the buildings. At this time Middleton was on the Sewerage Committee and also the Water Supply Committee of the Cheltenham Improvement Commissioners and this may have helped him to gain the contract.

Today, if one looks at the front elevation of the engine and pump rooms and the engineman's house – that is minus the left side bay extension, one is struck by the similarity in design to Eastholme. The brickwork is the same, red with five bands of purple brick to the front and alternating red and purple voussoirs above the porch door and all the windows. Apart from an extra single light window to the right of the porch the pattern for all the other windows at the front of the house is identical.

The three gables too are identical – one large one on the projecting bay to the left, a smaller one in the centre and a medium sized one to the end bay. The bargeboards are identical to those at Eastholme and apart from the lack of steps leading up to the porch, which are not necessary at the Mythe, the two buildings were originally very similar in all aspects of their appearance. Completion was just after the start of the Middleton-Goodman partnership but designs would have been made well before this. However, as with most of Middleton's pre-1868 contracts, the archives for this particular work at the Mythe cannot be located now. (46)

One final domestic contract with which Middleton was involved near to Tewkesbury was Beckford Priory and Hall. The property on the Cheltenham to Evesham Road was acquired by the Ashton Case family in 1883. Captain Henry Ashton Case had converted to Roman Catholicism in India in 1876 and in 1883 he gave up soldiering and bought Beckford Hall where he settled in 1884. He added two additional wings, one of which contained a chapel, extended in 1936. It is claimed that he installed electricity almost immediately upon purchasing the house, making it the first country house to have such provision.

The archives of the Middleton practice contain some accounts and plans for the work undertaken at Beckford. At the time the property was purchased by Captain Case Walker as he was then known, he was living at 12, Clifton Crescent, Folkestone, and Middleton made many journeys from Cheltenham to meet him in London. An initial 'One day inspection of the building together with the drawing of the House at

present,' was made by Middleton in 1883 at a cost of 15 guineas. (47) The contract for decoration, additions, alterations and maintenance was awarded to Messrs Collins of Tewkesbury but not all the work was completed in John Middleton's lifetime. That which was, comprised a new tower and balcony, a carriage shed and stables, greenhouse, engine house and drainage. Between 1884 and March 1887, two years after Middleton's death, further work was completed amounting to £4,895. This consisted of new wings with electric lighting installation adding £500 to the costs. Contractors employed on this second stage of the contract included many well known local firms which we have already met, such as Martyn and Emms, carvers and woodworkers, Marshalls the heating engineers and Letheren the decorative ironwork craftsman. Naturally in a contract of this size, nationally famous craftsmen were also employed such as Godwin the tile manufacturers, Heaton, Butler and Baine the stained glass producers and Hardman of Birmingham renowned for designing and supplying ecclesiastical furnishings. (48)

Because of Middleton's death in February 1885 it is not easy to say definitely what was actually designed and completed under his supervision and what was completed under the supervision of his son and partners, Middleton, Prothero and Phillott. For example, the final amount authorised to be paid to Messrs Collins, was queried by Henry Prothero in November 1886, (49). Plans 6 and 7 for the new wing are signed J Middleton FRIBA, but accounts indicate that the work did not start until after Middleton's death. Plan six definitely includes the Chapel with sacristy, chancel and access stairway, and plan seven of the proposed ground floor, shows bedrooms above the chapel but not going so far as to be over the sacristy and sanctuary. The basement plan number 5 matches the outline chapel plan as drawn in plans six and seven. All the above plans are endorsed on the reverse, 'We hereby certify that this is one of the drawings referred to in our contract. Signed Collins.' It is therefore safe to assume that the firm of Middleton Prothero and Phillott supervised the work for the new wings and the Chapel at Beckford Hall between 1885-1887 but that the designs were those of John Middleton FRIBA, Architect of Cheltenham. (50)

The church of St Giles at Bredon, also near Tewkesbury, provides another example of work for which Middleton tendered, but there is little supporting evidence in the Middleton archives. Several inspection visits were made to the church at Bredon by Collins and Cullis, builders, from 1868 onwards, but it has not been possible so far to determine the extent of the work which Middleton actually completed. An indication only is given in the Collins and Cullis tenders ledger where they informed Messrs Middleton and Goodman that they had inspected the spire and 'find it collapsed ten feet from the top.'(51) They recommended that it be immediately rebuilt at a cost of approximately £100. Nine months later they wrote to Middleton offering to restore the spire in accordance with his plans and specifications for £85 with an extra £12 to be added if it was necessary to restore an additional seven feet. No further correspondence or accounts have so far come to light. Unfortunately there are many such tantalisingly vague entries in the firm's archives at the Gloucester Record Office.

### ***References, Chapter XV***

#### ***Walton Cardiff***

1. *Evesham Journal* March 1972
2. GA P349 VE/21
3. The site was very prone to serious flooding

4. Samuel Higgs Gael was a wealthy landowner of Charlton Kings. He was the oldest serving magistrate on the Cheltenham Bench but otherwise took little part in the town's affairs. He died 24<sup>th</sup> September 1887.
5. GA P349 CW/1
6. GA D1406
7. GA P349 CW/1
8. GA P349 M1/1
9. The original plan shows it as being conical and octagonal. It was changed to a square wooden tiled one and is now part of a house near the site of the demolished church.
10. GA D843 4/1
11. *Evesham Journal* 30 March 1972

### ***Twynning***

12. GA P243 CW 3/1
13. Armstrong
14. GA P243 CW 3/1
15. GA D2970 3/7

### ***Forthampton***

16. William Burges, 1827-1881. Designed in UK, Ireland and USA..
17. *ibid*
18. GA D2970 3/1 and D843 p159
19. D2970 3/1
20. GA D843 4/1
21. Glynne – *Gloucestershire Church Notes*

### **16 *Woolstone***

22. September 8<sup>th</sup> 1871
23. GA D2970 2/2
24. *Cheltenham Examiner* 15<sup>th</sup> October 1873
25. GA D843 4/1 p158
26. Temple, 1922
27. GA D2970 3/1

### ***Leigh***

28. Church History Trail, 1999
29. GA P199 CW 3/1-3
30. *Gloucestershire Notes and Queries* Vol 5
31. GA D2970 3/7
32. *ibid*
33. GA D2970 3/9 entry number 30. "For Rev Arthur Gabell. Thomas Collins Contractor. July 1885-November 1885. Certificates would be issued when the roof was completed and when all the work was completed. Paid March 1886

### ***Tewkesbury Hospital***

34. *The Tewkesbury Register* 11<sup>th</sup> February 1865
35. *ibid*
36. *The Tewkesbury Advertiser and Gazette* 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1871
37. GA D843 4/1
38. *The Tewkesbury Advertiser and Gazette* 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1871
39. *ibid.* 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1872
40. GA D843 4/1
41. *Tewkesbury Advertiser and Gazette* 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1872

### ***The Mythe***

42. *Cheltenham Examiner* 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1869
43. *Ninety Years Past*. However Verey claimed that the property Middleton designed is the ..... former NT Regional HQ, at Mythe End, but see note 46 below.
44. See Chapter XII for Eastholme description.



- 45     *Tewkesbury Register* 12<sup>th</sup> June 1869  
46     Extensive research has been made at Tewkesbury and via the Severn Trent Water archives.  
       The November 2001 sale particulars for the property Verey proposes, say that that house was  
       built in 1895.

***Beckford***

47.     GA D2970 3/7.  
48.     GA D2970 3/9 No 19  
49     GA D2970 3/9.  
50     John Henry Middleton was RIBA. He never became FRIBA

***Bredon Church***

- 51     The Collins and Cullis Archive at GA D843 p147 and 169

## CHAPTER XVI

*Berkeley Castle; Brookthorpe School; small contracts and unidentifiable contracts.*

The ledgers and contract books for the Middleton Practice contain references to several projects which might be considered minor works. These range from the building of an additional room onto an existing house through to designing, superintending and completing small buildings such as conservatories, or servants' quarters. There are also designs for projects which were never completed, for projects where Middleton's application to begin was unsuccessful and for projects where the work which he did complete has not survived.

The ledgers also contain many references to contracts for which there is no evidence in the drawings portfolio but where the Cheltenham press provides periodic information about such work almost in passing. It is equally frustrating not to be able to gain further details from the archives of the building where the work was done. Such is the case with Berkeley Castle, in South Gloucestershire, where Middleton was invited to make an assessment of the work necessary for the restoration and repair of the Chapel of the Castle. (1) The work for Lord and Lady Fitzhardinge was completed by October 1882 and involved great technical skill as well as conservation.

The former Chapel dates from the fifteenth century and the roof beams and ribs forming the panelling are covered with scripture texts, believed to be by the Biblical translator, John Trevisa of Berkeley. The ends of the oak beams supporting the roof had become decayed and the condition of the whole structure was extremely serious. In previous generations the timbers might have been dismantled without any feeling of shame and would have resulted in a considerable loss, but Middleton prevented this from happening (2) The exterior of the roof was stripped of its lead and then strong beams strengthened with boiler plates were fixed above the roof. The actual roof was then suspended from these beams with wrought iron stirrups. The boarding for the new lead covering rested on this and the parapet hid any trace of the work being seen from below. *The Cheltenham Examiner* was ecstatic in its report, showering praise upon Middleton for the skill and expertise which he had displayed. (3)

This is probably the same work that is referred to in his ledgers under 'alterations and repair of the Private Chapel for Lady Berkeley' although the Castle archive does not hold any details. It is highly probable that the press reference to the Chapel and the ledger reference to the Private Chapel are one and the same contract for both make mention of repair/improvement to the chapel roof. However the references in the contract ledger do refer explicitly to work on the Private Chapel for Lady Fitzhardinge which comprised alterations to the Chapel screen, flooring and furnishings. A new lectern was provided, as were new altar hangings and new gas pendants. (4) It is also accepted that he designed the reredos in the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, although his plans have not come to light.

The Castle contract certainly displays Middleton's technical skill and supports the reputation that he was to gain at Ss Philip and James Church in Cheltenham where he revealed similar ability and resourcefulness.

While in the vicinity of Gloucester, it might be appropriate to mention one of his smaller contracts for which the archives provide a good illustration of the way in which Middleton addressed even small contracts like village schools. Brookthorpe school is just outside Gloucester and discussion about the provision of a new school had first taken place (5) in 1868. (6) Middleton's estimate for the school amounted to £500 plus £30 for a boundary fence. (7)

Work had begun on levelling the ground and fencing it in that same year but due to lack of funding and the need to apply for grants and then await decisions, work did not begin in earnest until 1873. In fact, the architect wrote to the Rector of the parish, from Cheltenham in October 1872, as follows:

Dear Mr Bayley,

I forgot to ask, is it mixed or what?

Believe me, yours sincerely, J Middleton (8)

Presumably the importance of an answer to this question was in order to make provision for toilet facilities, but in February 1872 tenders had already been invited for 'a new school at Brookthorpe, near Gloucester. Plans and specifications may be seen at our office from March 4<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday March 13<sup>th</sup> 1872. Middleton and Goodman, 1, Bedford Buildings, Cheltenham.' The specifications as prepared by Middleton and his partner Mr Goodman, were under the familiar six headings: excavators, mason, bricklayers; plasterers; carpenters and joiners; roof tilers; plumber and glazier; painter. (9)

The money was to be paid in instalments as the work was completed stage by stage – and the final instalment was to be paid within three months of the architect having certified that everything was completed according to the contract agreement. Nine plans in all were drawn – block plan, ground plan, elevations, windows and tracery, roof ventilators etc. In spite of Middleton's letter quoted above, the certificate authorising payment for the first stage of the work to Messrs King and Godwin amounting to £117.10.0 was issued on 18<sup>th</sup> September of that same year, 1872. This is rather amusing in view of the fact that the architect seemed unaware of the gender of the children who would use the school.

The school consisted of one large hall with a smaller room leading off and a small office/storage room coming off this one. Blue Forest stone was used for the steps and thresholds, and the windows, corbels and tablings were to be of 'Farleigh Down stone – or equally as good.' Any black bricks were to be best Staffordshire, with facing bricks inside to be by Messrs Burton of Ironbridge – 'buff and pointed, similar to the mansion lately erected for Mr Lucy.' (10) Under the floorboards there was to be a layer of concrete 4 inches thick, and the building was to be provided with a damp proof course of 'pitch bar and sand, put on hot.' Plate tracery was provided for in the two gable end windows with cleansed stone sills, mullions, jambs and heads. The porch was paved with 8 inch black and red squares on top of 6 inch thick concrete. All the stone corbels – typically Middleton – were to be chamfered. The woodwork in sight, apart from floors, roof and outbuildings, was to have three coats of best varnish after having been well stopped, cleansed, sandpapered and twice sized. The roof was covered with Broseley tiles with Peakes metallic roll ridged toppings.

Grants towards the building were received in 1872 from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Bristol and Gloucester Diocesan Association.

The school opened on Whit Monday, May 24<sup>th</sup> 1874 and by the end of the term there were 74 children on the registers. (11) An initial Inspection report commented on the 'excellent playground and offices all distinct from the building'. John Middleton signed King and Godwin's final certificate for payment at the end of 1873: - amount of contract £470; extra works, £145.12.0. Middleton's invoice dated October 1873 to William Charles Lucy, Treasurer of the committee for the erection of the school, amounted to £35.9.9, made up of drawing of plans, specifications and superintendence - £30.15.0, and contract, stamps, copies of plans and specifications and travel - £4.14.9. (12)

Of the smaller projects for which he produced designs which were not accepted, one in Cheltenham is known for certain. *The Cheltenham Examiner* of July 19<sup>th</sup> 1876 carried the notice that the supply of Spa water at the Cheltenham Montpellier Rotunda had been discontinued and removed to a temporary lodge at Montpellier Gardens, where it would be dispensed until a permanent building could be provided. Middleton was one of the architects who provided designs for the new permanent Lodge and the ledger entry put the cost at £700. Professional fees of £21.12.0 were paid in January 1877. There are three plans in the archive which comprise a roof plan, showing attic, skylight and garden display; a front, back and side plan/elevation; a room plan which shows a cellar, committee room, pump room, assistant's room and scullery outside of which was an open veranda supported on wooden pillars. (13) The plans almost match the existing building but were obviously not accepted for the contract was awarded to the architect JP Moore of Gloucester a former partner of James Medland, who submitted designs estimated at £575. These were accepted by the committee and the work was carried out by AC & S Billings and completed in 1877. To compare the two sets of plans one could almost believe that the two architects had worked together on them.

Further projects for which plans are recorded as having been prepared include a house at Shurdington for a Mrs Leigh in 1869 and designs for a font at Blandford Church in 1871. Some office book entries are quite frustrating in that they identify a client but the location is not given, as is the case with Colonel Noel. Middleton was making visits to this gentleman between August 1869 and December 1870 a period of over twelve months and plans were drawn up for a new conservatory and for a new bell turret and alterations 'to the school.' The client could have been at Nibley, or Lydney, or Chipping Campden – each location being the home of a Colonel Noel. And who was Mr Morris? Plans, drawings and specifications were prepared for 'a granite monument for the late Mr Morris' and the architect's fees were paid in 1880. Sometimes a building is identified but there are no details of the cost of the work involved, as for example, the insertion of a new east window at Pill Church, in 1877. Work was possibly carried out for Mr G Neville Wyatt at Cotswold – sometimes Cotteswold - House, where drawings were prepared for the laying out of the property and for alterations and additions which included a portico and four pillars. (14) There is also an entry suggesting that a Lodge at Swindon Hall, near Cheltenham was built for Michael Belcher in 1882/83, probably the one still inhabited in Wyman's Lane.

In addition to these unidentified references, there are, as one would expect, many ledger entries for run-of-the-mill work with which any architectural practice would be involved. Very often the client is someone with whom Middleton enjoyed social, professional or civic association and this may well account for his particular services being sought. Such contracts include work in 1878 on the drains at Roderick House, Suffolk Square; repairs and alterations at Alba Villa, Tivoli, for the widow of General Brett, costing £136; preparing plans and designs for Leckhampton Court for the tenant, Mr Hargreaves, in 1877, consisting of additions and alterations; (15) arranging with Estate Agents the terms of a lease on Sanford House for his client, GM Jackson and subsequently repairing the property and designing the internal decorations in 1880. In that same year he was responsible for the planning and supervision of alterations at Hatherley Hall in Hatherley Road for General Wilkins. In the previous year he had prepared plans and specifications for repairs, decoration and furniture designs for Dr Havilland at 6, Bayshill Villa. (16) This contract amounted to the not inconsiderable sum of £646. Other Cheltenham contracts included the erection of a conservatory at The Beauthornes in Hatherly Road, for William Watson in 1880 (17) and designing and building the new servants' hall at The Grange in Malvern Road for Mr Gillilan. (18) This latter contract only amounted to £107 13.0 in total and The Grange's sale particulars of 1903 may explain why this grand-sounding addition cost so little:

Opening from the Drawing Room is the conservatory and the Domestic Apartments. The Ground floor is well cut off from the better portion of the house, (containing) a light lofty kitchen; A HOUSEKEEPER'S ROOM OR SERVANTS HALL', pantry etc.

There were also additions and alterations in 1875 to the gallery at Nubie House, which overlooked Westal Green, for Mr Meyricke a well known local collector of works of Art. (19) An example of the close co-operation between Middleton and local craftsmen, is illustrated in 1876 when he was responsible for planning and superintending the erection of the entrance gates at Arle Court, for which his commission was 5% on £1,057. This was paid by the owner, Mr JW Butt, in January 1876. (20) However three of the more easily identifiable smaller contracts now no longer exists but are worth mentioning because they are not what one might call, 'run-of-the-mill'.

Coffee Taverns had been established in Cheltenham by 1870, the chief promoter being a Major Kington. The Major wished to provide facilities for strangers as well as locals who sought somewhere for social relaxation without having to resort to the public hostelrys. The most central of these establishments was the Imperial Coffee Tavern, but there were similar venues at St George's, St Luke's, St John's and Tivoli. Food and drinks were provided at moderate charges 'hoping to induce the breadwinner to prefer them to the public house.' The Imperial Coffee Tavern was situated in Cheltenham's High Street just below the old Assembly Rooms, at the end of the present Lloyd's Bank. Middleton was asked to draw up plans for the restoration of this Tavern and to enlarge the property by building a new room at the rear. *The Cheltenham Examiner* gave a full report of the work, showing how the excellent accommodation had been increased in size by the addition of a large room with an exit in Rodney Terrace. This room was capable of seating over 170 people. The project had been financed by Mr EH Gillilan whose aim in so doing was to provide

central convenient accommodation for the holding of meetings and small entertainments at a place of public resort. The builders, Messrs Billings, had followed the designs of Mr Middleton and installed the best system of ventilation, lighting and heating. Numbers frequenting the Cheltenham taverns were between 1,200 and 1,500 daily with up to 3000 on Bank holidays.

At the official inauguration of the renovated and enlarged establishment, reference was made to Mr Gillilan's 'generosity to the working classes' and to the expertise of Mr Middleton who had designed the amenity. (21) Middleton also carried out similar work at Westgate Street Coffee Tavern in Bath in 1878, charging commission of 7.5% whereas for the Cheltenham project his charges were 5% of the cost. (22)

In concluding these smaller contracts and while remaining in Cheltenham, it is worth looking at one further educational-cum-private contract and one unique one. Sydney Lodge was a large property in Western Road, occupying the whole site between what is now St Hilda's and Malvern Road. The frontage in Western Road extended for 222 feet, and the depth of the site was 150 feet. The sale particulars for 1892 describe the property as being approached by a carriage sweep with gardens, tennis courts, and paddocks at the side. It had a large entrance hall, drawing room and billiard rooms, bedrooms and bathrooms with hot and cold water, and a basement with domestic offices. (23) The house was in the possession of the Reverend RH Cooke from at least 1864. According to the 1871 Census he lived there with his wife Agnes and four children. In addition they provided accommodation for nineteen College boy boarders and five domestic staff. Middleton's work at the house was completed between June and August 1868 when he made additions to the house and carried out some alterations and repairs. (24) Middleton's work was not significant but is mentioned because it illustrates how some contracts may well have come about through a mutual friend. A later edition of Gloucester Notes and Queries (25) says that this same Reverend Cooke, then of Healaugh Vicarage, Yorks, was responsible for the engraving and design of the memorial brass in Christ Church, to the late Canon Fenn and that he had also commissioned the handsome brass lectern now in use in the church. (26) This would suggest that Cooke and Fenn were well acquainted if not even related, and we already know of the co-operation that existed between Middleton and Mr Fenn. It has also been recorded earlier that RH Cooke and Middleton, were members of Friends in Council. In 1892 Sydney Lodge was offered for sale, and was purchased eventually by the Ladies' College as a new boarding house to open in September that year. It remained so until the former Bayshill House was purchased circa 1914 and given the name Sydney Lodge. The Western Road property was likewise renamed but has since been demolished.

The unique contract to which reference was made above, is indeed one of Middleton's smallest, and one which he carried out in public spirit rather than professionally. In 1879, the local press reported the death of the Reverend Morton Brown, who since 1843 had been minister to the Cheltenham Congregational church. 'Cheltenham has lost one of its most notable, most valued, most highly valued men, and the vacancy cannot be soon occupied by another.' (27) Mr Morton Brown had taken a great interest in local affairs and served with Middleton on the Library Committee. He was a staunch liberal in politics and not at all afraid to express himself most forcefully in public. A meeting of friends of Mr Morton Brown met in October of the year of his

death with a view to deciding upon a fitting memorial. Among those present was John Middleton together with others who were friends and admirers of Morton Brown as well as being clients or personal friends of Middleton. A committee was formed to solicit contributions from the townspeople and it was announced before the close of the meeting that £100 had been already donated, Middleton's contribution being 3 guineas. Ideas were discussed for a suitable memorial and nine months later the press reported that a monument had been erected at the cemetery, 'the object of very general interest during the last few days.' Mr Morton Brown's body had in fact been disinterred and removed to its present site in order to enable the monument to be seen to full advantage in honour of his contributions to the town. The monument is twenty feet in height and was executed by the firm of Martyn and Emms. Middleton's contribution was to provide the designs for the dwarf iron railings which surrounded the memorial. The memorial is still in the same position but sadly the railings have been removed. Middleton also superintended the erection of the memorial tablet to the late Mr Morton Brown which was placed in the Congregational church but for this he charged two guineas! (28) There are many entries in the office books with fewer details than for those given above, and one must assume that they refer to possible work which in fact did not materialise.

It might now be appropriate to get some idea of the way in which the practice developed during Middleton's time in Cheltenham, by looking at some of the interesting and challenging commissions which he accepted, in this country, but beyond the county of Gloucester.

## ***References, Chapter XVI***

### ***Berkeley Castle Chapel***

1. Now known as the Morning Room and 'converted' in 1923.
2. *Gloucestershire Notes and Queries*, Vol II p283 and Cheltenham Examiner 18.10.1882.
3. Correspondence with the Castle Archivist in 2000 has not revealed any document in support ...of this contract.
4. GA D2970 3/7. This work on the Chapel must not be confused with the present private ..chapel in the castle. Verey and Brooks attribute the Parish Church reredos to Middleton in ..1881. It is also interesting to recall that Charles Piggott Pritchett of Wotton-under-Edge ..designed Berkeley's cemetery buildings in Station Road in 1866. He was of course ..Middleton's brother-in-law.

### ***Brookthorpe School***

- 5 GA P64 SC5
- 6 ibid P64SC21 & D2970 3/1
- 7 ibid P64SC5
- 8 ibid P64SC21
- 9 ibid
- 10 Mr William Charles Lucy, JP, was living at Claremont House in 1868 but from 1870 he was .. the sole occupier of a large mansion almost opposite the site of the present Brookthorpe .. .. School, a house named The Wynstones. The owner in 2000 believed that Mr Lucy was a .. . wealthy wheat importer in the mid to late 1800s who lost his fortune but later made another .. and built the mansion. A large coloured window on the exterior wall of the main staircase ... certainly reflects his importing interests, depicting as it does a sailed cargo ship entering port ... fully laden. However the mystery remains about Middleton's reference to the buff pointed .. brickwork of which the house is built. Evidence uncovered recently at the GA would .. suggest that Middleton's comments were pure compliment, about a project which he .. admired. Perhaps he was also somewhat influenced by his obligation to Mr Lucy who was

.....after all the Treasurer .. of the Brookthorpe School Building Committee. The house was  
.....in fact designed 1869/70 by .. AW Maberley (Brooks).

11 GA P64 SC5

12 *Kelly*, 1896 also adds, 'a school with residence for the mistress' but there is no mention of ..  
.. this in the Middleton archive.

### **1 *Montpellier Lodge***

2 13 GA D4335/57.

#### ***Various house references.***

- 14 GA D2970 1/44 Cotswold house for GN Wyatt. The drawing is dated 1883 and signed J ..Middleton, Cheltenham. The reverse is endorsed, "I certify that this is one of the drawings ..referred to in our contract. G Neville Wyatt and AC & S Billings." It shows a portico ..supported on four pillars. A property with this feature and this name, in Thirlestaine Road, ..was bequeathed to Cheltenham College in 1960. According to Cheltenham Looker On, ..Wyatt was the purchaser of Lake House in Thirlestaine Road in 1863 competing against ..strong opposition from Cheltenham College which also wanted to purchase the house. The ..Cheltenham Directory of 1891 and the Cheltenham Looker On of the same year list Wyatt as ..living at Lake House where he died in 1891. Presumably Wyatt intended to purchase ..Cotswold c1883. Cotswold was a very large estate and much sports facilities building has ..been carried out by the College on the land since it came into their possession in 1960.
- 15 GA D2970 3/7 shows that designs and plans were prepared but presumably came to nothing ..as the accounts bear the legend, "March 1883, Account void." However ledger 3/9 entry 145, ..March–September 1895 confirms a contract for £1,600 for work by Middleton's successors ..at Leckhampton
- 16 GA CBR C5/6/1/1/1 New Buildings Register. Jan 17<sup>th</sup> 1880 'for Scamell, approval of porch ..to Bayshill Villa'.
- 17 GA D2970 3/9 entry 18. The Beaithorns. The conservatory is still in situ in 2004.
- 18 Mr EH Gillilan and his wife were benefactors of St Stephen's Church and worked closely ..with Middleton in the choice of furnishings for the Nave and aisles. Their son in law was the ..first Priest to serve St Stephen's. A large brass memorial plaque to the family's memory is on ..the inside wall of the south aisle.
- 19 Further maintenance work was done there in 1883, mainly to the roof, and chimneys for the ..current owner, Mr Richardson. The Meyricke sons' war history is well documented on the ..walls of St Stephen's Lady Chapel.
- 20 Further work followed in 1883 – designs for window to use ancient stained glass, arranging ..same and obtaining estimates. Two visits to Heaton and Butler re disputed account "£7.17.6 ..for JW Butt esq." 1884 "New servants' bedroom at Arle Court for IPM Butt esq. £150, paid ..December 1885." See also Chapter XVII.

#### ***Imperial Coffee Tavern and Bath Coffee Tavern.***

- 21 *Cheltenham Examiner* 19<sup>th</sup> October 1877
- 22 Middleton's 5% fees of £33 were paid in December 1878. This was based on a restoration ..cost of £660 with an extra £16.12.0 in July 1881 for the room enlargement.

### **3 *House for Reverend RH Cooke***

- 23 GA D4858 2/1/1 1892
- 24 GA D2970 3/9 entry No 6 Extension to house of Rev RH Cooke £230 August 1868 – ..November 1868. Payment when the first floor joists are in position; when they are covered in ..and when the work is complete.
- 25 *Gloucestershire Notes and Queries*, Volume III p581
- 26 Canon JF Fenn, under whom Middleton served so many years as Churchwarden at Christ ..Church.
- 27 *Cheltenham Examiner* 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1879
- 28 GA D2970 3/1. The memorial is now in the small meeting room of the new Highbury Congregational Church, Cheltenham.



## CHAPTER XVII

*Herefordshire: Byletts; Canon Frome Court; Staunton on Wye church; Brockhampton Court. Warwickshire: Coleshill Park, Coleshill School. London and Middlesex: Sowerby. The north-east: Dinnington. Wiltshire: Brinkworth.*

After Middleton's move to Gloucestershire it is somewhat surprising to find how quickly he became involved with commissions which must have made tremendous demands upon his time and energies. We have already seen how up to the time of his partnership with Goodman, he kept only random accounts. This may be some indication of his initial intention not to resume full time practice. Very few of his early drawings have survived in the archives of the practice, although some may still be among the estate papers of the client concerned. Many will not have survived at all. However, the arrival of Goodman as partner marked the turning point between 'doing favours for friends and acquaintances' and adopting a more professional and business-like approach.

In addition to work in Gloucestershire, he carried out many contracts in Wales, which we shall look at later. But perhaps spurred on by Goodman in the early years of the partnership, he took on some quite large projects in other parts of England. Not all of these contracts are well documented and there is uncertainty about one or two of them, but we shall look at the main ones which illustrate the breadth of Middleton's portfolio.

North-west of Hereford is the large village of Pembridge. Situated between Leominster and Kington, Pembridge features prominently in the Herefordshire 'Black and White Tourist Trail' (1) A mile or so outside the village is Byletts, an estate which is featured in 'Mansions and Manors of Herefordshire' (2) The estate was bought in 1754 by the Reverend Henry Evans of St Margaret's, Westminster, whose grandson was named as owner in 1872. The estate had been bought from a family by the name of Hill from Shropshire and when Henry Evans at a later date bought the manorial rights of Pembridge Borough, these continued to be passed on to the inheritors of the Byletts estate. (3) In 1848 the Reverend Henry Evans died having settled the estate on his half brother, the Reverend Francis Evans and on his son, the Reverend John Bowle Evans. It was John Bowle Evans who carried out most of the improvements to the house in the late 1860s through to 1877, work which also included improvements to the estate itself. (4)

Middleton was architect from the late 1860s and drew plans of the old Byletts and made a report for the Court of Chancery shortly afterwards. (5) The plans included specifications for restoration and rebuilding in part, with a list of 'all the re-usable materials for all the alterations and additions to the Byletts,' the re-usable materials being the beams and oak panelling mentioned in 1872 as worth £180. (6)

Middleton made many visits to Byletts between 1870 and 1875 as did his partner Mr Goodman, and the account books also list other expenses such as sending plans to Captain Evans. (7) Without going into the house one cannot fully appreciate the extent of Middleton's work but the similarity between this house and the work he did at Stardens near Newent in Gloucestershire, is obvious. The house is in orange brick

with stone and brick decorative bands at the front. The front itself has a recessed left wing, and a projecting gable in which is the main entrance to the house. Next to this is a recessed central wing and a projecting gabled right wing. The house is on three storeys apart from the gabled wing to the right which is of two storeys. It would appear from Middleton's plans that this was the wing which he built on to the original house. The plans suggest that the house before his additions was quite small and plain. (8) On the ground floor apart from the domestic offices there were only a dining room to the right and a morning room to the left with bedrooms and attic space above. There were then no projecting bays to the front of the house.

Middleton drew at least 20 plans to which he made reference, but plans two, three and four give the information necessary to understand what he finally achieved. (9) He introduced the projecting porch rising through three storeys at the front of the house, culminating in a steep gable, containing on the third level, a three-light Gothic window. To the right of the existing house he added a completely new wing projecting to the same extent as the porch wing and terminating in a steep gable. However this wing is on two floors only. On the ground floor he added a large drawing room to the existing dining room with delicate stone traceried square windows on three sides. Behind this room were Captain Evans' room, a butler's room and a lavatory. Above this extension were a dressing room, a boudoir and a bedroom. The boudoir at what then became the rear of the side of the house, was lighted by an oriel window. Plan three shows access from the original building into the extension by means of arches or arched doorways. The heavy tall chimney stacks on the new wing are certainly distinguishing features

At the rear of the house he added new domestic offices, dairy, scullery, closets, wood and coal stores and larder. Middleton continued to act as architect for the estate well into the late 1870s with two estate cottages being built just to the left of the main house, a lodge at the entrance to the estate, now demolished, and a large greenhouse. (10)

How Middleton came by the contract is not at all clear but clues may be found in the ancient parish church at Pembridge. There wall memorials in the South Transept carry many references to the Evans family. Nearly all are ordained Anglican Priests, but none is identified as incumbent of the parish although from 1790 all are named as 'Of Byletts'. In addition we learn that 'Reverend Francis Evans MA of Byletts, died Cheltenham, January 20<sup>th</sup> 1868 aged 76, buried at Holmer in this County.' Nearby we find another memorial recording 'John Bowle Evans JP, DL of Byletts, died Cheltenham February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1906 aged 70. Interred at Leckhampton, Gloucestershire. Also of Frederick Bowle, eldest son of the above John Bowle Evans and Isabella Sylvia Evans, died Cheltenham April 6<sup>th</sup> 1896 aged 31. Interred at Leckhampton.'

Frederick Bowle is listed in the obituary column of *The Cheltenham Examiner* but his father John Bowle Evans merited a lengthier obituary when he died ten years later. From this we learn that he was very involved with the social and philanthropic life of Cheltenham where he resided at 20, Lansdown Place. He was the son of the Reverend Charles Evans (11) of Byletts, Herefordshire. In 1868 he married Isabella Sophia, the only daughter of Mr Charles Lloyd Harford of Evesham House, Cheltenham and from that time his connection with Cheltenham 'had been intimate.' A list of his associations in the town gives more than a suggestion of his acquaintance with

Middleton, which may well account for the latter's work at Byletts. Both Middleton and Evans were on the Council of the Ladies' College, (12) and Middleton was the College architect. Evans' father in law, Mr Harford, was a client of Middleton's as well as being a fellow member on the Town Commissioners. Mourners at Evans' funeral and the dedication on the many floral tributes include names for whom Middleton had completed work of both a domestic and ecclesiastical nature. It is clear from this evidence that Middleton and Evans would have had a wide circle of friends and associates in common. As well as completing work at Byletts, Middleton was also engaged by John Bowle Evans to carry out alterations and repairs to his Cheltenham home in Lansdown Place in 1881 (13) After Bowle Evans' death in 1906 his son Major Bowle Evans continued to live at 20, Lansdown Place and he leased Byletts to Major General Sir Elliott Wood KCB, who was still living there in 1913. (14)

In 2001 the estate cottages have been modernised, the stables have been converted to domestic accommodation and the main house, Byletts, is divided into apartments. Externally however, the house retains most of the features which would be recognisable by Middleton today.

Still in Herefordshire, just a few miles north-west of Ledbury is Canon Frome Court a mansion which in Middleton's day had been in the Hopton family for over three centuries. (15) The present house was built by Richard Cope Hopton in 1835. The other family seat was at Kemerton in Gloucestershire which had passed into the family through marriage. The Reverend John Hopton, Rector of Canon Frome, lived in the house until his death in 1870 when it passed to his son, John Hopton who was at the time, living at Kemerton Court (16). Upon inheriting the estate in 1870, John began planning alterations (17) He moved there from Kemerton in 1871 and Middleton's account books record visits to Canon Frome in 1875 and 1876, although no plans for his work exist. However the work that he was responsible for included a billiard room, two bedrooms and servants rooms built over the offices in the east wing, and the pillared stone porch to the North entrance.

John Hopton died in 1890 a year before his only surviving child, Bertha, who inherited the property. Upon her death it passed to her husband. After World War II the premises became a school and Middleton's billiard room became the music room. In the year 2000 the estate belongs to a housing association the main house having been divided into apartments. Inside the church which is in the estate grounds, there is a Hopton Memorial Chapel, with plaques commemorating members of the family. (18)

The only known ecclesiastical contract in Herefordshire for which Middleton was responsible was for the Church of St Mary the Virgin at Staunton-on-Wye, on the Gloucestershire-Herefordshire border. It is an ancient Parish Church in the transitional style with a solid tower capped with a pyramidal spire. The church has a long chancel, nave, north and south porches and is built of local stone. Middleton's visits to the church began in 1877 (19) and plans signed Middleton and Son were prepared that year 'for alterations and repairs'. (20) No further details are recorded but *Littlebury's Directory* refers to 1878 when 'the spire was recovered with red Broseley tiles and a new South porch was added by Middleton and Son of Cheltenham.'

The only other work in Herefordshire which is attributed to Middleton, with some degree of reservation however, is the enlargement of Brockhampton House, near Ross-on-Wye. Middleton drew plans in 1877, for the property which was then named Brockhampton Court. The original house was built c1759 and was sold in 1833 to a William Stallard who in turn sold it in 1869 to the Reverend Sir Christopher Lighton of Ellaston, Staffordshire. (21) Sir Christopher who originated from County Dublin, died in 1875 and the title and the property passed to his son, Christopher-Robert Lighton. He was born in 1848 and was called to the Bar in 1874. He served his adopted county as JP, Deputy Lieutenant and from 1885 High Sheriff. In *Mansions and Manors of Herefordshire* we learn that the house ‘possesses no particular features and will probably undergo considerable alterations before it is converted into a Mansion.’ (22) The prophecy was soon to be realised for from 1877 to 1879 Middleton was visiting the property, and had drawn plans for the proposed alterations early in 1877 (23) His intention was to extend the property to the West of the main porch entrance and the extent of his work is clearly visible in the different use of stone and the Bath stone dressings. There is also one of his familiar date shields on the principal chimney breast at the front of the house which bears the date 1879 (24) Although there is no archive material available apart from the drawings, an examination of the extension externally accompanied by his drawings, persuades one that Pevsner is indeed correct in identifying this as the Brockhampton House on which Middleton worked. (25)

Moving from Herefordshire into Warwickshire, we find only two known examples of Middleton’s work, both in the town of Coleshill. One is a school and the other is by far the largest of his domestic buildings. To address the latter first of all.

Coleshill Park is an estate which had passed into the Digby family by the end of the 1400s. The ancient parish church of Coleshill became the burial place of this family from the early 1500s and in each generation the owner of the estate left his mark on the old manor house. King James I granted the family the Sherborne (Castle) Estate in Dorset and gradually they came to spend more time there than they did at Coleshill, so that by 1786, the estate was described as the ‘deserted seat of the Digbys.’ (26) Edward Lord Digby died without issue in 1856 and the estate passed through marriage to relatives named Wingfield who were granted the Digby name and Arms by Royal Licence, thus giving birth to a line of Wingfield Digby owners of the estate. However by this time the old manor house had been so neglected that it was described as being ‘long demolished’ and when Middleton became involved in the late 1860s, nothing of the original house remained.

The new Lords of the Manor of Coleshill had no manor house to speak of and an improvement fund for the estate was set up with the intention of building a new Coleshill Park. Middleton had been consulted at the latest by 1867 and had drawn plans for a new mansion by the following year:

‘House for Captain Digby – plans and travelling expenses £92.13.10.’ (27)

These plans may have been considerably altered, for the Practice’s archive in the Gloucester Record Office (28) contains plans for the proposed new house signed and dated ‘Middleton and Goodman Architects, Clarence Street, Cheltenham 1870.’ This archive also contains several different drawings for the attic floor, the chamber plan,

the cellar plan and a plan for the haylofts. The chamber plan alone provides for thirteen bedrooms, the attic plan for twenty! There is also a Lodge plan dated 1872. (29) Between April 1868 and February 1874 Middleton and/or Goodman made many journeys to visit Captain Digby in either Birmingham or at Coleshill. Contemporary petty accounts include entries for the cost of sending telegrams to Coleshill; travel to Birmingham; mailing plans to Birmingham; advertisements and the carriage of models for Captain Digby. The firm of Collins and Cullis of Tewkesbury was awarded the building contract and their copy contract book reads:

January 16<sup>th</sup> 1871 to Messrs Middleton and Goodman Architects,  
Cheltenham. We agree to do the work on the new Mansion House,  
Offices and stables for Capt. Digby at Coleshill Park as per the plans  
prepared by you for £13,200. The extra cost of the archway  
to the stable yard will amount to £45. (30)

A further letter in March of that year confirmed that the estimate included the surveyor's fee and a sum of £150 for coloured glass. (31) An additional list of extras included the chimney piece for the drawing room in Caen stone, at £17.10.0; an Irish marble shelf for the above at £4.10.0; the chimney piece in the Boudoir, £13.12.6 – all inclusive of carving, marble columns etc. A revised contract was then sent to Middleton stating that, 'Collins and Cullis have looked well into the difference between stone ashlar and brick.'

With a new Lord of the Manor and no manor house, work began with some urgency in 1871 and was almost completed by 1874. The new house was constructed some half a mile to the north of the original and the estate papers at Sherborne Castle include the building accounts for all aspects of the work even to paperhanging and furnishing costs by Debenham and Freebody of Cheltenham. With the costs of decoration and furnishing, Coleshill cost £19,410.4.10 which included Middleton's fees of £700. The use of so many Cheltenham sources for supplies and craftsmen must have had a remarkably positive effect on the economy of the town. The costs had all been paid in instalments as each stage of the work was completed and signed for by Middleton, between July 1871 and continuing until March 1877. Some was later work consisting of enclosing the garden – 'extensive walls in brick for the kitchen garden' - for which again Collins and Cullis were the contractors.

The contract, the largest in the Middleton archive, produced an extensive red brick Tudor Gothic building with polychrome decoration under a steeply pitched roof. The main entrance is by means of an impressive porte-cochere and to the left of this is a large service wing and the walled garden mentioned above. *Kelly's Directory 1892* described the manor as 'a notable mansion of brick with Bath stone dressings in the Elizabethan style and situated on an eminence (sic) in an extensive park, one mile west of the town.'

Immediately inside the main entrance door one enters a small porters' lobby and this was designed with a stone fireplace, somewhat overlarge for the size of the room, but it has quite distinctive carved features. The hood is designed to represent fish scales and projecting from it are three miniature gables. The thick surround of the fireplace proper has an intricate rope twist decoration at the top of the opening and the stone shelf is supported on heavy marble columns with fluted capitals. Either side of the

fireplace was a pew type seat against a panelled wall, but only one seat now remains. From this lobby one continues into the main hall through a coloured glass screen fitted into a gothic arch. On either side of the door the screen displays roundels of coloured glass faces. The main hall is large, square and light, surmounted by a lantern roof. The flooring is of green, red and orange tiles supplied by two firms, Minton and Godwin, set in squared patterns which repeat themselves every third row. Immediately opposite one on entering the hall, is the grand arched opening leading to the stairway. Against the wall to one's left is another impressive fireplace. Opening from this main hall are doors leading into the ground floor rooms.

The house was occupied by the Wingfield Digby family until about 1910 (32) after which it became a retreat house for the Anglican Diocese of Birmingham and much later a hospital. During the latter period the property was considerably altered internally by the addition of dividing walls, not always sympathetically inserted and several of the beautiful panelled ceilings were covered with polystyrene tiles. However there are many original features remaining that will be preserved in the ongoing restoration and conversion of the property which began in 2002. Mention here of just a few of these examples of Middleton's artistic work will give a flavour of his attention to internal details.

The main downstairs room is the one with the large square bay to the front right of the house. An elaborately and deeply carved arch leads into the bay the more ornate carving being on the side of the arch facing into the room. The arch itself springs from chamfered stone walls on either side of the opening and these in themselves are masterpieces of the stone carver's art. Inside the arch and on the walls all round the windows within the bay are further delicate carvings in the stone, not unlike those at Mount Gernos in the Teifi Valley in Wales which will be described later. The ceiling of this room is panelled with heavily carved stone bosses at the intersections.

The room behind the one just described is possibly the original dining room and it too has a heavily carved arch leading into the bay. A striking feature of this bay is that immediately inside the arch is a heavy, wooden, mechanically controlled roller blind which when activated serves as a screen which completely cuts off the bay from the rest of the room. There is evidence that a similar blind also existed in the front room. The dining room also has large windows with the original wooden shutters and there is a buffet recess very similar in design to those at Eastholme and Westholme in Cheltenham. (33) It has an elegant carved wooden pediment supported on two carved rectangular corbels unusually laid horizontally rather than vertically. The ceiling in this room is also of panelled wood with a regular, patterned, pierced-wood coving. The fireplace for this room is Tudor in style, heavily carved with two short stumpy marble pillars supporting the marble mantle shelf – referred to in the accounts of the firm of Collins and Cullis. The rectangular stone over-mantel is also heavily carved and the detail is worthy of close inspection.

Returning to the entrance hall, one approaches the first floor square open gallery by means of two flights of stairs with carved newel post and balustrade. Doors lead from the gallery to various rooms and passageways and from the gallery one has an excellent view of the lantern above and a full view of the hall below. On the right side of the gallery is a very unusual feature – a mock fireplace. This, like the other ones mentioned, is also in Tudor style and very artistically carved but above it, rather

resembling an ecclesiastical reredos, is a coloured glass window containing the emblems of the Wingfield Digby family. This window is set in a stone gothic recess with marble pillars either side. Behind the fireplace and window is a narrow passageway leading from the front to the back of the house. A fire could never have been lit in the grate as there is no chimney. The ceiling over this gallery is again of square wooden panels, the roof plate resting on carved stone corbels. Entry to the tower is gained from the gallery through another archway filled in with a wood and glass screen. This bears a striking resemblance to the screen on the first floor of the original main entrance hall to the Cheltenham Ladies' College building.

The other room most worthy of mention is the first floor room in the projecting bay beneath the bell turret. This room has a very ecclesiastical feel and is another example of the stone carver's art. The arch at the far end of the room which separates it into one-third and two-third 'compartments', is carved in similar fashion to the others that have already been described. This one however is supported on either side by groupings of three marble pillars with beautifully carved capitals. Each group of pillars stands on one floriated corbel which is positioned half way up the wall. In this room there is also a large gothic arched recess again heavily and deeply carved. The window recess is a patchwork of delicate carving on the walls either side of the window as well as on the arch itself.

In the servants' wing the stairway, newel and balustrade are unaltered and one of the windows still retains its original diamond shaped glass and iron protective grille. The house is far too complex to describe in further detail. The extensive garage and carriage block to the left, and beyond that, the walled garden, make this an exciting challenge to the architects who have planned its conversion and restoration. (34) As was suggested earlier, the Wingfield Digby family did not enjoy their new home for long - forty years or so – and after a considerable period of neglect it is being extensively and comprehensively developed as a Business Centre. (35)

At the same period as the mansion was being constructed, Middleton was also engaged in preparing plans for an elementary boys' school in the town. (36) This was later known as Back Lane School. The project was financed by a member of the same family, the Reverend John Wingfield Digby, Vicar of Coleshill. The building Middleton designed was a typical Victorian school. It is built of red brick with blue brick pattern and white stone dressings, and surmounted by a steeply pitched tiled roof with miniature dormers. Externally there was provision for the usual range of services. In a walled garden adjacent to the school, Middleton designed the headmaster's house, on the side of which is a stone shield dated 1872. A doorway in the high brick garden wall gave the headmaster access to the school grounds.

Since Middleton's time the school has been slightly altered and enlarged. On one of the gables is a roundel containing the emblem of the Digbys, an ostrich carrying a horseshoe in its beak and the motto, 'Deo non Fortuna.' Middleton's first visit to the Reverend Digby to discuss the proposed school was in April 1871. Collins and Cullis were awarded the contract according to Middleton's plans and specifications, with minor adjustments allowed. (37)

The final cost of the work, including furnishing, professional fees, plans etc, came to £1,740 which had been settled by June 1874. The property has not been used as a school for some time and in 2001 the property was on the market for £495,000 (38)

After leaving Darlington, most of Middleton's work was, as we have seen, confined to the Midlands, Gloucestershire in particular. There were however some private contracts which he accepted in the early 1870s in the London area and these may have been as a result of personal recommendation. The first of these about which any details are available was for the enlargement, restoration and repair to a house in James Street, Buckingham Gate, London. The client was Mr Arthur Pendarves Vivian MP, who at the time of his initial contact with Middleton was living at 19 James Street. Mr Vivian was married to Lady Augusta Emily, daughter of the third Earl of Dunraven and it was undoubtedly through this connection that Middleton was asked to provide plans for the new home which Mr Vivian intended to occupy further along the same street, at number 26. (39) Collins and Cullis tendered for the work which included new stabling and the addition of a laundry as well as internal refurbishment. (40) This must have been a quite substantial contract as the work on the house itself amounted to an estimated £2450 and the stables £1,531. In Collins and Cullis' tender for the work they commented about the phasing and costing of the contract, suggesting that the basement offices should have been priced separately from the living accommodation and new work separately from alterations. There were also several later additions to be included in the eventual costs, including oak instead of deal for the ceilings and ornamental plastering in the Drawing Room. Whether the firm was actually awarded the contract is not clear from their archives, but Middleton certainly received his commission in cash, by 1874. His invoice allowed for over 30 visits to Mr Vivian ranging from £3.16.8 to £4 18 9 per visit, but as Middleton was a member of the Hanover Club in Hanover Square, he no doubt stayed there. (41) An interesting connection between Cheltenham and this particular contract lies in the fact that some old oak carving from Arle Court, Cheltenham, was bought by Middleton on Mr Vivian's behalf and transferred to the new house in London. (42). St James' Street which was very near to Buckingham Palace, no longer exists.

Another contract with which it would appear that Middleton was involved in London was for work on the Church of St Peter, Eaton Square. Middleton submitted alteration and re-ordering plans and was making visits to the church between July 1871 and November 1873. The incumbent at the time was the Reverend Mr Wilkinson, a great evangelist who subsequently became Bishop of St Andrew's and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church. He was a much admired friend of Dorothea Beale of Cheltenham Ladies' College through whom Middleton may have made contact. Unfortunately all the parish archives were destroyed during WWII and as a result of a fire in 1987 the church had to be totally reordered, so that any identification of work done by Middleton would be impossible. (43)

While still near to London, mention must be made of another sparsely documented contract which Middleton pursued on Hampton Court House, near Hampton Court. The House was built c1765 for the mistress of the Earl of Halifax and passed through several families until 1871 when Mr Marmaduke Blake Sampson a classical scholar, acquired the house. Middleton supplied plans for the construction of a Picture Gallery, conservatory and orangery, but it would appear that Mr Sampson died soon after acquiring the house. In 1872, Middleton was travelling to, and corresponding with, a



Mrs Heurtley at that address. These visits and correspondence continued into 1875. but the tender supplied by Collins and Cullis to Middleton and Goodman in 1873 contained the following information:

Erection of picture gallery at Hampton Court House for Mrs Heurtley according to your drawings and specifications, £3,130. We will use stoneware bonding bricks in lieu of Staffordshire black bonding bricks.

Three lower tenders were submitted and the contract was secured by Mitchell of Dulwich for £2980. The confusion persists into 1876 when Middleton was paid his commission on three phases of work on the property for the executors of the late Mr B Sampson, each separately costed but not defined - £5958; £2,800 and £300. (44) Presumably Mrs Heurtley was a relative or a tenant of the Sampson executors.

Two contracts which are identifiable and are of considerable interest date from 1879 and are not at all related. The furthest away from Cheltenham was at Sowerby near Halifax, an area not unknown to Middleton from the early days of his career when he worked with his brother in law in Darlington. The present Church of St Peter, Sowerby, was completed in 1766 but not consecrated until 1847. It contains a larger than life monument to Sowerby's most illustrious son, John Tillotson DD who was Archbishop of Canterbury in the reign of William and Mary. The nave has two rows of Corinthian columns which lead one's eye towards the apsidal east end. The church has retained its original ground plan, but in October 1878 the Bishop of Ripon authorised 'the erection of a new organ chamber and vestry, repewing and the making of certain other alterations.' (45)

Middleton was awarded the contract, even though so far from home, but he had friends in the area, and certainly close friends in Halifax. The work was more aesthetic than structural, and included some furnishings.

Middleton made eight journeys to the church between June 1877 and July 1879 at £2.17.0 a journey, (46) and several parcels of sample materials were sent from Cheltenham between July and August 1878. The Faculty for the work is in Wakefield archives and includes a ground plan of the proposed alterations while at Gloucester there is a large seating plan, altar frontal design, a design for a brass and iron lectern and designs for the new chancel arcading. (47) All of these plans are signed Middleton and Son and dated variously August to November 1878. The chancel alterations and altar frontal are described in *The Cheltenham Examiner*: (48)

Our attention has been drawn to some fine pieces of work now being carried out in the workshops of Messrs Martyn and Emms of Hales Road. Among these are several for the interior of St Peter's Church, Sowerby near Halifax, executed by J Middleton and Son of Cheltenham. The work is principally in connection with the chancel of the church. The two side screens of the chancel are of richly carved Caen stone. The arches will have at each centre the head of a Saint and the whole will be supported on small marble pillars of very elegant appearance. The centre layer of frieze work is after the pattern of a piece in the celebrated Ghilberti gates at Florence and is being carried out by

Martyn himself.

These stone screens pierce the north and south walls of the chancel giving a northward view of the organ chamber and southwards a view into the side chapel. They certainly have a very “Italian” appearance. The rest of the work is still very much in evidence today and mirrors the description continued in *The Cheltenham Examiner*:

The front of the chancel will be in Serpentine and Irish marbles, plain but massive with centre panels in rich, crystal Mexican marble, forming a bold and elegant design. The oak stalls executed by the same firm, will be in keeping with the stonework of the chancel. Leading to the altar a flight of low steps is also in course of execution in tessellated pavement. (sic) Among the other oak work in the church, the West end screen in the tower, of which the metal portion is by Messrs Letheren, is of particularly bold design. The whole is of a classical character and the work shows great care and attention.’

Behind the altar the apse is decorated with Jacobean oak panelling. Into this Middleton has inserted a small credence table which he had exhibited at a recent exhibition in Bath. This oak credence is still in situ and forms a niche in the original panelling. The roof of the niche resembles a pilgrim scallop shell and beautifully complements its surroundings. Middleton’s work creates a striking effect which is much enhanced by the Italian stucco work on the walls of the apse. The altar frontal mentioned above, almost certainly designed, as was the lectern, by John Henry Middleton, was seven feet four inches in length. The design suggests silk and gold embroidery on best Lyons velvet. The centre panel depicts a circular floral and sunburst pattern, surmounted by a crown all in gold, matching the fringe of the superfrontal. The brass and iron lectern is most ornate and carries foliage and bunches of grapes. (49)

The final stage of the work was the replacement of the old box pews with free unappropriated sittings at ground level. However box pews in the gallery still bear witness to those far off pre-restoration days. The pulpit, designed by Middleton and costing £155 was repositioned to one side of the chancel entrance and a new priests’ vestry replaced the one located under the sanctuary in what is now a boiler room.

Although mainly aesthetic this was an important contract and quite distinctive in comparison with Middleton’s other re-orderings. One can clearly see a similarity between this work and John Henry Middleton’s later work at Christ Church in Cheltenham. This may indicate more of his influence at Sowerby than the archives give him credit for.

The same may be said about a contract completed shortly after Middleton’s death, and again, a contract in the North of England. A few miles to the north of Newcastle upon Tyne, is the town and parish of Dinnington. A church had been built there in 1835 and was adequate for the needs of the village as it then was, until 1885 when it was realised that a larger place of worship was needed for the expanding community. There are two plans in Gloucester Record Office, one signed J Middleton FRIBA, 1883, for Woolsington church. The other is signed ‘Middleton, Prothero and Phillott,

Westminster and Cheltenham' and would appear to be c1885. (50) This latter plan is for Dinnington Church. Confusion arises over the fact that Woolsington and Dinnington are neighbouring villages but Woolsington does not have a church. However Middleton's books record a visit in June 1884, to a Captain Bell to consult about Dinnington Church (51) Further entries record 'Dinnington Church for Major Bell of Woolsington, £2,300, June 1885.'(52) This probably suggests either in 1883 there were plans to build a church at Woolsington, or that the first plan drawn by Middleton was titled 'Woolsington' because Captain, later Major Bell, who lived at Woolsington Hall, was the patron of the new church at Dinnington, just three miles distant. Whatever the true facts, the Dinnington Church of St Matthew was completed in 1886 and contains several memorials to the Bell family which give clues to a Cheltenham connection and perhaps a reason for Middleton being given the contract.

Major Henry Bell married Helen, the daughter of Sir William B Burdett, Bt., of Cheltenham. Captain Henry Bell was living at Chalfont Lodge, in Cheltenham, when Middleton arrived in the town and was one of the founder members of Friends in Council to which Middleton also belonged. As well as being a Captain in the 36<sup>th</sup> Regiment, he was also a very keen and knowledgeable archaeologist. Helen died in July 1878 aged 68 years and the Captain, by now promoted to Major, died in November 1887. The east window of the church was erected in their memory by Major Henry's sister, Dulcibella.

The church is built of stone in the Transitional style and has a chancel, nave, south porch, and west turret with one bell. The chancel is raised well above the level of the nave and is entered through a high, Gothic, moulded arch. There is an organ chamber and south-east vestry. There is a distinct lack of decoration in the church but this does create a sense of light and spaciousness. The font near the porch door is a relic from the former church.

It would appear that plans were drawn by Middleton for Major Bell, but his death occurred before they could be finalised. The contract was then taken up by his son John Henry, who made some alterations, resulting in the building that one can see today. The account was settled in November 1886 at which time the final completion certificate was issued by his successors Messrs Middleton, Prothero and Phillott. (53)

Returning South, the only known professional contact that Middleton had with Wiltshire would appear to have been in the small town of Brinkworth, which Middleton first visited in October 1871, when he consulted with the Rector, Mr de Quatteville about the state of the church. Further visits are recorded from that time on right up to 1880. Prior to Middleton's involvement the chancel was in a most dilapidated condition with the side walls leaning fourteen inches out of perpendicular, the roof entirely decayed and the flooring virtually gone. (54)

Middleton's plans for restoration necessitated the complete demolition of the chancel, all the stones being numbered as they were taken down so that they could be replaced as accurately as possible in the rebuilding. The stones on the windows and doorway were similarly numbered. Middleton designed a new roof of panelled oak with carving at the intersections, and the floor was relaid with Minton tiles. The East window, in perpendicular style was filled with coloured glass by Hardman of Birmingham at the expense of Mr de Quatteville and his brothers and sisters as a

memorial to their parents. In removing the whitewash from the north aisle near the chancel, some wall paintings were discovered and also a complete painted figure on one of the piers to the nave. Middleton's restoration also included new seating, for the nave and the chancel, a new credence for the sanctuary and arcading to form the reredos behind the altar. (55) The church was reopened in September 1879 'in accordance with the designs of Messrs Middleton and Son.' (56)

A vast amount of work has been covered in these chapters and hopefully further works will come to light as people become more aware of Middleton and the extent of his practice. That is one of the aims of this book, an aim which has already borne fruit in Wales where he completed many contracts, some of which have only recently been identified as being to his design.

## **References, Chapter XVII**

### ***Byletts***

1. The Black and White Trail of timber framed houses in this area of Herefordshire.
2. Robinson 1872.
3. Herefordshire Record Office D32 *Historical Antiquities of Herefordshire*.
4. As 3 above and *Robinson*, writing in 1872: Bowle Evans has rebuilt the house which seems to have been an irregular Elizabethan Mansion rich in massive beams and oak panelling. *Kelly's Directory* 1913: The Byletts is a mansion of red brick with stone dressings rebuilt to the designs of John Middleton, c1879. This date is rather late and does not accord with the archive information.
5. Presumably in connection with the will. Gloucester Record Office D2970 3/1
6. GA D2970 2/2. The room to the left of the entrance is all panelled with re-used panelling.
7. Accounts were settled in November 1877
8. GA D2970 1/21.
9. Plan 3, "Middleton and Goodman, Cheltenham 1871. The red and yellow tint shows the new wing and alterations"
- .. Plan 2 Ground plan as above signed on reverse, "We hereby certify that this is one of the plans referred to in the annexed contract . Signed Welsh and Sons & J Bowle Evans."
- .. Plan 4. "The porch walls are to have concrete footings as shown for the new wing. Middleton and Goodman Architects, 1871."
10. GA D2970 3/1 & 3/9 No 15: 2 Cottages £509; Lodge £250; Greenhouse £277. These accounts were all paid by 1875 and the contractor for these was James Bassett.
11. *Historical Antiquities* op cit., says Francis Evans rather than as here, Charles Evans.
12. *Cheltenham Looker On* June 27<sup>th</sup> 1908 p7: Fountain presented to the Ladies' College in memory of John Bowle Evans esq., Member of the College Council and a true friend of the College, always interested in its welfare. Cups to go with the fountain were also presented.
13. GA D2970 3/1
14. *Kelly's Directory* 1913.

### ***Canon Frome Court***

15. *Robinson* op cit.
16. *Landed Gentry*.
17. Kemerton is very near to Tewkesbury where Middleton had completed several contracts. John Hopton may have been well aware of his work.
18. I am grateful to the widow of the last school caretaker, who lives near the Court, for this information about the latter years of the Court.

### ***Staunton on Wye.***

19. GA D2970 2/2
20. As above D2970 1/186

**45. Brockhampton House/Court**

21. *Burke's Peerage*

22. *Robinson*, 1872.

23. GA D2970 1/19. See also under Kempley - John Henry Middleton was taken to Ross in 1878, perhaps to visit this contract.

24. An interlude of the post Middleton era: In the early 1890s Sir Robert was almost tricked into selling the Court by an American family. While touring the Wye Valley they spotted the Court and drove up to the entrance through the line of a seemingly private green valley. "This could be the place for you Alice" exclaimed the mother to her daughter and prospective husband. No sooner had their coachman opened the carriage door, when they were approached by Sir Christopher-Robert Lighton on horseback. He paid his respects and was obviously overwhelmed by the Americans' raptures over his property and invited them in for tea. They were ushered into the great hall, a butler relieved them of their coats, muffs and woollen gloves while they warmed themselves by the open fire in the deep stone fireplace. During tea of cakes and sandwiches, "Mama made her bid for the estate before the poor man had sampled one of his sandwiches. Stunned by her generous offer, and needing time to gather his thoughts he mentioned that he'd been born on American Independence Day July 4<sup>th</sup>. Mama hailed this as an omen and the deal was soon clinched."

The newly weds, Alice Jordan of Boston, Massachusetts and her husband the Reverend Arthur Wellesley Foster, second son of a Yorkshire mill owner, moved in during 1894 after Mr Jordan had had alterations made by the architect F Armitage, who incorporated Middleton's additions into his own, as well as adding original wings, thus doubling the size of the house. His work is dated within a shield 1893. Mrs Jordan desired a more historic Elizabethan style. "No one will know its pseudo" she said. The new Mrs Foster was responsible for the building of All Saints Church opposite the drive entrance, in 1901. This was designed by W Lethaby as a memorial to her parents. (From the Diary of Alice Foster, part photocopied and retained at Brockhampton Court 2002.)

25. Verey,

**46. Coleshill Park**

26. Thomas Pennant "*Perambulations of Warwickshire*"

27. GA D2970 3/1. Coleshill Estate Papers at Sherborne Castle, Dorset, suggest that no decision ... was reached until the second half of 1869.

28. As above D2970, 1/54. Coleshill papers at Sherborne show that Middleton and Goodman ..... received their fees for plans and specs on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1871

29. *ibid*

30. GA D843, 4/31.

31. Some still survives on the first floor landing. Messrs Letheren, Boulton, RE&C Marshall, ..... Debenham and Freebody, all of Cheltenham, feature significantly in the list of

.....suppliers of furnishing and internal fixtures.

32. *Kelly's Directory*

33. These have been described in Chapter XII.

34. Peter Hing and Jones Architects, Birmingham. In the original plans Middleton arranged for water to supply the house to be pumped from the River Cole by means of a water pump.

35. The author was given a pre-refurbishment tour of the property courtesy of the Architects and the Developer in July 2001. Since that time, further changes to the plans have been made. At least two opinions of the Park have been published neither very complimentary:

(i) "The House, though handsome, well appointed and Elizabethan in style, is only Victorian in age and therefore does not call for further description." *Coleshill and Its Parish Church* 1925. Coleshill Library.

(ii) "Coleshill Park is a rather pedestrian red brick house designed by an unknown architect for JD Wingfield Digby in 1871-1873 and as at Bilton Grange, the external silhouette is enlivened by a tower over the carriage porch." *Country Houses of Warwickshire*. Geoff Tyack 1989, Warwickshire Local History Society.

**47. Coleshill School**

36. GA D2970, 1/39 An extension for girls was added in 1887 for Queen Victoria's Jubilee.

37. GA D843, 4/1  
 38. When the school closed in 1982, the building became the town's Community Centre and Town Council Office.

***London, Mr Vivian MP.***

- 39 GA D2970, 3/1  
 40 GA D843 4/1  
 41. He wrote from the Hanover Club in 1880 to a client about the church at Maenclochog, Pembrokeshire.  
 42 GA D2970, 3/1 1873

***St Peter's Eaton Square.***

43. Correspondence with the Incumbent 2001.

***Hampton Court House***

- 44... GA D2970, 3/9 No 11. The House is currently a Private School and the orangery and .....conservatory can still be found at the side of the house.

***Sowerby***

45. Information from West Yorkshire Archive Service, Wakefield Headquarters.  
 46 GA D2970, 2/2  
 47 As above D2970, 1/227  
 48 *Cheltenham Examiner* 19<sup>th</sup> March 1879. 'Martyn' was the proprietor of the renowned Cheltenham firm of sculptors and carvers.  
 49 GA D2970 1/277. The dimensions are pencilled in as being a length of seven feet four inches and a height of three feet five inches for the frontal. The lectern "in brass and iron" written in manuscript, will cost £50. Both the frontal and the lectern drawings are signed in what appears to be John Middleton's signature.  
 The lectern drawing is dated Nov 1878 and the frontal Aug 1878.  
 The pulpit drawings are neither dated nor signed but are very detailed and the detail of the ornamentation is at the "experimental" stage. The total cost of the work which was paid in full by April 1880 amounted to £2,238.17.3. Gloucestershire Archives D2970, 3/1

***Dinnington,***

- 50 GA D2970 1/55 and 1/210  
 51 GA D2970 3/7  
 52 GA D2970 3/9 No 29: For Major Bell of Woolsington for Dinnington Church, June 1885 – March 1886. There are five stages at which certificates for payment of contractors will be issued, the final one in November 1886.  
 53. GA D2970 3/7

***Brinkworth***

54. GA D2970, 2/2 and *The Builder* of 4<sup>th</sup> October 1879  
 55. GA D2970, 1/17 There are four plans (i) new credence and chancel; (ib) new windows, choir stalls and credence, signed Middleton and Son Dec.1877; (2) section of east wall and reredos; (3) as 2 with wooden panels; (4) reseating plan.  
 56 *The Builder* op cit. Middleton's commission was £51.3.0, GA D2970, 3/7

## CHAPTER XVIII

*Wales: Llangynllo; Cenarth; Aberaeron; Llandysul; Capel Dewi; Llandygydd; Llechryd; Llanfihangel Ystrad; Newport (Pemb).*

During Middleton's residence in Cheltenham, he undertook many contracts in Wales, some ecclesiastical and some domestic. His church work included new buildings, rebuilding and many restorations, all reflecting the range of contracts on which he was engaged in Gloucestershire. Many of the Welsh churches had suffered from neglect in the period leading up to the 1840s and their renovation was due in no small part, to the appointment of committed and enthusiastic bishops. Many parishes were however very poor and covered large areas. Consequently, local fund raising was a major problem and there was often a long delay between the initiation of a project and its completion. Likewise many projects were followed through in stages as and when funding became available. Also, in order to keep costs as low as possible, local and naturally less experienced builder/architects were employed with their services paid for by local landowners. Grants from organisations like the Incorporated Church Building Society were available but the very high standards which they required often meant that applications for grant aid were turned down – or not even applied for.

One thing that strikes one on looking through the Middleton archive is that of nearly 240 extant drawings a third are for Wales. Various suggestions have been made as to how these came about, but it seems that his friendship with the Countess Dunraven of Clearwell in the Forest of Dean may be the answer. This has been referred to in the earlier chapter on Clearwell. The Bishop of St David's, Basil Jones has also been suggested as a possible connection, having transferred to St David's from Middleton's birthplace, York in 1874. However as this was seven years after Middleton's first Welsh contract of 1867, this is highly unlikely in the early years, although a strong and lasting friendship did develop between the Bishop and Middleton after the Bishop's appointment.

Most of Middleton's Welsh work was in the counties of Cardigan and Carmarthen with only a few contracts appearing for Pembrokeshire. This may seem rather a long way to travel from Cheltenham and could have presented difficulties over supervision of the work once it had been started, but communication was much easier in the second half of the nineteenth century than is at first imagined. The increased opportunity for rail transport enabled a traveller to leave Cheltenham at 6.10 am and to arrive in Swansea by 11.35, or Carmarthen by 12.58. If one preferred, one could leave Cheltenham just after midnight and reach Carmarthen by 6 am. On arrival, Middleton could guarantee that the client would have arranged transport to convey him to the site of the work for which he had been engaged. We know too that overnight accommodation was never a problem. He stayed several days when working on Cilgwyn, Newcastle Emlyn, for Mr Fitzwilliams and readily accepted the hospitality of the patron of the living when working on Maenclochog Church in Pembrokeshire.

The earliest known plans for work in Wales would appear to be those for rebuilding the church of St Cynllo at Llangynllo, Cardiganshire. These are signed John Middleton, Architect, Cheltenham and dated variously 1867 and March 1867 (1) The

medieval church had fallen into a serious state of disrepair and although repairs had been carried out periodically, most extensively in the 1840s, it was eventually decided to demolish and rebuild the church altogether, apart from the tower, 'which would provide a link with the past.' (2)

The church stands about three miles from the River Teifi and about four miles north east of Newcastle Emlyn. It is in a beautiful position, overlooking the estate of Bronwydd, now a ruin, but formerly the home of Sir Thomas Davies Lloyd, Bart, 1820 – 1877, who had rebuilt the mansion in 1853. (3) It was mainly through the financial support of Sir Thomas and his near neighbour Mr Gwinnett Tyler of Mount Gernos, that the Vestry Meeting agreed to adopt the rebuilding project for the church. (4) There is a strong possibility that this was one of the contracts which came about through the connection between the Tyler family of Mount Gernos and the Dunraven family in the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire. (5)

The church is built of stone in the Early English style and consists of nave, chancel, and vestry with the south porch beneath the tower and spire. On the north side there is an organ chamber beneath which is the boiler house. All the windows and door arches have carved stops on each side, mostly of crowned heads, but some with mitres. There is a fine small rose window above the west window with a similar one above the east window. Internally the church is an excellent example of High Victorian architecture, and shows the influence of the Cambridge Camden Society. The windows are of Bath stone and the church boasts many examples of marble and stone from Cornwall, Devon, California and Italy, used both in the decoration of the building as well as in some of the furnishings. The whole of the carving which makes one catch one's breath in awe as one enters, is the work of the Cheltenham firm of RL Boulton with whom Middleton worked so closely on many projects in Gloucestershire and Wales. Davies says "It is difficult to imagine anything more beautiful than his carving of the angels." (6)

The nave is lined with red brick and bands of black brick. The roof is open and is supported by six arched principals resting on twelve carved Bath stone corbels, each carved with flowers and foliage - rose, shamrock, thistle, oak, acorns, wheat, grapes, geraniums, willow, violet, lilies, daisies - and a harp. (7) Between the corbels, the wall is decorated with strong polychrome patterns. The nave floor is tiled and patterned and the walls carry several large and ornate memorial tablets to the Lloyd family. Many of these memorials are of white marble and alabaster, some decorated with ornamental canopies, coloured coats of arms, urns and cypresses and alabaster and black marble mouldings. (8) There are also several brass memorial tablets. The nave pews are of pine and several continue to support three-branched brass candelabra, very similar to those still to be seen at Clearwell in the Forest of Dean.

The chancel arch is richly and deeply moulded. Two short columns of Italian marble support this arch, and each column rests on a superbly carved group of three angels, carrying scrolls. These carry the legend, 'Glory to God in the Highest, on Earth Peace, Goodwill Towards Men.' On either side of the chancel arch are the carved heads of the four evangelists, Matthew and Mark facing the west end and Luke and John looking towards the east window. The chancel walls are lined with Bath stone, relieved with bands of red stone. The floor is laid with rich encaustic Minton tiles and the choir stalls carry very interesting brass candelabras. The roof of the chancel is



canted and divided into beautifully decorated panels separated by richly decorated mouldings. These panels bear a striking resemblance to those used by Middleton in his own house in Cheltenham. (9) The roof is supported by eight carved angels of delicate design. According to Whatmore, these are adaptations from the well known paintings by Fra Angelico (10). The angels are in various symbolic attitudes, some praying, some praising, some playing musical instruments and two over the sanctuary with hands folded in an attitude of perfect contentment, and very similar to those in the apsidal sanctuary of All Saints Church in Cheltenham. (11)

The vestry built by Middleton is now the organ chamber, the arch to which is supported by groups of carved angels, again carrying musical instruments and bearing scrolls with the legend, 'O come let us sing unto the Lord.' Within the sanctuary, separated from the choir by an open brass rail, one can see on the south side, an intricately carved credence and alongside it, a sedilia supported on an amusingly carved nationalist symbol – a bunch of leeks! There is also a richly carved rail of grapes, ears of corn, and lilies around the sanctuary.

Beneath the east window is a richly carved diapered reredos in which is placed a vesica of alabaster containing a floriated white marble cross with five coloured marble bosses. On either side of the vesica are roundels containing carved figures of worshipping angels. This reredos was presented to the church by Rosa Tyler of Mount Gernos shortly after the opening of the church and the central cross was the gift of John Middleton. (12)

The font near the south door was presented to the church, 'In memory of Grace Beatrice Daisy Tyler, April 25<sup>th</sup> 1869,' the date being her baptism day. It is octagonal and made of Caen stone with a red granite base. Clusters of water lilies support the bowl. The eight sides of the bowl are deeply sculptured, four with emblems of the evangelists and between them, the other faces bear scenes connected with the theme of baptism, including Christ's baptism. The pulpit is richly ornamented with eight varieties of stone. The upper portion is of variegated alabaster, the body of Caen stone with small dark granite pillars and the base is of a variety of free stone. On the Caen stone are carved St Paul, preaching to the Gentiles; on the right, St Peter holds the keys of heaven; on the left is St John the Evangelist. Between these three representations are pillars of Italian marble, and above, two medallions within the alabaster containing the carved heads of St David and St Cynllo. This pulpit was presented by the Lloyd family in memory of George Marteine Lloyd 1830 – 1849.

A further memorial of interest is the statue in the south-east corner of the nave, opposite the pulpit. It is in a superbly carved niche and represents the Old Testament character, Ruth, holding a sheaf of corn. Whatmore suggests that perhaps Ruth was substituted for the Virgin Mary, being considered less 'high church' in the 1870s. This statue was presented by Sir Thomas Lloyd in memory of his wife who had died in 1871. (13) The canopy above the statue is a superb piece of craftsmanship and is worthy of close inspection.

Family vaults of the houses of Bronwydd (Lloyd) and of Mount Gernos (Tyler) are in the graveyard at the west end of the church and Middleton was involved in their design.

St Cynllo is one of Middleton's gems, in fact the jewel in his Welsh crown. 'Mr John Middleton the architect, with the co operation of Sir Thomas Lloyd of Bronwydd and Mr Gwinnett Tyler of Mount Gernos, brought together all that was lovely, both in architecture and art into the sacred building.' (14)

Costing approximately £2,200 by 1870, the 1990s saw an urgent appeal for complete external restoration to the tune of £80,000. Much of the work has been completed and the church is now ready to withstand the ravages of wind and water for many years to come, carefully tended as it is by a small but dedicated, devoted and enthusiastic family of parishioners. (15)

Middleton's next Welsh church contract was for the rebuilding of St Llawddog's at Cenarth. An 1833 description of the original church described it as 'a small, neat edifice on an eminence above the village and the River Teifi, but without any architectural details of importance.' (16) By the 1860s it was in desperate need of repair having fallen into such a serious condition that services had to be held in the schoolroom. (17)

Middleton and Goodman were consulted and plans were drawn by John Middleton in May 1868. (18) Two drawings exist in the Gloucester Record Office, one containing a joist plan, foundation plan and a ground plan. This is endorsed on the reverse, 'This is one of the drawings referred to in the annexed contract. HL Davis, WOB (William Owen Brigstocke of Blaenpant, the squire) and Jenkins Evans.' (19) The second plan is endorsed by Jenkins Evans only and shows the south elevation with the bell turret, but no porch; a five sided apse at the east end; a nave section and the proposed west end with rose window and door beneath. Tenders to rebuild the church were invited in *The Welshman* of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1868 and between then and 1872, Middleton's accounts contain many references for travel expenses to Cenarth ranging from £1.16.0 to £2.15.6. (20)

The foundation stone was laid on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1868. This was one example when funds were raised over a period of time and the work completed in stages as money became available. When the old church was demolished, tombs were discovered under the foundations, suggesting an earlier church on the site. However Middleton's new church was formally opened in June 1872, having cost £1,700. *The Welshman* recording the event on 21<sup>st</sup> June made special mention of the octagonal apse – which is in fact pentagonal – and the elaborately carved chancel arch with its massive still-leaf corbels to the column shafts and similar capitals. The beautiful circular window of 1872 at the west end which contained seven six pointed lozenges, also received special mention, being the gift of Mrs Brigstocke, who by this date was a widow. (21) The apse has three lancet windows with Hardman glass of c1871 donated by Mr R Davies. Surprisingly, concern was expressed at the time about the weathering suitability of the Bath stone dressings (22)

The layout of the church consists of the apsidal chancel, entered through an elaborate arch; a nave and north and south aisles; a south porch; a north heating chamber and vestry, and a handsome bell turret for two bells. The mosaic floor is of an attractive design in glazed tiles, beneath which is the original coal fired heating system. The 1872 square pulpit is of heavily floriated Caen stone with red marble pillars, but the font is of most interest. The bowl dates from c1100 and this was surmounted on an

elaborate stone and marble pedestal by John Middleton. In *The Carmarthenshire Antiquary 1973*, the church is criticised for being of too ostentatious a design and the recent parish appeal brochure repeats the comment of one architect, that ‘the ceiling is the only good part of the building.’

These criticisms may be justified, and perhaps Middleton felt hurt by them, but he had other reasons to be disappointed. ‘His costs had only been paid in part by 1878 and in 1885 the accounts book is marked ‘A/c rendered - bad debt.’ (23)

A further example of a congregation having to worship in non-ecclesiastical surroundings because the church was in a dilapidated state, occurred at Aberaeron. The 1838 church had been built as a chapel of ease to cater for an influx of English or Anglicised minor gentry who came to settle in the town when the new harbour was being constructed. By 1870, this square Georgian style preaching house had fallen into a terrible state of decay and the bishop licensed the Town Hall as a place of worship until such time as sufficient public subscriptions had been made to build a new church. (24)

Middleton once again was awarded the contract to draw up plans and seek tenders for the work. He had first visited the town in 1871 when he stayed overnight at a cost of £3.16.4. (25) The plans he designed provided for a building in the French Gothic style comprising an apsidal chancel and sanctuary, a nave, and a tower and spire at the south-west angle. Seating was planned for 400 persons. (26) As with so many of Middleton’s churches, the work was accomplished in stages, as we saw at Cenarth. The first part consisted of the five bay aisle-less nave, and south east chapel, which was opened for worship on October 1<sup>st</sup> 1872 and the vestry, organ chamber and apsidal chancel. (27) A contemporary description drew attention to the roof with its eleven principals of arched ribs on stone corbels; the Caen stone pulpit relieved with florid carving and the arcading with its carved stone flowerheads on each of the marble columns. The encaustic floor tiles were by Godwin of Lugwardine. (28) The seats and the lectern were of pine and deal. Externally the dark local stone provided a distinctive contrast to the Bath stone dressings. (29) At this stage money was not available to complete the tower and spire.

The consecration of Holy Trinity Church took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1875, and perhaps everyone despaired that the architect’s plans for tower and spire would ever be achieved. Three stained windows were designed for the apse by Bell of Bristol, and the firm said they had never sent out better windows! The new font matched the stone pulpit but at the back of the church they retained an 800 year old font from Henfynyw Church, the mother parish. (30) The bills had all been paid by October 1874, and came to a total of £1,613.9.0 (31)

The determination to continue to work towards the completion of the tower and spire bore fruit. In June 1878 tenders were invited for their erection, the former estimated to cost £795, the latter £300. (32) This contract was awarded to Roderick Williams of Aberystwyth in 1880, again suggesting a delay because of the slow rate at which public subscriptions were received. (33)

Since completion there has been a major change to Middleton design for the east end. In 1899/1900 Middleton’s apsidal sanctuary was demolished and replaced by the

present square one, which was consecrated on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1900. (34) The windows from the original apse were re-used in the north wall of the new chancel. Apart from this and the painting and gilding of the chancel ceiling in 1966 – 1967, the church looks very much as Middleton left it, although in 2002, major restoration work was under way and the church was shrouded in scaffolding and protective sheeting.

The church of St Tysul at Llandysul is situated by the River Teifi and the extensive churchyard surrounding it is approached through a c1933 Lychgate. The church dates from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries and was repaired and re-pewed between 1829 and 1831 (35) It is of an unusual design, with nave, chancel, two side aisles and a square tower, but no transepts. It is also unusually large and this placed a heavy financial burden on the parishioners. Middleton and Goodman were the architects appointed to restore the church and tenders were invited in August 1872, although Middleton had been consulted as early as 1870 (36) The work had been commissioned by the Vicar, the Reverend WG Jenkins, acting in the absence of the Rector of the living who was at that time Principal of Jesus College Oxford. (37)

The interior of the church prior to Middleton's restoration was plastered and white washed and part of his work involved removing the plaster to reveal the original stonework. (38) This was remarked upon in the *Cardiganshire Antiquarian Society's Journal* of 1967, when it spoke of 'the simple beauty of restoration in the pointed stonework of 1874'. Additional work by Middleton included the insertion of a moulded and shafted north aisle doorway of Bath stone and a south aisle window with ball flower decoration. He also replaced two windows with intersecting tracery. Previously the church had had a low single roof over the nave and the aisles. Middleton raised the nave roof to a height above that of the aisles and there are indications that the floor level may also have been altered. The chancel was definitely rebuilt and the height of its roof raised. The panelled ceiling is supported on arch braced trusses on stone corbels in the shape of musical angels, obviously carved by Boulton. The chancel also contains a fine traceried north window, an ornate east window with an original carved head above it and a south lean to with a traceried window and door.

The Caen stone pulpit is richly decorated and carries a statue of St Paul. The pulpit stands on red marble pillars and this too was carved by Boulton of Cheltenham. This was a really major work by Middleton, almost amounting to a complete rebuilding, apart from the tower. (39) The cost, in the region of £2,300, was met partly by public subscription and partly by ICBS grants. (40)

Nearby is Capel Dewi, rebuilt in 1835 as a chapel of ease to Llandysul. In 1883 John Middleton invited tenders for alterations to the church and the work started in June 1884 but was not completed until after Middleton's death. The church stands on the banks of the River Clettwr and the financing was heavily supported by Captain Stewart, who paid £1,000 towards the cost. (41) The church is a very pretty cruciform building with west tower, nave, chancel, very shallow central transepts and a vestry. Middleton made an initial inspection visit at a cost of five guineas and drew plans of the existing church. He then drew plans for its enlargement, alteration and restoration of the windows, the chancel arch, the roof, tower and nave. The project was also to include complete reglazing and re-flooring. The work was contracted to J and D Evans for £985. With architect's fees, contract and stamp the final cost reached

£1,050. The firm's fees were 'account rendered' in July 1886 and then settled. (42) Middleton's designs in fact resulted in the rebuilding of the chancel with two perpendicular windows of two lights to the south wall and a three-light east window. On the north side he installed a vestry with a three-light window. The larger three-light Perpendicular traceried window in the transept also dates from this period.

On entering the church one is immediately impressed by the fine, single, open, barrel roof, plastered walls and moulded arches to the transepts which also have roofs similar to that in the nave. There is no chancel arch but there are segmented pointed inner arches to the chancel windows, all to Middleton's design. The font, lectern and wooden pulpit desk were supplied in 1886 by Jones and Willis, and the cross and candlesticks were supplied by Singers of Frome. Again, this contract was a considerable one, which unfortunately Middleton was unable to see completed. (43)

A new church had been built at Llandygydd between 1855 and 1857. In 1874 Middleton was invited to design and install a new reredos and pulpit (44). The local press provided eloquent descriptions of these additions to the church. The reredos, 'of most chaste and beautiful character' was in memory of a Mrs Buck. The base was of Bath stone with diaper pattern, supporting nine arcades flanked by larger outer ones containing the commandments, carved and coloured gold on white marble. The arches of the arcade were supported by beautifully polished granite shafts with floriated capitals. The central arch had a cross of white marble set on an engraved black marble background. The outer arches had white alabaster medallions of grapes and corn. The pulpit, in memory of William Brigstocke for whose widow Middleton had worked previously at Cenarth, was of Caen stone supported on four polished granite shafts. The three faces comprised panels each engraved and enriched with alabaster medallions, all with good floral patterns. The bookstand on the pulpit was of polished marble. These furnishings, to Middleton's designs, cost £250.

Sadly the church was demolished in 2000 and now only the nave floor remains with the font still in place at the west end, and all totally exposed to the elements.

The neighbouring church at Llechryd provides another example of 'new for old' and Middleton's involvement from October 1876 necessitated making plans of the existing church and then drawing plans and designs for a new church. (45) The estimated cost of the building in stone with chancel, nave, one aisle, south porch, belfry with one bell and seating for one hundred persons amounted to £1,083. Middleton's sparse accounts for this project show payment on agreement, stamp duty, travel and superintendence of the work, an account which was settled in April 1880. The church dedicated to St Tydfil must look today very much as Middleton designed it. The bell tower above the west window still houses its bell. The south porch is part stone, part wood and glazed. Internally the church is of painted brick and the windows are not coloured. The four light east window is very plain as are the side windows in the raised chancel, around which runs a band of terra cotta laurel leaves in relief. The arch to the chancel is not carved and springs from square, stone, painted, internal buttresses. The ceiling is supported on heavy beams resting on simple corbels positioned well below the string course. The pews are red pine. As the cost might indicate, this is not one of Middleton's most sumptuous churches but at the consecration by the Bishop of St David's on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1878, the church was

packed with 'the elite of the district' and in the evening over 300 crammed into the building for the Litany. (46)

Captain Herbert Vaughan was the grandson of John Vaughan of Green Grove, Cardiganshire, who had assumed the surname Lloyd on inheriting, in addition to Green Grove, the Brynog Estate. Herbert succeeded to the estate on the death of his elder brother in the Crimea in 1855 (47) In 1873 Middleton was invited to undertake two completely different contracts for Captain Vaughan – one on the Church of St Michael at Llanfihangel Ystrad, and one on the old manor house which was in the parish. Middleton made his first visit to the very dilapidated ancient medieval church in 1873 and tenders were immediately invited for its complete restoration, and at the same time, for the building of a vicarage. His initial plans were highly criticised by the ICBS and they described the whole design as exceedingly bad, 'so bad that it is suggested that the whole be reconsidered. The church is a parallelogram divided by an arcade and your present scheme is at variance with the old design.' (48)

Captain Vaughan, through whose efforts the project first got under way, replied that the present design was on the foundations of the original old church in existence some centuries ago which had been later altered in the form sent to the ICBS. Middleton clarified this further by writing, "You have mistaken my survey drawings of the church at present, for my plans!" He explained further that some sixty to seventy years previously, the chancel projected as far as was shown on the new plan, but it was in such bad repair that without funds, it had been shortened as shown. The old church had no features of interest – wooden windows, very rough arcading and no mouldings.

The ICBS would have none of it and insisted that the church was interesting as it was. No change in the arcading was called for. Middleton supported by Vaughan and the Rector emphasised that the arcading was hideous and very bad. The bellcote also was in a dangerous state and that whatever happened they intended to proceed.

The ICBS refused to accept the designs stating that 'The destruction of these ancient and very characteristic Welsh churches is too common and cannot be too strongly deprecated.' (49) In the event, Middleton succeeded in a complete rebuilding which included the chancel, nave, vestry, north aisle and store room. This was completed by 1877 at a cost of £1,300. A report ten years later said that he had left nothing except the font dated 1180, an old oak chest dated 1661 and some medieval masonry in the aisle and nave. (50) The church consists of nave and north aisle separated by a four bay arcade, with double chamfered arches on round pillars. The internal walls are of exposed local stone with Bath stone dressings. The chancel is of three bays and is approached through a slender, pointed arch which rests on clusters of triple shafts with foliated capitals. (51) The ceiling here is ribbed and boarded. There is a fine four light east window and the reredos is a triple gabled, carved stone design with cusped arches on small, coloured marble columns. The wooden nave ceiling beams rest on moulded stone corbels and the north aisle has a scissor truss roof. (52) All the floors are suspended. Externally the buttresses are of 1877 vintage as is most of the pointing. The Vaughans were not a particularly wealthy family and one wonders how so much money was raised to restore the church without ICBS support. Further plans were provided in 1880 for a tower and spire, but did not materialise. (53) The porch and bellcote are 1928 additions.

Further work in the parish was undertaken by Middleton between 1879 and 1883 and this was in connection with the vicarage. After the church was completed he was asked to report on the condition of the Old Manor House for the Church Commissioners. (54) His report included plans of the building as it then was and specifications for complete restoration. Fees for the drawings, fair plans, specifications and superintendence of the work were paid in full in January 1885, and amounted to £1,074. (55) This must refer not to Vaughan's manor house, Brynog, but to the old 18<sup>th</sup> century building called in Middleton's ledgers, 'Llanfihengel Vicarage, the Old House.' (56)

The old town of Newport, Pembrokeshire, is dominated by its castle and its parish church of St Mary. Middleton was called upon to work on both of these ancient buildings in the late 1870s early 1880s, but work on the castle may not have been completed by him.

The 13<sup>th</sup> century Parish Church was the subject of neglect and weathering and in spite of extensive restoration in the 1830s the newly appointed Rector in 1875 found the church 'disfigured and dilapidated.' The *Tivyside Advertiser* of October 1879 described the condition of the building as dreadful, with very rotten wooden window frames, a leaking whitewashed roof and the walls so cracked that ivy had penetrated them and was flourishing inside the building. This was not an unusual condition in which to find church buildings in mid Victorian Wales but by the 1870s there was a great feeling for restoration and renovation as Middleton's work in the Principality bears witness.

A restoration committee was formed in 1877 and Middleton and Son of Cheltenham were appointed architects. (57) Middleton had already made a reputation for himself in the area and his acquaintance with the Lloyd family of Bronwydd may have influenced his appointment. (58) In fact Middleton had made an initial visit to the church in 1875, perhaps at the new Rector's request and the Lloyds' suggestion. (59) However whatever the motivation, plans signed 'Middleton and Son, Cheltenham, March 1878' were approved by the ICBS on 16<sup>th</sup> April that year. (60) At least 23 drawings were produced including some for the chancel seats and panels. The agreement between the Rector on behalf of the restoration committee and William and David Evans of Cilgerran, the building contractors, 'for work contracted, to be executed for £1,999.14.0' is dated 15<sup>th</sup> May 1878, (61) This document also gives the names of the committee members and these include Sir Martine Lloyd of Bronwydd.

The work was scheduled to be completed by 15<sup>th</sup> May 1879 and would deliver the said Parish Church in a clean and perfect state fit for use. There was a six month period allowed for inspection and re-instalment of any defective work and the final payment to the contractors was to be made within four months after the architect had notified the client that all was completed according to contract.

An addition to the agreement stated that, 'in the first instance, work must not exceed £1,579.16.0' and that further work was to be proceeded with only on the authority of the committee. The overall cost was made up of:

Chancel	£419.18.0
Nave, Transepts, Chancel arch	1452. 0 .0
Porch	38. 0 .0
Tower	89.16.0

Middleton's plans are very detailed, from the size of the bolts, to the thickness of the wood carving and the minute details of the window carvings.

The thirteenth century west tower was not touched and is in fact the only part of the old church to remain, but a new window was put into the west end in place of the original one. Soil was lowered around the tower to reveal an escutcheon on each side of the west door in the tower wall. Middleton declared that he had never seen one before. While pulling down the wall which closed up the tower arch, he also found a holy water stoop in its south wall. (62)

Middleton designed the church in the Early English style but was careful to follow the proportions of the original church and to build on the original foundations. (63) He gave the transepts their present double arches although the north transept had only been constructed in 1810, but the south transept was wide and original with one gable. However Middleton found an old print which showed that it originally had had two, so he restored it that way. Likewise the double arches of this south transept were rebuilt as Middleton believed they would have been originally. This decision was based on the discovery of a pier of the old columns which he found during the restoration work.

The walls were repointed and raised several feet and the marks of the original roof line can still be seen on some parts of the walls especially in the north transept. The chancel was rebuilt to a longer and lower design and the roof was replaced. The wooden windows were taken out and replaced with stone ones, the side ones being filled with coloured glass. The floor was relaid with Godwin's encaustic tiles. In the nave the old high backed pews were removed and replaced with those now currently in use. The old gallery at the west end was removed, making room for a vestry under the tower, separated from the nave by a screen filled with ornamental glass. (64) The big three-decker pulpit in front of the chancel arch was removed and a new freestone pulpit was provided, sculpted by local masons. The ancient Norman font was then stripped of its caked whitewash and retained. All the wrought ironwork for the church was supplied by Letheren of Cheltenham. As well as the discovery of the ancient holy water stoop mentioned above, fragments of a 14th century coffin lid which had been discovered many years previously, were transferred to the new vestry, cemented together and mounted on a stone slab.

At the opening of the church, the Bishop commented that Middleton's restoration had provided "one of the handsomest and most commodious churches in Pembrokeshire." (65) He made a comparison in the course of his sermon, between his visit four years previously and the present occasion. The final cost of the work, including the architect's fees was just over £2,500. Middleton had indeed produced a good solid church 'with none of the polished marble and Gothic fantasies of his work in Cheltenham and in avoiding such Victorian excesses, had produced a fine handsome church' (66)



While still considering Middleton's work in Newport, it is interesting to note that the Middleton archive at Gloucester Record Office refers to the following charges against the estate of the late Sir Thomas Lloyd, Bart: (67)

Plans for additional room and porch at Newport Castle and battlements - 1877.  
Examining and reporting on Round Tower at Newport, being converted into rooms for the new Corporation – paid 1878  
Superintendence and monument to late Lady Lloyd.  
Designs for Bookcase, screens, doorways etc in the entrance hall at Bronwydd, paid 1878.

It has not been possible to confirm to date, whether all of this work was actually completed apart that is, from the monument to Lady Lloyd which presumably refers to the statue of Ruth in Llangynllo church. In 1859 - 1860, RK Penson built a house in the ruins of the gate-house at Newport Castle for Sir Thomas Lloyd. In the 1880s, David Jenkins, architect, of Llandeilo directed further alterations which *may* have been the work planned by Middleton, indicated above. 'Abutting the east gable of (Penson's) house is a later extension. At ground floor level there is a projecting porch with a two centred arched doorway which forms the rear entrance to the lower ground floor. This is closed by a Gothic style door. Between this porch and the east gable is a narrower two centred arched doorway that gives access to the narrow ground floor chamber. The first floor elevation has a central two centred arched light. The pent-roof is butted against a rebuilt east wall of the gate-house.' (68) This provides an exciting opportunity for further research by the local historian.

## ***References, Chapter XVIII***

### ***Llangynllo***

- 1 GRAD2970 1/108 and Tender advertisement in *Carmarthen Journal* 1.3.1867. The foundation stone of the church was laid by Harriet Uda Tyler, August 1868 and the church was opened by the Bishop of St David's in 1870. (ER Horsfall-Turner, BA. 1902.)
- 2 Whatmore, 1998, to whom I am grateful for permission to quote extensively from his Church History.
- 3 In 1853 Thomas Lloyd employed RK Penson to rebuild the family home as a Romantic castle. He was enthralled by the Camelot tradition, as Middleton himself seems to have ..... been when one considers his own home in Cheltenham. At the same time, Lloyd purchased for .. ... £700 the old castle ruins at Newport, Pembrokeshire, part of which he then restored as a residence ... for himself, again designed by RK Penson, but for part of which Middleton prepared some .....designs. (See Newport.)
- 4 Sir Thomas Lloyd and Gwinnett Tyler made gifts of one of only two sets of jewelled plate in Cardiganshire. Kept in an old chest made from a beam from the old church, a ... .....vellum scroll records: "To the honour and glory of God, the plate for the Holy Communion was ... ..... presented to Llangynllo Church by the Houses of Bronwydd and Mount Gernos AD 1870." The ... .. jewels in the chalice represent the initials of the Christian names and surnames of the two ... .. families. On the base are written:
  - 1 Lapis Lazuli – Sir Thomas Lloyd
  - 2.Hyacinth – Henrietta M Llooyd
  - 3.Malachite – Marteine OM Lloyd
  4. Topaz – Gwinnett Tyler
  5. Jasper – Judith Tyler
  6. Garnet – Gwinnett George Tyler

On the bosses are the names of the six youngest children of Mount Gernos. Whatmore op cit.

- 5 'Rural depopulation and a depressed countryside in the last decades of the 1800s led the Lloyds of .....Bronwydd in conjunction with South Wales notables like Windham Quin of Dunraven who had .....estates in Glamorgan and Ireland to support the Welsh Industries' Association towards .....developing an Arts and Crafts market based on rural industries. The buoyant woollen industry in .... the lower Teifi valley led the Tylers of Mount Gernos to set up a weaving and dyeing mill at .....Maesllyn in the 1890s.' Baker Jones.1999. (In fact Maesllyn was set up in the 1880s.)
- 6 Davies 1905.
- 7 Whatmore. op cit.
- 8 Whatmore. op cit.
- 9 Saved at the demolition of Middleton's Cheltenham home, in 1977 and now in the .....Cheltenham Museum Store Room.
- 10 Whatmore. op cit.
- 11 .The chancel was designed to represent the Church Triumphant, the Nave, the Church .....  
..... Militant. Evan Davies, op cit.
- 12 . *Kelly's Directory* and Evan Davies op cit.
- 13 .GA D2970 3/1 Plans for monument to late Lady Lloyd 1877  
3/7 Superintendence and drawings for monument to late Lady Lloyd.  
Sir Thomas died July 1877 and was succeeded by his son Marteine Owen Mowbray  
.Lloyd,Bart.
- 14 Davies op cit. Thomas Lloyd ,in correspondence with the author wrote, "Middleton's work is ..... very correct and efficient but in some churches too ornate for their setting. On the other hand ..... many parishes were short of cash and had little chance to show off, Llangynllo and Mount .....Gernos being two exceptions."
- 15 Appeal literature 1999.

### ***Cenarth***

- 16 TD Lewis 1833.
- 17 Sir Stephen Glynne described the church in 1855 : "Nave, chancel, South transeptal chapel. Over .....the west gable is a bell turret with two open arches for the bells. The church is long and the .. .....ground rises considerably to the east. There is a plain pointed chancel arch, and a projection in .....the south wall. All the windows are modern and very bad. There is no west window but a plain .....pointed door. The chancel and nave are both 'ceiled'. The font is early, with a square bowl and .....common scalloping, the stem being cylindrical. There is a cross on the east gable. The outer ..... walls are whitewashed." *Carmarthenshire Society of Antiquaries*: The font described by Glynne  
... is now at Penbryn and the cross on the gable found a new home on the porch of the vicarage.
- 18 GA D2970 1/25
- 19 See notes on Kidwelly
- 20 GA D2970 2/2
- 21 Thomas Lloyd says that the window is completely out of place, "but full marks for trying."
- 22 Details from the Listed Buildings Report: Grade II Reg.No 14226.
- 23 GA D2970 3/1

### ***Aberaeron***

- 24.. Church History available in the church.
- 25.. GA D2970 3/1
- 26 National Library of Wales: Aberaeron 22 & 23. Specifications for erecting and finishing a .....complete church at Aberaeron according to the drawings prepared by Middleton and Goodman,  
..... Architects 1871. Stamped and approved ICBS 16<sup>th</sup> May 1871.  
At the NLW there is an elevation and plan similar to Middleton's by Edward Haycock of Salop,  
... Architect 1871. (Aberaeron 25). There are also estimates for stone carving by Boulton, c1872; an  
... account from Boulton for a new pulpit to the designs of Middleton and Goodman; an account for  
... Godwin tiling and an account for "extra work by David Davies." (Aberaeron 26 – 29)
- 27 *Tivyside Advertiser* notice of 20<sup>th</sup> September 1872. 'Several distinguished Clergymen have .....promised attendance. There will be an English service.'
- 28 NLW Aberaeron 26-29
- 29 *The Welshman* 4<sup>th</sup> October 1872
- 30 Church History available at the church: The font is square with chamfered corners each .....containing a Christian emblem with the four faces deeply carved, each with a marble pebble in

- .....the centre of a flower. The bowl stands on a central stone column surrounded by four polished  
.....marble pillars with plain corbels.
- 31 NLW printed balance sheet, Aberaeron 30 - 31
- 32 *Tivyside Advertiser* 13<sup>th</sup> September 1878: “The contract for a tower and spire has been taken by  
... Messrs Roderick Williams & Son for £900. Work must be completed by 1<sup>st</sup> November.” Also  
... NLW Aberaeron 32, “ Work on the tower at Aberaeron in accordance with the designs by  
.....Middleton and Goodman”. The spire is a short squat example.
- 33 *Listed Building* description and personal observation by author: The tower is a lofty one ...  
.....surmounted by a shallow spire and vane. It is in three stages and the top stage has Gothic  
.....louvres on all sides. The central stage has a gothic window on the west side only above the  
.....main doorway into the church. This doorway has a pointed moulded inner arch and an outer  
.....toothed one. These rest on heavy, chunky short pillars set into the wall, which in turn rest on the  
.....square cut continuation of the porch wall. The dog tooth pattern continues into the walls of the  
.....doorway and horizontally along the front of the tower as far as the corner buttresses.
- 34 NLW: Aberaeron 33, by Middleton’s successors, Prothero and Phillott, 1899.

### **Llandysul**

- 35 CADW reference, 22/D/15/(5) Grade II\*
- 36 GA D2970 2/2. Plans D2970 1/100
- 37 *Listed Building* information. Reg No 10574
- 38 Sir Stephen Glynne recorded his visit to the church in 1855: Arcades of plain, tall, pointed ...  
.....arches, no moulding or ornament of any kind. The windows are all ugly, modern gothic, and the  
.....chancel walls seem to have been rebuilt. The interior is pewed, tolerably regular but with a bare  
.....frigid look. There is a huge pulpit with a sounding board in the chancel arch. The font has a  
.....broken bowl on a square base.
- 39 *Tivyside Advertiser* 12<sup>th</sup> June 1874, “The church was reopened 10<sup>th</sup> June, Wednesday last.”
- 40 Parish History, “*St Tysul’s Church, Llandysul*’ 1978.

### **Capel Dewi**

- 41 Tender advertisement, *The Welshman* 11<sup>th</sup> April 1883, “J Middleton, Architect.” Memorial  
.....plaque records, “To the glory of God and in memory of Agnes Marshall Stewart who died  
.....October 1<sup>st</sup> 1883. This church was restored by her family in 1886.” ( ie, completed by  
.....Middleton, Prothero and Phillott)
- 42 GA D2970 3/9: ‘St David’s for Captain Stewart of Altyrobin, Carmarthenshire: 1884 – 1885 ...  
Settled July 1886. Payment certificates will be issued as and (i) when windows are up to the  
.....springing; (ii) when the chancel window and arch are finished; (iii) when all is ready for the  
.....roof; (iv) when the roof is covered in; (v) when the windows are glazed; (vi) when the flooring  
.....is finished; (vii) when the whole is complete.’
- 43 CADW reference 22/D/27 (6). *Listed Building* report. Reg No 10,585. Grade II

### **Llandygydd**

- 44 *The Welshman* 27<sup>th</sup> February 1874 and GRO D2970 3/1 April 1874.  
GA D2970 3/1 “For William Buck, fair and working drawings, superintendence, contract  
.....etc., in connection with the erection of the reredos at Llandygydd Church. Paid April 11<sup>th</sup>  
.....1874

### **Lechryd**

- 45 *Tivyside Advertiser* 29<sup>th</sup> December 1876 “Mr Lascelles of Pencraig has generously given the  
.....site for the new church in the village. The necessary steps will be taken to commence building  
.....but certain legal formalities are necessary before active measures can be adopted.” Similarly,  
.....*Tivyside Advertiser* 13<sup>th</sup> July 1877: “The laying of the foundation stone by Mrs Rowley  
.....Lascelles of Pencraig took place on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> . The architect Mr J Middleton was present as  
.....well as many interested in the progress.”
- 46 *Tivyside Advertiser* 13<sup>th</sup> September 1878 “The Lord Bishop has fixed 19<sup>th</sup> September for the  
.....consecration of the church at 11am. At 3.30 the Litany will be led by Reverend Rowley  
.....Lascelles of West Lavington, Sussex. The Clergy are to wear surplices”.
- The Tivyside Advertiser* 27<sup>th</sup> September 1878 reported the consecration service in full, and  
included in the report “The church was erected from the designs of Middleton and Son. The  
style is Early English and the nave is 30 feet by 18 feet and the chancel 14 feet by 13 feet six  
inches. There is a vestry and organ chamber to the north. The internal walls are lined with

brick, some coloured and arranged in patterns. There is a band or relief pattern of laurel leaves in terra cotta in the chancel. The side windows are plain, the east and west windows are filled with tracery. An ornamental wooden screen divides the vestry and organ chamber from the chancel. The roof in the nave and the chancel is open. The seats are open and the choir has full stalls on both sides. All the seats are polished red pine. The pulpit is of handsome polished oak on a Bath stone pedestal and was presented by the contractors, Thomas and Evans. The font is of plain Bath stone. The external walls are of local stone. The Vicar is Rev James Owen, the Patron Mr TE Lloyd.”

### ***Llanfihangel Ystrad.***

47 *Landed Gentry of Great Britain.*

48 The old design is described by Sir Stephen Glynne on his visit in 1847: A plain body, north aisle, .....no marked chancel, no porch, open belfry at west end. Glaring with whitewash. Arcade formed .....by four very rude pointed arches with large wall piers, no mouldings or capitals. The font is .....attached to one pier, and has a large bowl, scalloped below on a circular shaft, set on two high .....steps. The windows are all modern. Eastern (chancel) end is boarded, the rest plastered. The .....whole is pueed (sic). (Summarised by author)

49 ICBS 7915. Information courtesy Thomas Lloyd. Years later, John Henry Middleton, in dispute .....with the ICBS over his designs for another church, reminded them, “You often quarrelled with .....my late father over taste and style.” ICBS 9041 1886.

50 1887 report in *The Welshman* 15<sup>th</sup> July 1887.

51 Compare Glynne’s description at 48 above.

52 CADW description: Well designed 19<sup>th</sup> century parish church surprisingly large for .....Cardiganshire, which retains medieval masonry and the unusual emphasis on reproducing the ... .....idea of the aisled plan of the old church.

53 GA D2970 3/1

54 GA D2970 3/7, “Llanfihangel Vicarage, The Old House.”

55 *ibid.*

56 The old vicarage was on the same site as the present one but nearer the road, ie further north. ....Information provided by present incumbent (2001). Plan at GA D2970 1/107 No 1

### ***Newport, Pembrokeshire***

57.....Listed building details, Reg No 12,483 Grade II\* Large 13<sup>th</sup> century West Tower. ...Restoration .....and rebuilding 1879 on original foundations by John Middleton and Son. The .....Contract/Agreement is at Pembrokeshire Record Office, Haverfordwest, Ref HPR/33/47

58... Thomas Lloyd was Lord Marcher with the right to appoint the mayor of Newport.

59....GA D2970 2/2

60... Pembrokeshire Records Office Agreement Documents, HPR33/47 and Plans HPR/33/48

61.. As above at 57.

62... Wallace-Hadrill, 1989.

63.. *The Welshman* 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1879

64.. *ibid*

65.. Richard Hurlock in correspondence with the author shared the following amusing ... .. information: “Willis Bund writing in 1888 in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* entered a plea on ...the .. .....lamentable source of destruction to antiquarian remains in South Wales. “I regret the ...Bishop .....(St David’s) can bring himself to speak of these restorations as satisfactory.” ... (Llanybydder .....was included in his list of examples.) The east window, post Middleton, ...commemorates the .....Rector, Canon Evan Jones who died in 1904 and who was responsible ....for initiating the .....restoration work under Middleton. The *Tivyside Advertiser* noted that ...the total cost of the .....project was just over £2,500.

66.. Wallace-Hadrill *op cit.*

67.. GA D2970 3/7 and 2/2 1877

68 RCAHM Wales, ‘Newport Castle’ 1992.

**I am grateful to the occupiers of the house, Mr & Mrs Holt, for giving of their time in ...showing me these alterations and additions and discussing with me the possible architects.**

## CHAPTER XIX

*Clydey; Maenclochog; Llangynllo; Llansawel; Eglwyswrw; Henllan; Llanpumpsaint; Aberystwyth; Llandeiniol; Llansadwrn; Carmarthen; Llanybydder; St Clears; Kidwelly; Llanfihangel Abercywyn; Llandyfriog; St David's; Abergwili; Lampeter.*

It has already been made clear that many of Middleton's projects both in England and in Wales were completed in stages as funds became available. It was often the case that after he had been consulted, he drew up plans which were not actually started until some years later. St Clydai's church at Clydey is an example of such a delay. The church actually dates from c1490 and is a plain, heavy building with a massive square tower. Repairs had been carried out in the early 1800s but in 1874 Middleton visited the church to make an inspection with a view to a complete restoration. A visitor to the church at this same time, Richard Rolt Brash, wrote that the church 'is of the rudest type, built of common rubble masonry with a modern deal roof, no ceiling and having no features of any merit.'<sup>(1)</sup> Further visits by Middleton followed in 1875, 1876 and 1877, when Middleton's accounts show an expense of £1.18.0 for a plated trowel for Clydey Church. (2) An application to the ICBS the previous year had described the church as very rotten but although it was planned to rebuild, parts of the church walls could possibly be kept. Estimates for the work amounted to £1175, and the intention was to provide an Early English nave and chancel, a south aisle, tower vestry and north porch. The ICBS objected to the plans (3) and enlisted the architect RK Penson to inspect and report upon the state of the building. He described the church as having an arcade of local thin stone, and plastered throughout. There was a square headed three-light window with sandstone dressings but no other window had any detail. There was also a notable rood stair. The newly appointed incumbent was determined to proceed with rebuilding whatever the outcome of Penson's report and when the ICBS refused to make a grant for Middleton's designs, an appeal was launched to raise the necessary funds by public subscription.

The Middleton archive (4) shows costs for making a copy of the agreement to rebuild Clydey Church, dated 1879; making plans of the existing church; making plans and designs for the restoration, which would include rebuilding the nave and the aisles; building a new chancel and repairs to the tower. The estimated cost of the new chancel was £325 and the remaining work £875. A further item provided for was the construction of a new vicarage which was built in 1878, a mortgage for £350 being raised that year.

Work began in earnest in 1878 and the restoration was so dramatic that it amounted to rebuilding. Nothing remained of the original windows and arcade. (5) Those that one now sees are Middleton's Early English designs. The south door was closed and replaced by a window. A new door with a fine porch with pointed arch and lancet windows and diagonally set buttresses, was provided at the north-west corner of the nave. A holy water stoup possibly of 13<sup>th</sup> century vintage was reset alongside the north door and the deal roof mentioned by Brash was replaced by a fine pitch pine structure covered with Preseli slates. The tower was hardly touched but the battlements were rebuilt and a small spire added. This was removed in 1973. Middleton's fees were paid partly in 1879 and finally in 1883. (6) *The Welshman* and *The Pembrokeshire County Guardian* do not report on the opening of the church until

July 1889 which would suggest that it took until then to raise the final amount required to free the church from all debt. (7)

The Press description of the completed church is quite complimentary – ‘ a handsome Bath stone arcade, massive early period tower and steeple, a most handsome church seating 380.’ For the first time, mention was made of the chancel, a continuation of the north aisle. The church guide describes it as being of slightly more elaborate detail than the rest of the church and this may be explained by the Press report of the opening in 1889 where two ‘architects’ are credited with the work. ‘First portion (nave etc) Middleton and Son. Chancel, D. Davies, Llandysul.’ In Middleton’s plans, the chancel is drawn in red, with the note, ‘NB: red tint shows the part to be tendered for separately.’ (8) Middleton had died in February 1885 and it may have seemed that the work would never be completed according to his plans, due to lack of funding. However if, as seems probable, funds later became available, the incumbent may have decided upon a local architect/builder to complete the work adding detail to Middleton’s original design.

While working on Clydey church, Middleton was also engaged on another ‘rebuilding on old foundations’ project at Llangynllo in Powys. The work at St Cynllo’s church provided a nave and chancel under one roof but separated by the chancel arch and the north transept. This work was completed by 1878, although the south porch and battlemented tower were rebuilt by FR Kempson in the 1890s. (9)

A commission which is very similar to the challenge presented at Clydey, was accepted by Middleton in 1879 at Llansawel. His plans for restoration are dated 1879 but it was not until 1885, and six months after his death, that the work was put in hand. (10) According to the 1898 history of Llansawel the church had been thoroughly repaired in 1861 so Middleton’s plans just eighteen years later may have been a restoration and alteration in line with the current vogue and nothing more. The 1885 – 1887 work carried out by Middleton’s son, John Henry and his partners Prothero and Phillott followed Middleton’s plans very closely. The report of the opening (11) enthused over the interior which looked all new with red pine pews, and six new gothic windows of Forest of Dean red sandstone in the nave. The aisle had been retiled and a new pulpit erected by Martyn and Emms of Cheltenham. The roof had been heightened and a very handsome gothic east window of plain glass set in Forest of Dean stone had been installed. The chancel floor was tiled by Godwin of Hereford at great cost and the chancel roof had been panelled. The cost of the chancel restoration had been met by Sir James Williams Drummond of nearby Edwinstford, who had also donated a handsomely carved lectern. (12) As part of the restoration, a new vestry had been added and gravestones in the churchyard had been ‘repaired’

Further work on restoring the tower was completed in 1890 and a new reredos was installed in memory of Sir James Williams Drummond. Middleton’s accounts identify the restoration from September 1885 to June 1886. Payment of £885.11.6 was made to Daniel Davis builder, in 1887, accompanied by a pencilled note ‘contractor bankrupt’. (13)

One contract for this period which Middleton certainly did live to see accomplished and for which there is much surviving correspondence at Pembrokeshire Record Office, is the restoration of the old church at Maenclochog.

St Mary's church is in the centre of the village and since its 11<sup>th</sup> century foundation, it has been rebuilt and restored on several occasions. Since the 1700s it had consisted of a simple nave with a side chapel in the south transept. In the early 1870s the vicar sought the advice of the Diocesan Registrar about restoration and eventually wrote to the Bishop of St David's asking if he could recommend an architect. (14) The Bishop's reply reads,

"I venture to suggest my friend Mr Middleton of Cheltenham who has done much good work in the diocese."

It would seem that a Mr Reynolds, a Haverfordwest architect, had originally been suggested by the vicar or one of the restoration committee. The Bishop informed the vicar that the ICBS would only consider plans drawn by a duly qualified architect and although he might be doing Mr Reynolds an injustice, he hardly thought he could be a member of the RIBA. The promoter of the project, the Honourable Mrs Owen, widow of the founder of the Maenclochog Railway, received a letter from the Bishop, written from his Palace at Abergwili on May 28<sup>th</sup> 1880. In it he said, "Mr Middleton comes here tomorrow. He can easily visit and inspect Maenclochog church from this place as the trains are convenient." Middleton obviously made the visit on June 3<sup>rd</sup> as the vicar wrote a most interesting letter to Mrs Owen from which we get a lovely personal picture of Middleton at work. Remember the 'old gentleman' was just sixty years of age!

"Dear Madam,

I write a line to say that the architect was here and he was a nice old gentleman. He spent about two hours in church, my boy helping him with a ladder to hold the tape. He came in and had a luncheon with us and I drove him down to Moat and back for the midday train for Clynderwen. He told me he was going to write to you at once. He was going to London to restore some church. (15) I think he must be a man of great experience – I should have liked you to see him. He said very little to me but I expect he will not build any new Transcept (sic) but restore the old church in its former character. He is afraid that the Church BS (ICBS) will give very little to us as quite out of funds.

He liked the old church and said it was very clean. He said that he will prepare plans at once for your inspection and send plans to the Bishop, of the church as it now stands. He said that I must (?) restore all the chancel at my own expense and that I shall be supplied with estimates to that effect as I am Rector of the Living."

Middleton did write to Mrs Owen from Westholme, his home in Cheltenham and in the letter which was written on June 25<sup>th</sup>, he explained the delay in writing.

"By this post I have forwarded the design for the restoration of Maenclochog church. I hope it will meet your approval. In accordance with your wish I have made the restoration as simple as possible – anything of an ornate character in this instance would be out of keeping. The Rector I understand wishes to restore the chancel himself – this will enable me – for the sum you have named – to provide not only all you mention, but a new roof, and windows of simple design for the nave and will thus make the restoration complete as far as nave and tower are concerned. The front of the old pulpit is an interesting specimen of about the time of Queen Anne – I should

advise this part to be retained – the space from back to front diminished and the floor lowered – this with the altered position and arrangement, will quite prevent it looking too large for the church as it now does.

The font is a very old one and simply wants well washing and placing on a step. I shall have much pleasure in explaining anything that I have failed to make clear.”

Mrs Owen consulted the Bishop and on 28<sup>th</sup> June he wrote expressing the opinion that the plans represented exactly the character of a church desirable in a place like Maenclochog. “I think Mr Middleton has shown great skill in dealing with the difficulties of the situation.” He added that there were one or two minor points which he had thought right to communicate to Mr Middleton. What these points were is unclear as the remainder of the letter is missing, but the actual elevation plan in Gloucester Record Office is marked with the following legend: ‘Basil St David’s June 29 1880. Approved subject to Faculty being granted, but see letter addressed by me to Architect this day 29 June 1880.’ Unfortunately this letter has not survived.

On July 26<sup>th</sup> Middleton wrote to Mrs Owen forwarding the working drawings and specifications for the builder’s inspection. He suggested that he should write to two or three potential contractors and that she might do the same. Mrs Owen had obviously been involved in fund raising for the restoration which encouraged Middleton to comment, “I am sorry to give you this trouble as I am sure you will be very tired after your exertions – Bazaars are so very fatiguing.” He explained that the drawings and specifications were ‘extra particular’ in order not to encourage mistakes and ‘extras’. “I think from what I know of Welsh builders that five months will be required from the time of commencing, as there is a good deal to do.”

Three days later he wrote again to Mrs Owen in response to her questions about his professional charges which he assured her were those agreed by the RIBA “of which I am a Fellow.” With this letter he sent a draft of the advert inviting tenders for the work, “to which there has been a very numerous response.”

Again on 31<sup>st</sup> July, this time on headed paper from Westholme, Cheltenham, Middleton wrote to Mrs Owen asking her to make sure that the contractor understood the stages at which payments would be made, the final one being four months after completion of the work. This letter was followed on 13<sup>th</sup> August by another from Westholme, this time addressed to Colonel Owen, and was as follows:

“Dear Sir,

I received your letter last night on my return home and am leaving by the next train for London. I am very glad the slates can be produced from your quarry.....The best plan will be to get the contractor you wish to do the work to say in writing how much he will allow if these slates were substituted for those specified.”

The following day, Middleton wrote to Mrs Owen from the Hanover Square Club, London. He congratulated her on finding a contractor and requested that she send to Cheltenham “by return, the full address of the gentleman who will sign the contract on your behalf and also of Edwin Davies (the builder).” He added, “I am going to Mr Fitzwilliams (16) and after that to eight other places including Maenclochog. This I shall leave ‘til last as the Contractor will by then have got the roof on and thus enable me at once to decide what may be used again. He will also have had time to study the



plans and know what he does not clearly understand. My visits will take about ten days. Thank you for your kind offers of hospitality – I shall have much pleasure in accepting them.” (17)

The preliminary agreement was signed by the builder Edwin Davies and David Young, on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1880. The completion was to be before 24<sup>th</sup> December, at a cost of £520. The contractor was empowered to begin at once ready for Mr Middleton’s visit ‘next week’. The other parties to the agreement were the Reverend T Walters, Rector, John Owen and Margaret Owen.

On 9<sup>th</sup> November Middleton sent Mrs Owen a sketch of the chancel, “very simple to be in keeping with the rest, but I need not tell you how great an improvement it will be.” He asked her to pass it to the contractor for an estimate and closed by thanking her for her recent hospitality.

The final available letter in this correspondence came from Westholme, June 13<sup>th</sup> 1881, six months after the agreed completion date. Middleton expressed his pleasure that “everything went off so very satisfactorily.” This certainly referred to the previous week’s opening of the church. He then assured her that she was quite right in not paying the contractor any more fees until he (Middleton) had signed the completion certificate. He emphasised that if there were any problems the contractors were to be referred to him. The letter ended, “Very kind regards to you and the Colonel and congratulating you on the great success of your efforts.”

The final account sheet from Mrs Owen’s archive shows in detail all amounts paid including £511 12.0 to the contractor; £11.18.2 for Godwin tiles; glass £15.16.0; churchyard walls £68.4.0; Reynolds for the plans not accepted by the Bishop £3.15.0; expenses of the Band at the Bazaar 8 guineas; Letheren of Cheltenham for the iron top to the gate and other materials £44.15.0; Martyn and Emms £12.4.6 and Middleton’s fees of £49.14.6. This is endorsed ‘Finally settled 13<sup>th</sup> September 1881.’

*The Welshman* provided an excellent account of the work actually done and from this we learn that

‘the old church was pulled down because of its very bad condition, and an elegant and simple replacement was provided. The new church is almost cruciform with nave, chancel, transept and vestry. The old walls were utilised and repointed and look new. The nave roof is of teak and there are new pine pews. The windows are of metal frames in Bath stone facings and the mural tablets are all replaced. The roof is covered with Rosebush Quarry slates. The chancel was rebuilt at a cost of £200 at the expense of the Rector and has a fine stained oak ceiling. The boundary walls were rebuilt bringing the total cost to £525 plus £200 for the Rector’s contribution (the chancel). At the opening the Bishop paid tribute to the Owens of Rosebush for promoting the restoration and he spoke about the sin and shame of the previous dereliction. A dedication cross on the south wall of the nave marks the reopening. The Bishop finally added how very pleased he was, “to have introduced his friend the architect, to Colonel Owen.” (18)

A lot of detail has been given to this project because there exists an unusual amount of correspondence which throws light not only on the work done, but on the way Middleton worked, his dealings with his clients, his diplomacy, the enormous demands made upon his time, his frequent and lengthy spells away from home and his reputation in the eyes of those with whom he worked. There must have been a vast amount of similar letters for all the other projects which he undertook and the correspondence we have seen here helps one to realise the enormous amount of time he spent supervising work and meeting with clients. The Bishop's final comment quoted above also indicates how contracts were obtained through personal recommendation.

Before leaving Maenclochog, a word or two needs to be said about the proposed vicarage. The fact that John Middleton designed one is beyond doubt, his design fee being one and a quarter percent of the estimated cost of £1,020. (19) He visited the intended site in August 1881 and the design was approved by the Bishop and Queen Anne's Bounty (20) The ledgers also contain the entry, 'August 1881 – being enquired upon.' However as Thomas Lloyd suggests, the plans were perhaps too ambitious for a poor parish and in view of the cost of restoring the church, the project may have been abandoned for the time being and taken up later by another firm in 1887 and superseded by a second in 1898. (21)

Another Pembrokeshire project with which Middleton was involved was at Eglwysrw and the church of St Christiolus. The church is of pre Norman origin and prior to 1880 the previous major work on the building had been in 1829 when the church was rebuilt and the seating provided by the local farming community. (22) The decision to restore the church was taken in 1879 and Middleton's plans are dated 1880, with work beginning in 1881 (23) His ledgers identify the work for the Reverend T Jones, with plans of the current building costing £2.12.6; faculty, specifications and superintendence of the restoration, £34.18.0 and estimated building costs £640, allowing £50 for re-usable old materials. Middleton was of the opinion that the foundations on which he was to work were the original pre-Norman ones on which the 1829 rebuilding had been completed. His work amounted to a further rebuild, with the porch, the chancel arch of large proportions resting on carved corbels, and the flanking buttresses, being completely new additions. (24) The work was carried out in local stone with Bath stone dressings

The chancel itself is lofty and only a few inches lower than the nave. The ceiling has richly panelled open work and ornamented cornices, whereas the nave roof is open. A brass and iron altar rail was provided for the sanctuary and a handsome three-light window was designed for the east wall. A circular one was also designed for the west end. Pine seating was provided throughout and a belfry with one bell completed the plan. The church was opened for worship in June 1883 (25)

This appears yet again to be a case of the planned design costing more than was readily available and although Middleton's fees were partly paid by January 1884, an account rendered was issued the month after his death. The builder was the local contractor Evan Evans of Eglwysrw.

A smaller contract of the same period was the building of the chancel at St David's Church, Henllan, for which an appeal fund had been started in 1881, (26) although

from Middleton's accounts it would appear that he was first consulted as early as 1874 (27). Plans were drawn 1881-1882 for the Reverend J Powell and included a new south porch in addition to a new chancel. Prior to these additions, the 1813 church consisted merely of a nave and was very small with no features worthy of note. The church was reopened in April 1882 and so many people attended that the service had to be 'relayed' outside. (28) The cost of the work had been paid by December that year by which time also the new chancel had been consecrated.

Another project which involved rebuilding and enlargement, was concentrated on the pre-15th century church of St Celynen at Llanpumpsaint and was initiated by the Reverend James Lloyd. In contrast to many previous contracts, this one appears to have been well financed. From the date of Middleton's planning to the actual re-opening was a mere two years and all costs had been met by the beginning of the third year. Great emphasis is placed in local press reports on the fact that Middleton made as much use as possible of old materials and retained existing structures wherever possible. The old walls of the original nave were left standing a few feet above ground and in the chancel considerably more was retained. A vestry was added and the gallery at the west end, access to which was from an exterior door in the north wall, was removed. The alterations were in the traditional Early English style so favoured by Middleton with an extremely long chancel in comparison to the nave. (29) This chancel is approached through a semi circular arch of oak, resting on handsome cut stone corbels. The roof is coved and close boarded upon oak principals and collar beams, the latter open to view and neatly moulded. A squint, previously hidden, was revealed on the north side of the chancel. Middleton had suspected that it existed and subsequently used the shape of it to influence the design of the new windows.

The nave has a fine oak roof with semi-circular trusses, the old parts having been preserved as far as possible. A holy water stoup has been preserved near the door in the nave and an altar stone of pre Reformation date was brought into the church from the graveyard. It was marked with five consecration crosses and placed under the altar. The old hexagonal font was retained but a handsome new Caen stone pulpit was provided. The total cost of the work amounted to £700. At the re-opening of the church in June 1882, the Bishop described it as "one of the most satisfactory restorations I have seen." (30) It was considered by the local press to be one of the most beautiful little churches in the neighbourhood but perhaps too small - it could hold only ninety people. This latter deficiency was addressed in 1892 (31)

The most northern and undoubtedly the largest of Middleton's Welsh ecclesiastical contracts was at Aberystwyth, where he was commissioned to design a new church. In fact, as fate would have it, the church of The Holy Trinity was another example of a design initiated by Middleton senior and completed by his son, John Henry. The architect's perspective, preserved in the church, is identified as the 'New Church, Aberystwyth. Middleton and Son Architects.' Underneath this legend in much smaller script has been added, 'Now Prothero, Phillott and Barnard, Cheltenham.' The origins of the church bear striking resemblance to the origins of the Delancey Fever Hospital in Cheltenham – both began in the minds of benefactresses whose family contested the bequest. Miss Mary Morice bequeathed in her will of 1865 the residue of her personal estate for the purpose of erecting or endowing a new church in Aberystwyth. As a result of family opposition to this bequest the case was taken to Court by the Rector of Henllan who was one of the Trustees. In 1872, the Court of Appeal upheld

the wishes of Miss Morice with the proviso that £500 only be allocated towards the erection of the church, the remaining amount being used to provide for the endowment of the new incumbent. (32) On account of not being able to use all of the Morice bequest for building the decision was taken to build the church in stages as money became available for each stage – a solution with which Middleton was more than familiar through previous experience. (33) There is a considerable archive in the Gloucester Record Office with plans dating from 1882 through to 1897 showing the development of the building over a period of seventeen years or more. (34)

1882 – 1886 The nave by Middleton and Son opened 10 August 1886. The transepts and tower by Middleton junior, Prothero and Phillott, and consecrated 29<sup>th</sup> November 1888.

1897 – 1899 The chancel and vestries by Prothero and Phillott.

Middleton's account books contain several references to the new church, which begin in May 1881 and between May of that year and November 1883 he made at least 11 visits to the town. (35) The advertisement inviting tenders for the erection of the nave for the proposed church appeared in *The Welshman* on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1882 and the foundation stone was laid in 1883.

A very detailed description of the opening of the church (nave) on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1886 is to be found in *The Cambrian News and Welsh Farmers' Gazette* of August 13<sup>th</sup> with details of the architect's plan for the completed church also included – a five bay nave, chancel, and transepts with tower springing from the crossing. 'The nave is large and lofty in Early English style. The walls are of local stone with Douling stone dressings on the outside and Corsham Down stone used internally. The large traceried windows - five on each side north and south, and the two at the west end with a smaller one above - are all fitted with tinted Cathedral glass. The pitch pine roof is finely designed in gothic style with carved principals extending some distance down the walls and resting on ornamental semi circular corbels. The wooden cornices are also ornately carved. The floor is of wood blocks resting on turned arches in which the heating apparatus is to be placed. The lighting is by means of gas wall brackets. The church is approached by wide steps leading up to the porch at the north-west corner. The main door is of massive oak with medieval style hinges and fastenings. The eastern end is at the time, walled up, against which is a temporary chancel and sanctuary with the altar raised on three steps, framed from the nave by the tall, slender and graceful arches of the proposed chancel and tower.' (36)

The first phase amounted to £2,700 the eventual cost being in the region of £12,000 which included the chancel, organ chamber and vestries, although the tower was never completed beyond the lower stages. (37)

A much smaller contract was secured for the 1830s church of St Deiniol, Llandeinol which was partly restored and enlarged. (38) A spacious chancel was rebuilt entirely from the foundations with a large rounded apsidal sanctuary and a wood ribbed curved roof and an ashlar wall recess in the south wall. The resulting effect transformed the previously very simple church. (39) The floor of the chancel was laid with Godwin tiles and oak choir stalls were provided. The chancel windows were fitted with glass by Clayton and Bell as a memorial to the ministry of the Reverend WH Sinnett who had moved to Kidwelly, and his family. The whole of the work was

paid for by him. The roof of the nave was raised and opened, and all the other windows in the church were renewed as were the congregational pews. A new lectern 'of chaste design' was provided, being the gift of the incumbent, the Reverend S Lloyd.

At the service of consecration on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1883, the Bishop of St David's expressed the wish that he would be able to perform the same service at Kidwelly church where the Reverend Sinnett was at present. In reply the Reverend Sinnett said that it had been his life's ambition since a child, to see this new church at Llandeiniol.

Plans for the church restoration at Llansadwrn at this same period did not develop as smoothly as did those for Llandeiniol. Designs had been submitted in 1876 by the Llandeilo architect John Harries, for the restoration of the medieval church at Llansadwrn but the ICBS refused to accept the plans which were considered to be 'thoroughly bad in all details.' (40) Even the Bishop of St David's objected to certain features. Middleton, now an established restorer of Welsh churches, was consulted in 1881/82 and immediately drew plans of the church as it was at the time – a single chamber with no division between nave and chancel, the latter probably dating from c1600. He also furnished the incumbent with fair and working plans of the proposed restoration, at an estimated cost of £680. (41). Tenders were invited in February 1883 (42) but the work took until May 1885 to be completed, just after Middleton's death. As in other Welsh contracts it would appear that fund raising was a slow and not very rewarding process. (43) Three months after the work was completed an account rendered was sent to the Incumbent, the Reverend MV Green. The final cost amounted to £770. (44). In typical Middleton style the plaster walls in the chancel were stripped to expose the rubble stone, although the nave walls remained unstripped. A chancel arch was introduced in moulded Bath stone supported on corbelled squat columns. Thomas Lloyd suggests that this arch must have been to a long lost medieval transept, removed when the south aisle was built. A door in the north wall of the chancel was blocked in and from the nave into the south-east aisle there is a blocked in broad arch. A square window in the west end wall was also blocked. Pitch pine pews were provided together with a gothic style stall with a panelled frontal. The pulpit provided was of oak on an octagonal shaft with traceried blank panels to the four sides. (45)

St David's Church, Carmarthen was a much more challenging contract. His involvement began in 1880 and in 1881 he produced his first plans followed by much reduced ones in 1883. (46) Tenders were invited in August of that year for the construction of new chancel at an estimated cost of £498, but due to lack of available funds even these plans had to be reduced. (47) The original St David's had been opened in 1837 and consecrated in 1841. It was built on a North/South alignment. Within ten years the church accommodation proved inadequate for the needs of the parish and RK Penson was engaged to rebuild the church. His plans proved much too ambitious and his eventual contribution was the addition of a new four bay nave to the west side of the existing building, an additional clerestory, a new, large west window and the repositioning of the Communion Table against the east wall. The pews were rearranged and additional ones purchased enabling the church to seat 1,500 worshippers. This new and rather unsatisfactory design was opened in 1855. Further alterations were carried out in the intervening years, until 1884 when work began on Middleton's redesigned chancel as a memorial to the late incumbent who had died just

five years earlier. He formed a twenty-four feet wide chancel at the junction of Penson's T-shaped addition, raised the floor above the level of the nave, extended the east wall into the churchyard and cut off the former transepts – the organ chamber to the north and the box-pewed area to the south - to form a renovated organ chamber and a vestry. This new chancel was lit by a large lancet shaped Gothic east window with tinted glass in a freestone arch. Smaller windows either side of the chancel were set in Bath stone, the same stone being used for the 32 feet high chancel arch, supported on polished granite columns. Gothic style pitch pine pews and a clergy desk were installed in the chancel. The new sanctuary was railed in Welsh oak. The top step was tiled, the other levels being paved with Forest of Dean stone. Many of the furnishings were supplied through donations. The church was re-consecrated on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1886, another completion by Middleton's successors after his death. By this time the costs had risen to £1196. (48) A new pulpit and font were made by local craftsman William Davies and the altar also dates from this period. *The Carmarthen Journal* commented after the opening that the church 'used to be an ugly church but is now beautiful.' *The Welshman* confirmed this by adding, 'We always expect beautiful work when Middleton and Son are employed.' It is a pity, once again, that John Middleton did not live to hear these tributes. (49)

A complete rebuilding of the medieval church at Llanbydder was promoted in 1878 by Colonel and Mrs H Davies Evans of Highmead. Much restoration work had been undertaken in the early 1800s but the ICBS reports of 1884-1885 concluded that only the tower and lower walls were worth retaining. (50) However John Middleton's plans submitted early in 1883 were initially rejected by the ICBS 'The restoration of a very simple but interesting local type of church is proposed in a pretentious and unsuitable manner, in Perpendicular style. This is wrong. The Chancel arch is very cumbrous and out of place and the buttresses are bad.'

Middleton submitted amended plans at an estimated cost of £985 showing amongst other repairs, new tracery, a new chancel arch, a vestry on the north side and a new porch. (51) The actual work completed was quite dramatic and *The Welshman's* description published at the time of the opening in October 1885 provides a very full account of Middleton's achievement:

'The style adopted is Early Geometrical which has been consistently adhered to throughout. The walls have been thoroughly repaired and repointed; a new floor laid down throughout the church of tiling, with stone steps; and new seats to nave and choir stalls in the chancel and a pulpit of oak have been inserted. The roof is framed with curved principals and horizontal ribs, which in the chancel form panelling. All the windows are new and worked in Doulling stone. A porch has been added to the south side. The top of the tower, a very large and massive one, has been repaired with a concrete roof on iron joists. The turrets on the tower have been left out for the present on account of funds being short, as has the vestry which is to be built on the north side of the chancel. The restoration was begun in the summer of last year and was carried on successfully and now the church is one of the neatest in the neighbourhood. At the opening the Lord Bishop of St David's preached in English..... The contractors were Messrs J&D Evans, Llanddewi-brefi; the tiling by Godwin and Son and the oak by Messrs Martyn and Emms of Cheltenham.'

Middleton paid several visits between January 1883 – 1884 and *The Welshman* paid tribute to the architect, ‘the late John Middleton of Cheltenham whose too laborious life ended suddenly in the present year.’ (52)

The church of St Mary Magdalen at St Clears was formerly a priory and has a fine early twelfth century arch into the chancel and a font of similar date. The rest of the church is fifteenth century. Sir Stephen Glynne visited the church in 1845 and remarked that the walls leaned outwards and it contained some ugly monuments, with the west end of the nave ‘absurdly cut off by a wooden partition.’ Between 1853-1855 a considerable restoration was undertaken by RK Penson, when new windows were inserted in the nave and the roof and the pews were replaced. However this was not a complete restoration perhaps due to lack of funds in spite of a grant from the ICBS (53) In 1882 a restoration bazaar was held to find further money to complete the restoration, John Middleton having been consulted in 1881. (54) He drew plans of the church as it then was and made plans and specifications for the restoration of the chancel. Work on the nave and the tower was placed on hold until funds became available. He made at least nine visits to St Clears between 1881 and 1883, and his work was mainly a continuation of that started by Penson, and did not involve undoing much of his work.

The work he undertook was confined to the chancel. This was in very poor condition, but like Penson, he did not interfere with the pure Norman work in the chancel arch. Perhaps he now regretted what he had done at the church at Greatham (p34)! This chancel is later than the nave, and when Middleton made his initial survey he had found an Early English window which had previously been walled up. On opening it, he found it to be a beautiful two light window in reasonably good condition. (55) Middleton’s new windows in the side walls of the chancel copied this design and imitated it in the three-light east window. He also opened up the square north window in the chancel.

He re-pointed the old buttress at the east end and replaced Penson’s modern chancel roof with one more in keeping with the style of the windows. The chancel floor was laid with ornamental tiles and a new vestry to the south of the chancel and a new tower roof were provided. Decayed stone from the previous restoration, only thirty years earlier, was replaced and a modern brick building at the side of the chancel was removed. (56)

Describing the opening of the church after Middleton’s restoration, *The Welshman* said that ‘the work by John Middleton FRIBA is very tasteful.’ (57)

Another contract which was started by Middleton and continued by his successors was for the church of St Mary at Kidwelly, which had been severely damaged by lightning on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1884. On that occasion the top twelve feet of the spire, with twenty-five feet down one side of it, had been destroyed. A large part of the building was also severely damaged by falling masonry. The north-west nave roof was broken and there was severe damage on the south side too. Pews were smashed and an ancient font was totally destroyed along with the choir gallery at the west end which was totally demolished. Appeals to fund repairs were immediately put in hand and a public meeting to organise a fund raising programme was arranged in May

1884. (58) On the advice of the Bishop, Middleton of Cheltenham was appointed architect (59) and by the end of May scaffolding had been erected and the damaged part of the spire had been taken down. Mr Collins of Tewkesbury was awarded the contract for Middleton's restoration work on a new open wagon roof of seven bays, and work was well under way by November. However the whole programme of restoration and repair was to be a lengthy one, continuing well into 1889, when Middleton's son, John Henry, and his partner Mr Prothero, rebuilt the chancel. It had been boarded up for four years and services had been held in the nave. (60) The new font was also to the design of John Henry Middleton and the total cost of the work amounted to £1782. (61).

There were of course many other projects for which Middleton submitted designs some recorded, some hearsay. However either through lack of funds, unsuitability of design, change of incumbent or in some cases, Middleton's own death, the intended project was begun and not completed; deferred until funds became available; abandoned; or submitted designs were not accepted. Some of these projects are worthy of mention and of course there may be many more which have not yet come to light because the Middleton archive is far from complete.

In 1882, Middleton inspected the church at Llanfihengel Abercywyn and made plans of the existing building. The progress ledger shows that two further sets of drawings were prepared, one for restoration estimated at £800 and one for a new church at an estimated cost of £1,000. The Gloucester archives show only the 1882 drawings but the *Listed Building description* does indicate that restoration was undertaken at this period. This comprised mainly replacement of window tracery and the rebuilding of the bellcote. (62)

Another church for which Middleton prepared drawings but which was not completed in his lifetime was for St Dyfriog's near Newcastle Emlyn. St Dyfriog's Church at Llandyfriog, Newcastle Emlyn was the parish church of the Fitzwilliams family of Cilgwyn. Middleton's account books record travel expenses for visits to the church between 1881 – 1882. Plans to rebuild had been first considered in 1881 when a fete was held to start fund raising. (63). The contract books show the following accounts for 'work in progress' for the Reverend T Jones, Llandyfriog Church and C Fitzwilliams but unfortunately there is no date given for this entry:

Plans of the church at present	£ 2.12.6
Plans, drawings, superintendence on £800 at 1.25%	£10. 0.0
Plans for ICBS	£ 1.11 6
Revised accounts – plans for proposed restoration, Ecclesiastical Commissioners,	£ 3. 3 0
Drawings, superintendence etc re restoration, on £1,200 at 2%	£24. 0.0

The Fitzwilliams Letter Books contain correspondence dated 18 September 1885, after Middleton's death, addressed to his son, John Henry Middleton. In this letter, Fitzwilliams refuted the information, presumably contained in an earlier letter, that he had received from John Henry: "The Bishop told me he had had no conversation with you about the church, but I will lay the plans with him. £900 sounds a good price and that was the sum fixed at the beginning." This correspondence presumably refers to



the plans originally submitted by Middleton senior before his death but which had not been implemented. New plans were drawn by Mr H Prothero, one of the partners in the practice and the old church was demolished. The present replacement was consecrated in 1890 and the cost was in the region of the original estimate. (64)

At this same period an announcement in *The Welshman* invited tenders for the erection of a school at Llandyfriog. (65) The plans were according to the design of John Middleton, for a school and outbuildings, with applications to be addressed to the Cilgwyn Estate Office. (66) The Fitzwilliams Letter Books make several references to the school, St Tyfriog's. (67) The plans and specifications together with the contract were agreed by Charles Fitzwilliams on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1884 and the work was well underway soon afterwards. The school porch plans were finally agreed in May and the foundations were cut on 26<sup>th</sup> of that month. However on August 31<sup>st</sup> Fitzwilliams recorded that the school had not been touched for 3 weeks. Nevertheless by 3<sup>rd</sup> September the brick lining to the walls was proceeding as planned. The Dedication plaque was approved in October but by December the contractors were held up waiting for the weather cock and lightening conductors to arrive. These minor set backs must have been irritating to Middleton who was attempting to address the Cilgwyn Mansion contract with its attendant problems. However the school was completed in 1885, shortly after his death and the accounts 'for plans in connection with the erection and superintendence of the school at Llandyfriog, for Charles Fitzwilliams,' show professional fees of 5% of the cost of £300, all settled by December 1885. (68)

Further work in the 1880s, preceding Middleton's death and frequently continuing into the period of his son's senior partnership in the firm, included several minor contracts. Among them we find the inspection of the church of Holy Trinity at Alltyferin Nantgaredig in 1882, and just two years earlier, the preparation of plans for the erection of outbuildings at the Bishop of St David's Palace at Abergwili. Middleton had made several visits during 1878 and 1879 and in 1881 he drew plans for alterations to the Palace itself at an estimated cost of £552, but available evidence would suggest that none of these plans came to fruition.

At St David's, he was connected with several small contracts. In the Cathedral Close he designed a drawing room bay window for a Miss Thomas (69) at a cost of £63, and this was completed at the same time as he was planning the new vicarage at Capel Dewi, Llandysul. This involved seven visits to Llandysul and the mission church of Capel Dewi. Plans and contracts had been prepared by November 1882. He also designed a Lodge for the Dean and Chapter at St David's but this may not have been completed. (70)

In 1885 he advertised for contractors to make extensive alterations and additions to the vicarage at Abergwili for Archdeacon James. (71) The advertisement appeared in *The Welshman* on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1885, the day on which Middleton died at Adpar House. The original vicarage was to the design of RK Penson, c1855, and Middleton's contract was for a new chamber roof, plastering and outbuildings, at a cost of £631. In the event of his death, the work was taken over by his son and partners and completed by July 1886.

**However the most significant of these ‘transitional’ contracts was that for a new accommodation block and lecture rooms at St David’s College, Lampeter, started by Middleton c1884 and brought to completion by John Henry Middleton in 1887.**

Due to the increasing numbers of students, the Council of St David’s College, Lampeter, decided in 1884 that more accommodation was needed. (72) In November of that year, an application was made to the Charity Commission for assistance in meeting the anticipated cost of new buildings and new facilities. An immediate reply acknowledged receipt of the request but asked to be provided with plans and estimates of the costs involved.(73) *The Cambrian News* of October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1885, reported the laying of the foundation stone of ‘a new and handsome block of buildings that are to be erected in the College grounds south of the College and on the spot where a few years ago, the Jubilee of the Institution was celebrated. The new block of buildings which Messrs Middleton, Prothero and Phillott of Cheltenham have designed...will contain two spacious lecture rooms, a physical laboratory, twenty one double sets of dwelling rooms with offices and will cost without fittings, about £6,000.’

The foundation stone was laid by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Edward Benson, hence the name Canterbury Building. (74). The work appears to have been started before the official approval of grant aid had been received. The Charity Commission had received the plans, specifications and estimated costs on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1886 and was surprised to hear that a contract had been made already and work had started. However two weeks later, authorisation was given to proceed, and in January the following year the terms of the agreement were sent to the Trustees.

The new buildings did not take long to complete. The opening took place on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1887 and the ceremony was performed by the College Visitor, the Right Reverend Basil Jones, Bishop of St David’s. Part of the Bishop’s speech made reference to “Professor Middleton and those who worked with him on the completion of the building,” and later, the Bishop congratulated “my friend the architect, Mr Middleton.” During the ceremony, Professor Middleton received the highest honour which the College could award. He was presented to the College Principal with the usual Latin formula, which admitted him an Incorporated Member of the College. The Professor replied by saying how much he had enjoyed the time he had spent at the College and would be extremely sorry if the completion of the building should mark the end of his association with St David’s College. (75)

Canterbury Building’s external appearance did not excite great praise – ‘the exterior impresses one more with an idea of utility than ornamentation,’ - stated *The Cambrian News*, and this may well have been partly due to the fact that more than one hand was involved in the final plans, although Professor Middleton was credited with being the principal architect responsible. However, a shortage of funds is the more likely reason.

In the College archives (76) there are several letters which suggest that the original plans for the Canterbury Building were prepared by John Middleton senior before his death. He was familiar with the town having undertaken minor repairs to Lampeter

Church in 1872 (77) In 1884 he had drawn plans for additional rooms for the Lampeter Schools, which were completed just after his death in 1885. He also tendered for the reordering and redecoration of the College Chapel in 1884, (78) and it was at this time that his plans for a new wing for the College were drawn. However on his death a year later, the project which obviously had been accepted by the College Council, passed to Middleton's partner, Henry Prothero. (79) He addressed certain reservations which the Council had raised, such as the lack of bathroom provision. He enclosed simplified sketches of the proposed building which showed a three storey, Elizabethan style building with a central tower, and three storey, bay-windowed lecture rooms at either end. He remarked on the fact that he had omitted the two niches and bay windows to the tower and placed them in the lecture room wings instead, which may well give us some clue as to Middleton senior's original plans.

These revised plans were obviously not to the liking of the Council and within two weeks, Prothero had been asked to remodel and reduce the plans. He was not happy with the suggested proposals to render the building, but would agree provided that freestone dressing in the windows was retained. He also agreed to the suggestion of a long unbroken roof line "like St John's, Oxford, which has a charm of its own", and a lantern to light the passage way.

Sketch plans showed that the three-storey building was to be retained, but the central tower and the projecting end wings of the lecture rooms had been removed as had the bay windows. The roof comprised two parallel steep pitched lines, broken by chimneys and a central ornate lantern topped with a weather vane. This must have been deemed too costly, for five months later John Henry Middleton, writing from the firm's Cheltenham Office, expressed his annoyance at the suggestion that the outer wall might be faced with cement, and although this could be done by the firm, it would be done unwillingly. He gave several reasons for using stone facing – Llandewi stone – at a cost of a mere £155. It would appear that Middleton at this point took over the correspondence and supervision of the contract, probably out of sheer frustration at the delays that continued to arise and out of concern for the reputation of the firm. In September 1885, a compromise seemed to have been reached, with an agreement that the long side of the building on the S E would be cemented. But Middleton continued to press for stone at both ends, each costing an extra £16.10.0. To use stone for the long sides would cost an extra £61.0.0 each... "This is what I would like," and all future correspondence is signed J Hen. Middleton. The resulting Canterbury Building bore only a slight resemblance to Prothero's first sketch drawing and John Henry Middleton would appear to have redrawn the plans completely and to have achieved what he wished for - a stone building with Llandewi stone facings. (80)

### ***References, Chapter XIX***

#### **31. *Clydey***

1. Richard Holt Brash 1874 quoted in '*St Clydai Church History and Guide*', Tony Law 1993.
2. The Reverend Price was appointed in 1875 and Middleton's accounts are addressed to him. The plated trowel was for use in the laying of the foundation stone.
3. ICBS 7960. Sir Stephen Glynne visited the church in 1860 and his account of the state of the building contains the following information (summarised): Large church approaching state of ruin. Nave and chancel with south aisle extending along both, and a western tower, all of a rude Welsh type. An arcade of four low and depressed arches, three in the nave and one in the

chancel. The western arch is particularly rude, the others have the same sort of moulding. The chancel arch is rude and pointed. The windows are all square headed perpendicular in style of three lights. The tower is a very rude construction and opens into the nave by means of a very coarse pointed arch. The font is a rude, circular cup on square chamfered base. Everything is decayed and out of repair. The outer walls are whitewashed. There is a stoup by the south door.

4. GA D2970 1/36 and 3/1
5. 'The arcade is of an early style, consisting of pointed arches with two receding orders of simple chamfers. The substantial circular piers have nicely proportioned circular and moulded capitals, all dreadfully precise.' Compare this List building description with Glynne's description above.
6. GA D2970 3/7
7. *The Welshman* and *The Pembrokeshire County Guardian* July 1889.
8. GA D2970 1/36 Plan No 4. The reference to D Davies is repeated in the building of Llansawel Church - see below - where he is definitely acknowledged as 'the contractor' ie builder.

### ***Llangynllo (Powys)***

9. Pevsner

### ***Llansawel***

10. *Carmarthenshire Journal* 24<sup>th</sup> August 1885. *Listed Building* Reg No 10,949
11. *The History of Llansawel*, 1898: The church was reopened August 16<sup>th</sup> 1887. The interior is all new, with eight windows in gothic style, made of Forest of Dean red sandstone. Restored at the expense of Sir James Drummond, one of the churchwardens. The Bishop of St David's preached at the morning service, the Archdeacon in the afternoon. The nave measures 46 by 21 feet with sittings for 200. The pulpit to the right of the chancel arch is of wood on a Bath stone base and Forest of Dean grey steps. Squints on each side of the chancel arch were found during the restoration.  
The *Carmarthenshire Antiquary*, Vol IX 1973 is not very complimentary: 'A stark 13<sup>th</sup> century tower. The church was poorly built in 1860 and again in 1887'.  
See also GRO D2970 3/9 No 35: restoration September 1885 – June 1886 £885.
12. *South Wales, Ancestral, Biographical and Pictorial*, (n.d): 'Sir James Drummond senior, succeeded in 1844 and inherited the Edwinstford Estate, pursuant to the will of his father in law. He assumed the name Williams and died in 1866. His widow survived until 1872. Sir James was succeeded by his eldest son, also James, aged 3. The mansion at Edwinstford, Llansawel is gothic. Sir James also owns the ancient seat of the Drummonds at Hawthornden.'
13. GA D2970 3/7. For The Reverend Charles Chidlow, Llansawel. Windows, roof, nave, chancel roof, glazing, flooring were certificated when satisfactorily completed and payment to the contractor was made in seven instalments. A pencilled note adds: the contractor has had £200 uncertificated paid to him. Contractor bankrupt.

### ***Maenclochog***

14. Pembrokeshire Record Office, St Mary, Maenclochog Archive, and GA D2970 1/116. Apart from the GA plans, nearly all the information and correspondence contained in the chapter about Maenclochog has been provided through the courtesy of the Pembrokeshire Record Office, at Haverfordwest, HPR 29/1
15. Possibly St Peter's Eaton Square, London, which Middleton was visiting certainly from 1871 to 1873. See GA D2970
16. Mr Fitzwilliams of Cilgwyn, for whom Middleton was to work and where he in fact died.
17. The underlining in this letter is in Middleton's original copy.
18. *The Welshman* 10<sup>th</sup> June 1881
19. GA D2970 3/7
20. GA D2970 3/7
21. A suggestion made by Thomas Lloyd. When visiting Maenclochog, the author was shown a building that used to be the vicarage according to the lady whose son now lives there but it was of far too early a date to be by Middleton.

32. **Eglwysrwr**  
 22. *Carmarthenshire Journal* 8 June 1883  
 23. *West Wales Historical Records* Vol 1 p293. Listed Building Reg No 15,880 and GRO D2970 1/157.  
 24. *Carmarthenshire Journal* 8 June 1883  
 25. *ibid*

### **Henllan**

26. The *Tivyside Advertiser* 12<sup>th</sup> May 1882: Ten months ago, a bazaar was organised by Lady Lloyd to raise funds...  
 27. GA D2970 2/2  
 28. The *Tivyside Advertiser* 12<sup>th</sup> May 1882: There is now a beautiful chancel added to the old .....structure. The architect is Middleton and Son of Cheltenham and the work creates credit to ..  
 ... him and the builders. The *Carmarthenshire Journal* of 22.09.1882 records the consecration of ..  
 .. .... the church.

### **Llanpumpsaint**

29. *Listed Building* description Reg No 9403  
 30. Reports in *The Welshman* 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1882 and *Carmarthenshire Journal* of the same date.  
 31.....Further accommodation was provided by the building in 1892 of the Mission Church at Capel .....Celynin in the south of the parish. This was able to seat 100 people. The architects of this .. ....  
 .....mission church were Middleton (John Henry) Prothero and Phillott. The church was opened in .....1894. The parish vicarage was built by the same practice, completed in 1887, and cost £1,400.  
 .....(Kelly's *Directory* 1896.)

### **Aberystwyth**

32. *The Cambrian News and Welsh Farmers' Gazette* 13<sup>th</sup> August 1886  
 33. GA D2970 3/9 No24. Aberystwyth Church Nave: May 1883 – May 1884, £1,810 and increased to £1910. Fifteen stages of payment are identified before issue of completion certificate. The increase included accumulated interest.  
 34. GA D2970 1/2 and 1/3 and NLW, Aberystwyth 1883-1897: 19 items of plans and elevations.  
 35. GA D2970 3/7 Plans, drawings for new church at Aberystwyth. Plans paid £45, December 1882 and there are travel expenses from 1881 to 1883.  
 36. GA D2970 1/2. Plans signed Middleton and Son – pre 1885, are:  
 a ground plan of the nave, the slope up to and including the porch, with outline of the proposed tower and crossing and sanctuary, n.d.  
 Plan 4 a longitudinal section of the nave, ICBS approved 21 July 1882, with Plan 6 an extra drawing showing the cellar/crypt, endorsed on the reverse, 'We certify this is one of the plans referred to in the contract. Signed E Owen Phillips & J&D Evans'  
 Plan 7 shows details of the nave roof ICBS approved 13.3.1883.  
 There is also a drawn plan, 'Proposed site for a new church at Aberystwyth, Buarth Mawr, signed Messrs Roderick Williams & Son,' which gives an area of 1 rood 31.5 perch (120 feet by 163 feet.) This is marked D19a.  
 37. NLW Aberystwyth 1883 – 1897 Plans and elevations. CADW 22/B/250(3) and *Listed Building* Reg No 10,145 Grade II.

### **Llandeiniol**

38. *Listed Building* Reg No 17,135, 'particularly for the prominent apse raised on a basement bier house.' The 1832 church had a short chancel, three Tudor arched nave windows and a west tower. Plans at GA D2970 1/97  
 39. *The Tivyside Advertiser* of 23 November 1883 reported the 'Consecration of the Church at Llandeiniol' and the report also added that the church was now amongst the prettiest in the Diocese.

### **Llansadwrn**

40. ICBS 8003 and *Listed Building* Reg No 10,945.  
 41. GA D2970 3/7

42. *The Welshman* 23 February 1883  
 43. *Carmarthenshire Journal* 24<sup>th</sup> April 1885  
 44. GA D2970 3/9  
 45. *Listed Building* Description: Listed, though much restored, as medieval church on Celtic site, with surviving medieval windows. Much altered 1883-1885.

### ***Carmarthen, St David***

46. GA D2970 1/24  
 47. *ibid* 'Approved subject to Faculty September 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> W Basil St David's.' Plans: (i) New flooring, font chancel and vestry. (ii) New sanctuary, chancel, choir stalls, steps to sanctuary. Signed J Middleton, Architect, Cheltenham. (iii) West end and south elevations.  
 48. GA D2970 3/9 No 28. St David's Carmarthen, completion of nave, November 1885- May 1886 All paid November 1887.  
 49. *The Welshman* report of the re-opening.  
 In the 20<sup>th</sup> century a new baptistery was built, the porch repaired and the nave floor replaced; a new reredos was installed 1913-1915. The old north transept was demolished and a new boiler room built, the south transept was replaced with clergy and choir vestries and the chancel re-roofed. All windows were renewed and the communion rails were restored in 1993. The chancel rails once had gates and were brought from Christ Church in 1913. This information has been supplied by the Reverend Clive Hughes of St Anne's Aberystwyth, formerly curate at St David's, author of the Church History and St David's Diocesan Archivist. Middleton's son, John Henry with Prothero and Phillott designed and built St John's Welsh Church which was opened 1890. In 1886, John Henry was responsible for some re ordering in St Peter's. (Information, Thomas Lloyd.)

### ***Llanybyther (Llanbydder),***

50. ICBS 8879  
 51. GA D2970 3/9 No 10 "for Colonel H Davis Evans of Highmead, Carms, June 1884 – April 1885. £985. A/c rendered November 1885.  
 52. *The Welshman* October 30<sup>th</sup> 1885

### ***St Clears***

53. ICBS 4701  
 54. *The Welshman* 14<sup>th</sup> April 1882  
 55. *Listed Building* description and *The Welshman* 11<sup>th</sup> July 1884  
 56. *The Welshman* 11<sup>th</sup> July 1884.  
*Listed Building* description Reg. No 9,409 of this Grade II\* church also adds that the wooden reredos was installed in 1898 and in 1904-1905 some internal plastering was done and texts painted over the chancel arch. The Lychgate dates from 1911.  
 57. *The Welshman* 11<sup>th</sup> July 1884.

### ***Kidwelly***

58. *Tivyside Advertiser* 30<sup>th</sup> May 1884 'A Public Meeting was called to restore Kidwelly Church which was partly destroyed by lightening in February. The Reverend J Sinnett, the Vicar will contribute £500 towards the restoration and the Bishop £1,000. The estimated costs will be £2,600.'  
 59. *Carmarthenshire Journal* 30<sup>th</sup> May 1884.  
 60. *History of Kidwelly*, by D Daven Jones 1908: 'Consequent upon the catastrophe that befell the church in 1884, the defective and dilapidated work identified in the building has now been well and substantially restored under the directions of Middleton and Prothero, of Cheltenham. The spire has been restored to its original and symmetrical proportions and was pierced at a later renovation in 1904.' Here there is a slight confusion over the use of the architect 'John' Middleton. Middleton senior was responsible for the spire repair, the son for the other work mentioned.  
 The Listing description also refers to the 1902 refurnishing of the sanctuary, a new altar, reredos and side chapel in the south transept, and the tower was rebuilt and pierced and a new west window installed. The Listed Building description is the accurate one and Jones seems to have confused two different contracts - one on the spire and one on the tower.

- 61 *Listed Building* description, Reg No 11,878, ‘the largest Parish Church in South West Wales.’ Thomas Lloyd says that Tenby is bigger, but Kidwelly is the largest in Carmarthenshire. Plans at GA D2970 1/79

### **Llanfihangel Abercywyn**

- 62 *Listed Building* details Reg.No 25,485. WD Caroe was responsible in 1915 for the new porch, vestry and belfry.

### **Llandyfriog**

- 63 *The Welshman* July 1<sup>st</sup> 1881  
64 National Library of Wales, *Fitzwilliam Letter Books*, Cilgwyn Mss  
65 *The Welshman* October 19<sup>th</sup> 1883  
66 GA D2970 1/99  
67 National Library of Wales *Fitzwilliam Letter Books*, Cilgwyn Mss  
68 GA D2970 3/7

### **Nantgaredy, Abergwili, St David’s**

- 69 GA D2970 3/9 No21  
70 Christopher Bishop in a letter to Thomas Lloyd, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1992 confirmed that St David’s Vicarage was built. Then work was done at the same time as that done for Miss Thomas in the Close and when the Chapter Lodge was being designed. It was a considerable contract, in the region of £2,300  
71 GA D2970 3/9 No20. Five stages of payment. The final certificate was issued when everything was roofed and outbuildings completed. This contract amounted to £631.

### **Lampeter**

- 72 *History of St David’s University College*. University of Wales Press Vol 1 1977.  
73 St David’s College Archives H/7/43  
74 *The Cheltenham Examiner* 21<sup>st</sup> October 1885  
75 *The Cambrian News* July 1<sup>st</sup> 1887  
76 College Archives H/7/4  
77 GA D2970 3/1 and Plan D2970 1/87  
78 College Archives H/4/4  
79 Letter in College Archives H/7/4  
80 College Archives H/7.

The Canterbury Building was demolished in 1971 but some of the interior beams have recently been brought out of storage and bear the original arms/crests. The beams will be re-sited once they have been treated with preservative. The original Foundation Stone is preserved in the entrance to the new building which replaced the Canterbury Building, on the same site but with a different geographical alignment. For an interesting account of the Foundation of St David’s College at Lampeter, see ‘*A Bold Beginning, University of Wales, Lampeter, Glimpses of an unfolding vision 1827 – 2002*’. Various contributors. ISBN 0-905285-80-8. Published 2002 and available from the College.

## CHAPTER XX

*Welsh domestic work: Mount Gernos; Cilgwyn; Frongog;*

It was suggested earlier that many of Middleton's contracts came about through personal acquaintances and recommendations and the non-ecclesiastical work that he accepted falls mainly into this category. The two most remarkable, for different reasons, are both near Newcastle Emlyn in Cardiganshire – Mount Gernos at Llangynllo where an existing property was drastically altered; and a new house named Cilgwyn on a site which already contained a house by John Nash.

Mount Gernos had been the family seat of the Parry family and was inherited through marriage, by Gwinnett Tyler who married Judith Parry (1) The house was built c1800 for Judith's grandfather Llewelyn Parry and was situated above the ancient house on the estate named simply Gernos. (2) Middleton's connection with Captain Tyler probably began in 1869 as a result of his work on Llangynllo Church and through his connection with the Dunravens of Clearwell in the Forest of Dean. (3)

Between 1869 and 1877 Middleton's accounts contain repeated references to expenses on account of Captain Tyler. These expenses range from the cost of sending a telegram, cab fares, and rail fares – most frequently in 1872 – to the 1874 entry which records the receipt of £146.5.0 'for plans and superintendence etc in connection with the work for Captain Tyler at Mount Gernos.' (4) Middleton was called upon to remodel the existing house and this he did with great effect. (5) Externally he enlarged the south-west garden front by adding two large two-storey square projecting bays with a conservatory between. He closed up the main entrance which had been part of this south-west front and which was approached by a broad flight of stone steps. He opened a new main entrance on the rear north-east portion of the house, and erected a porte-cochere between the northern and eastern bays. On the north-west façade he added another two-storey projecting bay and further windows were added to the south-west elevation. All the new windows had Bath stone surrounds.

A 1905 description takes us from the main entrance into the house: (6)

'Within the entrance door the hall is screened off by a screen, artistically made, relieved in stained glass with the crest of the Tylers on one side and the Parrys on the other. Immediately on the left of the entrance hall is the library. Beyond the central corridor open the morning room, the dining room and the drawing room running parallel with each other and transversely to the main direction of the building, each beautified with special carved designs.'

The description of the interior and the carving in the rooms is expanded as the result of a Cadw visit to the house in 1985 (7) a summary of which follows.

'Internally the rooms were remodelled, some partitioned, mainly to create domestic facilities and accommodation. The internal woodwork was all 1870s gothic – elaborate wooden ceilings, dog-tooth moulded cornices and moulded ribs. The main gothic wooden staircase built especially for the Tyler family was a very wide dog-leg stairway of painted and stained pitch pine, moulded string and handrail, chamfered



and stopped newels with finials and pendants, and trefoil headed fretwork panels between chamfered and stopped balusters. This stairway replaced an earlier one of oak. The entrance hall ceiling had chamfered and stopped wooden ribs and contained a small fireplace with an 'Early English' pointed arched hood with dog tooth mouldings and chamfered and stopped jambs.

The stonework throughout was very intricate and very skilfully done. In the morning room there was an elaborate arch of carved Bath stone, leading into the bay window. The arch was a flattened two centred moulded arch and the jambs were lightly incised with trellis work patterns, enclosing fleur-de-lis, rose, and tiger-lily inside a trefoil headed niche. Trefoils in the reveals enclosed a group of 'gothic' musical instruments. The soffit of the arch was carved with tendrils and on the mouldings were a series of quatrefoil vesicas each enclosing leaves, fruit or flowers.

The two large bays in the south-west face each had elaborately carved Bath stone jambs and chamfered stopped wooden lintels. Above these were plastered brick Tudor arches into the bays. The jambs were carved with incised floral scrolls. The capitals were carved with leaves, fruit and creatures – a bird on a holly bush; a nest amid flowers; a squirrel among wheat, fir cones and nuts; a bird amid plums, grapes and berries. The carving was very deep and extremely detailed but was later lime washed.

A survey carried out in 1981 for the RCAHM, Wales, concludes,

'The impression is that the house suffered an overwhelming attack of 'Early English' restoration in the 1880s - possibly a later emulation of Bronwydd – which completely obscured a typical late C18 Cardiganshire minor gentry house of classical derivation, embedded in an early nineteenth century building of solid plain style.' (8)

General opinion from published sources would suggest that the house had been spoiled, at least externally, by Middleton's additions and alterations. (9) Since the house passed out of the family in the 1920s it had been allowed to deteriorate to such an extent that the only proof of its existence is to be found in two stone bays of the south-west front, which stand ghostlike, as though surveying the valley below. On a visit in 2001, the author was shown less than a hundred metres away, protected by industrial plastic sheets, piles of carved stone samples that once graced the ground floor rooms of Middleton's remodelled home for Gwinnett and Judith Tyler. These, lying alongside the lonely twin bays of the house, provide a sad memorial to Middleton's gothic creation.

The details on the interior carvings and the layout of the house bear a very striking resemblance to his design for Coleshill Park in Warwickshire and to the details in the sanctuary carving at Holy Apostles Church in Cheltenham, on both of which contracts Middleton was engaged in at the time.

A lodge to the estate was also built by Middleton c1874 but is not of great architectural merit, and cost only £220. However unlike its parent house, it is still standing today!

Mount Gernos was not Middleton's sole work for the Tylers. His contract book has the following entry for 1883 – 1884 work:

	£2,080	
Stone		<u>70</u>
		£2,150
Plans, contract, travel		£ 132.14.0
Paid August 1883 and August 1884. (10)		

There was quite a lively woollen industry in the Teifi Valley at this period (11) and although there may already have been a mill at Maesllyn, Gwinnett Tyler engaged Middleton to build the present structure using the Yorkshire pattern – large weaving hall with the roof supported by pillars rather than the fairly typical series of smaller rooms. (12) At first the mill was powered by water. After Gwinnett Tyler's death, his family continued with the project and expanded it to become a large scale mill with houses nearby thus adding to the importance of the small country village. (13) The mill in 2001 was no longer used as such but the structure although very grey and forbidding is very sound and has not been much altered since Middleton's day. Plans are being considered for possible conversion into holiday accommodation which would certainly ensure the preservation of a project unique in Middleton's portfolio.

Another contract on completely different lines was accepted by Middleton near Newcastle Emlyn for the Fitzwilliams family. Middleton was first consulted by the family in 1871 and his work for them continued until 1885. One of the Fitzwilliam ancestors, Benjamin Edward Hall had succeeded to the Cilgwyn Estate under the will of Captain Thomas Lloyd who had died a bachelor in 1801. Benjamin died in 1849 and his eldest son, Edward Compton Lloyd Hall assumed the old family name of Fitzwilliams in lieu of Hall in protest at not having inherited the whole of the Cilgwyn Estate under the terms of his father's will. Edward's third son, Charles Home Lloyd Fitzwilliams was born in 1843, married in 1869 and fathered ten children, eight boys and two girls. He succeeded to the Cilgwyn Estate in 1880 on the death of his father, his two older brothers also having pre-deceased him. (14)

Charles' parents lived in Adpar House, (15) on part of the Cilgwyn Estate and Charles and his family lived in the adjacent Emlyn Cottage, built c1790 by John Nash as a dower house for the unmarried daughters of Mrs Brigstocke of Blaenpant. (16) Charles was not too enthusiastic about Adpar House and when his father died in 1880 he had no intention of using it as his home. In fact in 1910 he had it demolished as being 'not fit for a gentleman to live in.' (17) Emlyn Cottage on the other hand was a delightful cottage ornee and overlooked the river towards Newcastle Emlyn. The 1881 Census reveals that Charles, aged 37, was living there with his wife, Margaret aged 34, his two sons and his aunty Alice.

Charles obviously intended to make considerable improvements to Emlyn Cottage and Middleton's office books record proposed alterations to the Cottage for Mr Charles Fitzwilliams at Cilgwyn. These included work connected with an improved water supply, alterations and repairs to the cottage itself and the rebuilding of the kitchen wing. These entries are dated variously 1880 and 1881. (18) However while this work was being carried out, Charles was certainly negotiating with Middleton the

possibility of building a new mansion with stables, farmyard and gate lodges. A letter from his Estate Manager, Mr Robinson, addressed to Mr J Middleton at 1 Bedford Buildings, Cheltenham, and dated 10<sup>th</sup> September 1880, would seem to confirm this:

“I send you plans and sections of the field whereon it is intended to erect the new house etc for Mr Fitzwilliams.” (19)

Fitzwilliams’ plan had in fact developed to such an extent that it called for the demolition of Nash’s Emlyn Cottage to make way for a larger and more impressive house on the site. The design of Middleton’s house is in many ways, however, identifiable with Nash’s general plan.

Middleton’s fees for preparing the various designs etc for ‘a new mansion, stables, farmyard etc for Mr Fitzwilliams,’ amounted to 5% of the estimated £3,800. (20) He made site visits in August and November 1881 and again in March and June 1882. The fees were paid in September 1882, but this did not include the costs of the stables and the gate lodges. Further plans were drawn up in 1883 before inviting tenders which were opened on 6<sup>th</sup> June of that year. Charles Fitzwilliams made several consultation visits to Middleton in Cheltenham prior to inviting tenders but once accepted, the estate manager sent the plans and specifications to Middleton on 22<sup>nd</sup> June: “I send by this post plans and specifications of Cilgwyn Mansion and stables, all signed by Mr Fitzwilliams and the contractors. All hoping they will reach you safely.” Work began immediately with the demolition of Emlyn Cottage and Charles Fitzwilliams and his family moved into Adpar House while the work on demolition and building progressed. Middleton’s visits to assess progress on the work are fully recorded in Fitzwilliams’ diary. (21) These entries are frequently elaborated with comments showing his interest – and sometimes annoyance – at the speed with which the work was progressing: “House: putting in ground floor window arches,” (26 May 1884); “String course nearly all up and ground floor walls going up,” (3<sup>rd</sup> September 1884.)

During his visits Middleton stayed at Adpar House with the family and there are many diary entries which record Charles Fitzwilliams going to the station to collect Middleton or taking him to a slate exhibition or driving him with Maggie – Mrs Fitzwilliams – to Llandysul. One one occasion, there was a visit to Middleton who was staying at nearby Mount Gernos with the Tylers.

But although building a mansion for Fitzwilliams was a large and exciting project it was not without difficulties, exacerbated somewhat by the distance between the office of the architect and the site of the development. Fitzwilliams’ estate manager and at times, Fitzwilliams himself, wrote quite sharply to Middleton complaining about lack of building progress, especially when the builders were running out of bricks - “Perhaps a shortage of money. Please sort it out!” Other issues which gave rise to veiled reprimands were the fact that the builders were getting impatient at having to wait for the ironwork to arrive, and the lack of information as to the whereabouts of the plans for the door locks. Irritation was also expressed when the instructions to proceed with certain works deviated from the original plans. In fact, most of the letters in the Fitzwilliam Letter Books contain some criticism of either Middleton’s delay in organising the supply of materials, confusion over the interpretation of plans or delay in issuing confirmation for proposed works to be started. (22) “Please send on irons, plates etc for the doors *at once*.” (17<sup>th</sup> September 1883)

“No progress with the building since you were here.” (25 March 1884)

“Re dining room. Glad you are going to start work on the details and hope that you will now have everything down on paper to avoid delay and having to cobble and cut to get things in.” (21 April 1884.)

“Contractors won’t move without written instructions – we’re still waiting!” (30<sup>th</sup> April 1884.)

All costs for Cilgwyn were settled in six instalments the final payments being made to Middleton’s successors in December 1885, including those for the west Lodge, in spite of the date, 1890, which it bears. (23)

Maybe the travel, or the rather fractious relationship that developed with Fitzwilliams proved too much for Middleton, and on February 6<sup>th</sup> while paying one of his site visits to see the almost completed work, Middleton was taken ill and died one week later, at Adpar House where he had been staying with Charles Fitzwilliams. (24)

The house that Middleton designed was a complex and heavy building, in the shape of a hollow square, the open side being at the rear of the house. The front was of three bays with a central tower in which was situated the main entrance, approached through a large, glazed porch, now removed. The tower extended to four floors and either side of the tower is a hexagonal projecting bay extending through two storeys under a roof which has a distinctive, heavy and projecting dormer. The left side of the house comprises two projecting square bays of three storeys with three light square windows at ground level and two light windows in the two storeys above. Above the windows at ground level both to the front of the house and on the left elevation, there are carved decorative plaques each bearing two different coats of arms one of which is that of Charles Fitzwilliams, the other presumably of his wife’s family. The right side elevation has three gable dormers and attached to the side of the house is a large Victorian conservatory, above which is a date stone for 1885. Around the front and left side of the house there ran a canopied veranda that has now been removed. The top sections of the tower and the walls surrounding the dormer windows are all Tudor style wood and plaster. To the rear of the house are the stables and domestic offices with a clock and bell turret on the top of the kitchen wing.

The mansion was not an attractive building, in fact rather grim, with its wooden tower, completed after Middleton’s death but now removed. The house is heavy, solid and imposing but one has the impression that architecturally, there is too much going on and the whole building appears to have been designed for a restricted budget. This may have contributed to reported disagreements between Middleton and Fitzwilliams. Thomas Lloyd writing to the author expressed the opinion that “Cilgwyn is now in a terrible state and in danger. I do not however think that it is Middleton’s best house. The huge staircase in the entrance hall came from the Great Exhibition in Paris of 1867 where it won a prize. Fitzwilliams purchased the staircase while enjoying The Grand Tour, and had it shipped back to Adpar House. It would appear that the new house was designed around this French oak staircase which spanned three floors but it was wrongly measured for the hall – people were forever tripping over it during dances. His church work however has stood the test of time pretty well and is a tribute

to his sound construction, although some of his florid detailing is alien to the basically simple churches of Wales.”

It has not been possible to gain access to the interior but early photographs of the main entrance hall show clearly the enormous wooden staircase mentioned above with pairs of tall fluted Corinthian columns supporting the ceiling above the hall. As one ascends the stairway, immediately facing one is a large stained glass window showing the Fitzwilliam Arms, although this may be of a later date than the house. The stairway now branches to left and right a half storey before reaching the first floor landing above which is a glass lantern ceiling, the dome of which can be seen from the back of the house. The newels and balusters of the staircase are most elegantly carved and the walls in the stairway are half panelled. (25)

There are also two identical Lodges over the carriageways, one by Middleton dated 1884, the other 1897.

Middleton’s death has been mentioned but before we look at the circumstances in more detail, it might be appropriate to record here one other domestic contract upon which he had worked prior to his death, but which was completed afterwards.

At the time that he was working on the nave of Holy Trinity, Aberystwyth, he had accepted an invitation to design a large house, subsequently named Frongog, at Upper Vaner, about one mile from the town. *The Builder* of 10th January 1885 reported the award of the contract for a house for Mr E Jones to Mr J Middleton of Cheltenham and an advert for tenders appeared in *The Architect* on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1885 exactly one month before Middleton’s death at Cilgwyn. The advertisement explained that tenders were for a new house near Aberystwyth for EJ Jones, and were to be delivered by 3<sup>rd</sup> February, to the architect John Middleton of Cheltenham.

According to Middleton’s office books, he had visited the site in March 1884 (26) and had completed the fair and working drawings shortly afterwards. The estimated costs of the house were £2,795 but Middleton did not live to see even the start of the work which began in May 1885 and lasted until November 1887. (27) Delay in completion may well have been due to his sudden death and subsequent negotiations with his successors. Mr Jones himself did not live long enough fully to enjoy his new gentleman’s residence for he too died only a year after moving in – August 1888, aged only forty seven. Probate records tell us that Mr Jones, late of Frongog, died at 11 Marine Terrace, and that Probate was granted to his widow, Mary, of Frongog. His estate was valued at £32,010. He was descended from Thomas Jones who had a rope walk near Vaenor Street. This developed into a tar works and flag and slate works, and later he became a ship owner and was involved with local timber works. This was probably from where Edward Jones’ wealth came. (28) His grave stone gives the information that he was a JP, that his daughter died aged eleven in 1884, and that his son died in Saskatchewan, Canada, in 1906. (29) Mr Jones was one of two original acting churchwardens of Holy Trinity until the parish was officially constituted in 1887 and it is probably this connection that provided the house contract for Middleton.

Frongog is a large house of stone set in a prominent position overlooking vast open

countryside. The exterior is rather austere with a three bay asymmetrical front, the left bay's window arrangement not matching that of the two other bays. The entrance is in the centre bay through a wooden door surrounded by a glazed screen. Above this is an uninscribed stone panel, ready for arms or a date. The east side of the house comprises two bays, one square and one forming a large semi circle with a semi-conical roof.

A small entrance hall and a glazed door set in a glazed screen lead into the main hall. Here one is met by an elaborate and impressive dog-leg stairway turning from left to right with carved newels and balustrade. On one side of the stairway, at first and second floor levels, an open, stone, gothic, arched screen looks down into the hallway. Above this is a glass lantern roof which lights up the stairway and hall below. The ground floor rooms have impressive fireplaces and cornicing. In the garden is an ornate summer house which appears to be contemporary with the main house. The grounds contain outbuildings added to the house by Mrs Jones in 1889 but by 1892, she had vacated Frongog although she remained in Aberystwyth.

This concludes Middleton's domestic work in Wales. There were plans for many vicarages but the majority seem to have been put on hold due to lack of financial resources. Several of them were however completed by Middleton's successors. At this point, it would seem appropriate to return to Cilgwyn to look at the details surrounding his death.

### ***References, Chapter XX***

#### **17 *Mount Gernos***

1. Tyler family information – ‘*The Landed Gentry of Great Britain,*’ and ‘*Historic Cardiganshire Homes and their Families.*’  
Gwinnett Tyler was the fourth son of Sir George Tyler of Cottrell, Glamorgan, JP, DL, MP for Glamorgan, and Harriet Sullivan whom he married 21<sup>st</sup> September 1819. Gwinnett was born 25<sup>th</sup> February 1828 and married Judith, daughter and heir of Major Parry of Mount Gernos in 1852. He died just one year after Middleton, March 1886.
2. Davies, 1905. ‘The house was about two miles away from Bronwydd, the home of Sir Thomas Lloyd, and second only to Bronwydd in importance. The main part was erected about 1810 in the time of Llewellyn Parry, grandfather of Judith (Parry) Tyler. The lofty pile was renovated and altered over thirty years ago by Mr Middleton of Cheltenham with Mr D Davies of Penrhiwllan as Clerk of Works.’
3. See Chapter XII on Clearwell. Gwinnett Tyler's sister, Caroline, married the son of the Countess Dunraven of Clearwell, who was Middleton's client.
4. GA D2970 2/2
5. GA D2970 1/202
6. Davies op cit
7. Cadw 1985
8. RCAHM Wales 1981
9. *Historic Cardiganshire Homes and their Families.*
10. GA D2970 3/7
11. Baker Jones 1999
12. *The Teifi Store*
13. Davies op cit

#### ***Cilgwyn***

14. Grave details: Edward Compton Lloyd Fitzwilliams of Cilgwyn in this parish d.17 April 1880 in his 73<sup>rd</sup> year, and was buried here.  
Edward married 19 June 1833, Mary Alexwinia who died in 1892. They had three sons and five daughters. Only one son, Charles Home Lloyd survived his father. He was JP, DL and

High Sheriff of Cardigan in 1884. In August 1869 he married Margaret Alice, daughter of David Russell Crawford of *Cheltenham*.

Charles' obituary in the *Tivyside Advertiser* of 15<sup>th</sup> May 1925 provides the following information:

"The death of Mr Charles H L Fitzwilliams of Cilgwyn, father of ten children. His death removes one of the last remaining links with Tivyside families of the Victorian era. Aged 82, he died on 14<sup>th</sup> May. He was born 14<sup>th</sup> May 1843, the third son of Edward Charles Lloyd Fitzwilliams of Cilgwyn. He was educated at Poitiers and Gottingen. He pursued a successful shipbuilding engineer's career on the Clyde in the early days of steam. He married Margaret Alice Crawford in 1869 and they had eight sons and two daughters. He succeeded to the family estate in 1880 as his two elder brothers were dead.

He was a model landlord and all the tenants were attracted to him. His word could always be relied on and he was very sporting. The funeral will be at Llandyfriog at 2.30 on 18<sup>th</sup> May." (Summarised by the author)

The funeral service was also reported on 22<sup>nd</sup> May. A simple ceremony. The family at Cilgwyn was always a mainstay of Llandyfriog Church. The body was in church overnight. The church had been turned into a Chapelle Ardente for the occasion. The Union Jack was draped over the coffin with his sword and helmet as Deputy Lieutenant of the County. The body came to the church on a farm wagon at his own request. The coffin was home made of grown elms and a local blacksmith made the bolts. Floral tributes include one from Sir Marteine and Lady Lloyd of Bronwydd, who were not present at the service.

- 15 Adpar House was a three bay, three storey Regency house with deeply overhanging eaves standing adjacent to the very Victorian Cilgwyn which Middleton was constructing. (Thomas Lloyd)
- 16 *John Nash, Architect in Wales*, by Richard Suggett 1995, ISBN 1/8711184/16/9: "Information which has newly come to light-Built 1792 for Mrs Brigstocke, widow, for her unmarried daughters. Early example of integrated villa planning. Offices behind house, concealed by a sweep of quadrant walling. Kitchen, stable ranges, grouped around courtyard with covered way. Emlyn Cottage was Nash's first exuberantly gothic house and suggested a place appropriate for retirement.... A drawing for Mrs Brigstocke, possibly by Pugin, shows the porch set in between gothic windows. The site had been carefully chosen, and the house was built on the site which was leased only for the lives of the occupants, even though the Brigstockes were very large landowners.
- 17 Lloyd.
- 18 GA D2970 3/7 & 3/9
- 19 National Library of Wales, *Cilgwyn Papers*; Letter Book 10.9.1880
- 20 GA D2970 3/7
- 21 NLW *Fitzwilliam Diaries* 72 – 77
- 22 NLW *Cilgwyn Estate Records*; Letter Books (II) 72
- 23 GA D2970 3/9 No 37 Cilgwyn Mansion paid December 1885, £3,800  
No 38 Cilgwyn Stables paid December 1885, £923  
No 39 Lodge at Cilgwyn £349 (no date)
- 24 See Chapter XXI.
25. The author is indebted to Mr K Jones of Newcastle Emlyn and to Mr Fitzwilliams of Cilgwyn for copies of photographs of the house and family.

### **Frongog**

26. GA D2970 3/7
- 27 GA D2970 3/9 No22
- 28 "*Aberystwyth Industries*"
- 29 Aberystwyth Cemetery: Edward John Jones of Frongog, Llanbadrn Fawr JP.  
died 23 August 188 in his 48<sup>th</sup> year

Also of Mary beloved wife of the above, died April 9<sup>th</sup> 1899 in her 43<sup>rd</sup> year.

Mary Eugenia, dearest loved child of Edward and Mary Jones died August 18<sup>th</sup> 1884 in her 11<sup>th</sup> year.

Also Lewis Austin, second son of the above who is buried in Saskatchewan, Askeborn Base, Canada, died April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1906. Born May 24<sup>th</sup> 1877.

**The author would like to record his thanks to the present owners of Frongog who gave him access to the ground floor of the house and the grounds.**

## CHAPTER XXI

*John Middleton; the final days; his burial in Cheltenham; national and local tributes.*

*The Gloucestershire Echo* of Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February 1885 carried the following announcement:

We regret to announce the death of Mr Middleton the local architect of Cheltenham, well known as the designer of some of the principal buildings in this town chiefly those of the ecclesiastical type, of which All Saints may be mentioned as an example. On Saturday Mr Middleton was in Wales where he was seized of a paralytic stroke, and he died this morning at 7 o' clock.

*The Cheltenham Examiner* was somewhat more sensitive and complimentary in its report of John Middleton's death and more comprehensive in its record of his accomplishments when it made this announcement on 18<sup>th</sup> February:

With unfeigned regret we record the death on Friday last, after a very brief illness, of Mr J Middleton, a gentleman whose name has been for many years widely known as an architect and the impress of whose skills is written on many of the most beautiful of the modern ecclesiastical buildings in the neighbourhood. Mr Middleton may be said to have died in harness. He left home a week before his death to visit some work he was carrying out for a gentleman in Newcastle Emlyn in South Wales, and being seized with paralysis, he quickly lapsed into unconsciousness and died at the home of the gentleman in whose interest the journey was undertaken.

The report continued:

Mr Middleton had been resident in Cheltenham for about 25 years, and during that period had been associated with much of the best work of a time of unusual architectural activity.

There followed a list of his most notable achievements in Cheltenham, a special reference to his work at Berkeley Castle and a passing reference to his work in Wales. *The Cheltenham Looker On* also recorded his death in its edition of 14<sup>th</sup> February, the day after it had happened and made much of his architectural genius 'to which Cheltenham is so largely indebted for its ecclesiastical edifices.' Slightly more detail is included about the events surrounding his death:

He was seized by paralysis, which deprived him at once of bodily and mental power and where he remained in a state of unconsciousness until his life became extinct early yesterday morning.

Middleton was supervising the building of a mansion at Newcastle Emlyn for Charles Fitzwilliams. As implied in the earlier description of the work on this mansion, Cilgwyn, the relationship between client and architect was at times somewhat strained but little information about the events leading up to Middleton's stroke is available.



The Coroner's records for that period do not exist and the only sequence of events is to be found in the diary of Capt. Fitzwilliams (1)

4<sup>th</sup> February 1885      Middleton did not come  
I went back to Tymawr.  
Carmarthen races.

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> Feb.      Middleton came by evening bus.

Sat 7<sup>th</sup> February      Mr Middleton found ill in bed,  
paralytic stroke.  
Mrs Middleton and maid arrived.

Mon 9<sup>th</sup> February      Middleton very ill. Nurse White arrived  
from Onford Home.

Tues 10<sup>th</sup> February      Middleton very ill.

Wed 11<sup>th</sup> February      Sinking gradually.

Thurs 12<sup>th</sup> February      Near gone last night.  
Better today. H Middleton in town  
Knocked up with journey. Must come  
on by first train.  
H Middleton arrives at 12.30 am.

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> Feb      Middleton died at 7 am.

Sat 14<sup>th</sup> February      Nurse White left.

Mon 16<sup>th</sup> February      Middletons left.

.....

March 4<sup>th</sup>                      Mr Prothero here.

His burial took place at the New Cemetery, Bouncers Lane, Cheltenham on February 18<sup>th</sup>.and the burials register for the Parish Church of St Mary records the name of the undertaker - Scannel; Middleton's age - 64; his religion - Established Church; and the fact that he was buried in a vault and that the Reverend GP Griffiths, Vicar of Middleton's first Cheltenham Church, officiated at the funeral. (2) Surprisingly, in view of Middleton's reputation in the town, the local press did not carry an account of the funeral service, nor a list of mourners.

Earlier reference has been made to the apparent severance of ties between John Middleton and Christ Church, where he had been an active member since his arrival in the town. Accepting the fact that his parish priest and friend of over twenty years, Canon Fenn had pre-deceased him, it is still puzzling that his funeral did not take place from Christ Church. *The Gloucestershire Echo* report of 19<sup>th</sup> February only adds to the mystery:

The funeral of the late Mr Middleton took place on Wednesday morning at the Cemetery and in the evening a muffled peal consisting of 962 changes of Kent Treble Bob Majors was rung upon the Parish Church Bells by the Society of Ringers, Mr Belcher conducting.

Tributes were paid to his memory by many of those who had been colleagues in the many organisations to which he belonged in the town and beyond, the first and most poignant being that given at All Saints' Church by the Priest-in-Charge, the Reverend G Gardner, on the Sunday following his death:

Especially was grateful remembrance due to him from the congregation worshipping at All Saints, for the stately church which was the result of his taste and skill, and it might truly be said, of his deep religious feeling. No one could have the privilege of being personally acquainted with Mr Middleton without being strongly attracted by his gentle, childlike spirit, and at the same time his varied stores of information and his wide culture. The deepest sympathy must be felt for his widow and his son in the sorrow which has so unexpectedly overtaken them. (3)

The Reverend Gardner also reminded his congregation that the beautiful House of God in which they were sitting was a fitting tribute to his memory and skill.

Of tributes paid by colleagues and friends, none was more moving than that paid by Major RC Barnard, who with Middleton was a founder member of the Cheltenham Library. He had employed Middleton to design his house, Bartlow, on Leckhampton Hill and he was also a very close personal friend. Middleton had served as Treasurer of the Library for twenty two years and at its Council Meeting shortly after his death had been announced, the following tribute was paid by Major Barnard:

The points which particularly struck me were his perseverance and hopefulness and these were impressed by their influence upon the foundation and success of the Library. When the acknowledged want of such an Institution led me to make an effort to meet it, it was to Mr Middleton that I first had recourse; and I shall never forget the readiness with which Mr Middleton entered into the project and the perseverance and confidence with which he supported it. Often when the difficulties we met with caused my energy to flag, and made me despair of success, Mr Middleton's hopefulness assured me, and we persevered in our undertaking. Very few of those who bore the early burden of the work now remain amongst us but none of these would feel that his work was disparaged when I say that it was due to Mr Middleton more than to anyone else, that the Library was founded and that it has enjoyed so successful a career. (4)

An expression of the Council's sincere sympathy with Mrs Middleton and her son was recorded and a copy sent to them. Other members of the Library Council remarked on the readiness with which Middleton had always placed his professional skill gratuitously at the service of the Council.

Not only in Cheltenham was his loss greatly mourned. Ewan Christian, a colleague, the architect of Cheltenham's St Matthew's Church, sometime Diocesan Architect and

President of the Incorporated Church Building Society, when making his presidential speech to the RIBA in November 1885, made special mention of John Middleton:

(He was) one of the kindest and most genial of men. He was an excellent architect, an artist and an antiquary some of whose works display, in combination with sound construction, a freshness of design which is always grateful to those who can appreciate good work (5)

His professional reputation is best summed up in quotations from the many publications which recorded his death:

He possessed the ability to obtain the best results (viz St Mark's) with the minimum of expenditure, but also where costs were not limited, as at All Saints, Holy Apostles and St Stephen's, recently built and completed under his design and personal direction.....All through Wales his talent is illustrated by many striking works ... The Bishop of St David's relied much on his architectural judgement and taste.  
(*The Cheltenham Examiner* 18.02.1885)

His name will become associated with the County of Gloucestershire for generations.

(*The Cheltenham Looker On* 14.02.1885)

The Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society laments the death of Mr John Middleton, Founder Member, Provisional Committee Member, Member of the Cheltenham Council Proper of the Society and local Secretary.

(*BGAS Transactions* Vol 10 p3 1885/6)

A year or two after settling in Cheltenham, he gratuitously made the design for All Saints Church, Cheltenham, which was so much admired that he was induced to commence practice again, and carried out the Ladies College, Cheltenham and a great many other works in the neighbourhood, having especially a large connection amongst the clergy in Wales.....He was devoted to his profession and several well known men were brought forward by him, amongst others Mr Boulton the architectural sculptor.

(*The Builder*, 21.02.1885)

Of all the local church architects living in the Victorian period, none is as prolific as Middleton - nor more talented, with perhaps the exception of Benjamin Bucknall.

(David Verey in *Pevsner, Gloucestershire, The Vale and the Forest of Dean*)

He seems to have been a friendly, sociable man, winning friends from both sides of the ecclesiastical divide.

(Christopher Bishop, *Presidential Address to the B G A S 1992*)

Middleton's vision of creating (for Cheltenham) a medieval skyline of towers and spires was never fully to be realised, but his five churches .....stand today as his

finest achievement, and most significant contribution to Cheltenham's Victorian architecture.

(Hugh Greenhalf, *A Gloucestershire Gallery*)

John Middleton's burial place and memorial at Cheltenham Cemetery is in no way ostentatious, being one in a row of many similar memorials north of the Chapel door. A simple plain cross bears the following legend on its plinth:

In memory of John Middleton, b 27 Aug 1820. d 13 Feb 1885.  
Forever with the Lord  
Jesus Mercy.

On the side of the plinth is also inscribed:

Also of  
Maria Margaret, his wife  
Who died Dec 23<sup>rd</sup> 1898  
Aged 81 years.

Little has been said about Maria Margaret apart from casual references to her presence at official openings or fund raising events. It will be remembered that John and Maria had only just bought and moved into Gresham House, St George's Road when he died so suddenly in Wales. Already the house had been renamed 'Westholme', announced as such in the CLO of 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1885. The new owners of Middleton's former home in Overton Road continued to call that Westholme too, as is borne out by the announcement of the birth of a daughter there in April of 1885. The name was later changed to Abbeyholme and the circumstances surrounding this change have already been explained. We have no information as to who was present at Middleton's funeral, but afterwards Mrs Middleton presumably returned to Yorkshire to spend some time with her family, returning to Cheltenham on July 11<sup>th</sup> 1885. She was soon joined by her son John Henry who was at this time, living and working in Cambridge. The Yorkshire visit must have been an emotional one for Mrs Middleton as just eight months previously, in June 1884, she had accompanied her husband on a holiday visit to family and friends in that area. In widowhood Mrs Middleton continued to visit friends and relatives and the year after her husband's death she is recorded in the Cheltenham arrivals list as having just 'returned from St Leonard's on Sea and Rugby.'

Maria Middleton continued to live at Westholme until 1893 and the arrivals/departures lists in Cheltenham record her visits to and returns from London until that time. By 1894 she had moved to London to live with her son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter. John Henry had just been appointed Art Director of the South Kensington Museum. Their reunion was not to last for long. John Henry died in 1896 after which Maria Middleton continued to live in the city near her daughter-in-law and granddaughter for a further two years. On 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1898 Maria Margaret Middleton died aged 81. Her cremated remains were brought back to Cheltenham and were interred on 29<sup>th</sup> December in the grave in which her husband was buried. (6)

Probate records give her address at the time of death as 22, Kensington Court Mansions, Middlesex, and probate was granted on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1899 to Thomas Henry Morris J P, and Richard Charles Pritchett, accountant, her nephew. Maria and her son John Henry had been the sole beneficiaries under the will of John Middleton senior, a will which had been drawn up in 1882. At that time his share holdings consisted of one seventeenth of the North Bitchburn Colliery in Durham, and the house in Cheltenham together with its contents. No mention is made in the will of the architectural practice. Maria was left whatever of the household contents she decided to keep and personal effects. The shares income was to be equally divided between her and John Henry and upon the death of either, their share would pass to their respective heirs. There was one proviso, namely that should Maria's income not maintain £600 per annum, it was to be made up from her son's shares income. Neither party could sell shares while the other was still alive without mutual agreement. Probate was granted in September 1885 to the value of £16,643.8.5, a comfortable but not excessive amount. (7) John Henry, although the potential successor to the architectural practice, never felt entirely at home in the profession and his interest in Art and Archaeology eventually persuaded him to relinquish his share in the practice and to pursue those interests which ultimately made him more famous nationally than his father had been. This happened about 1889.

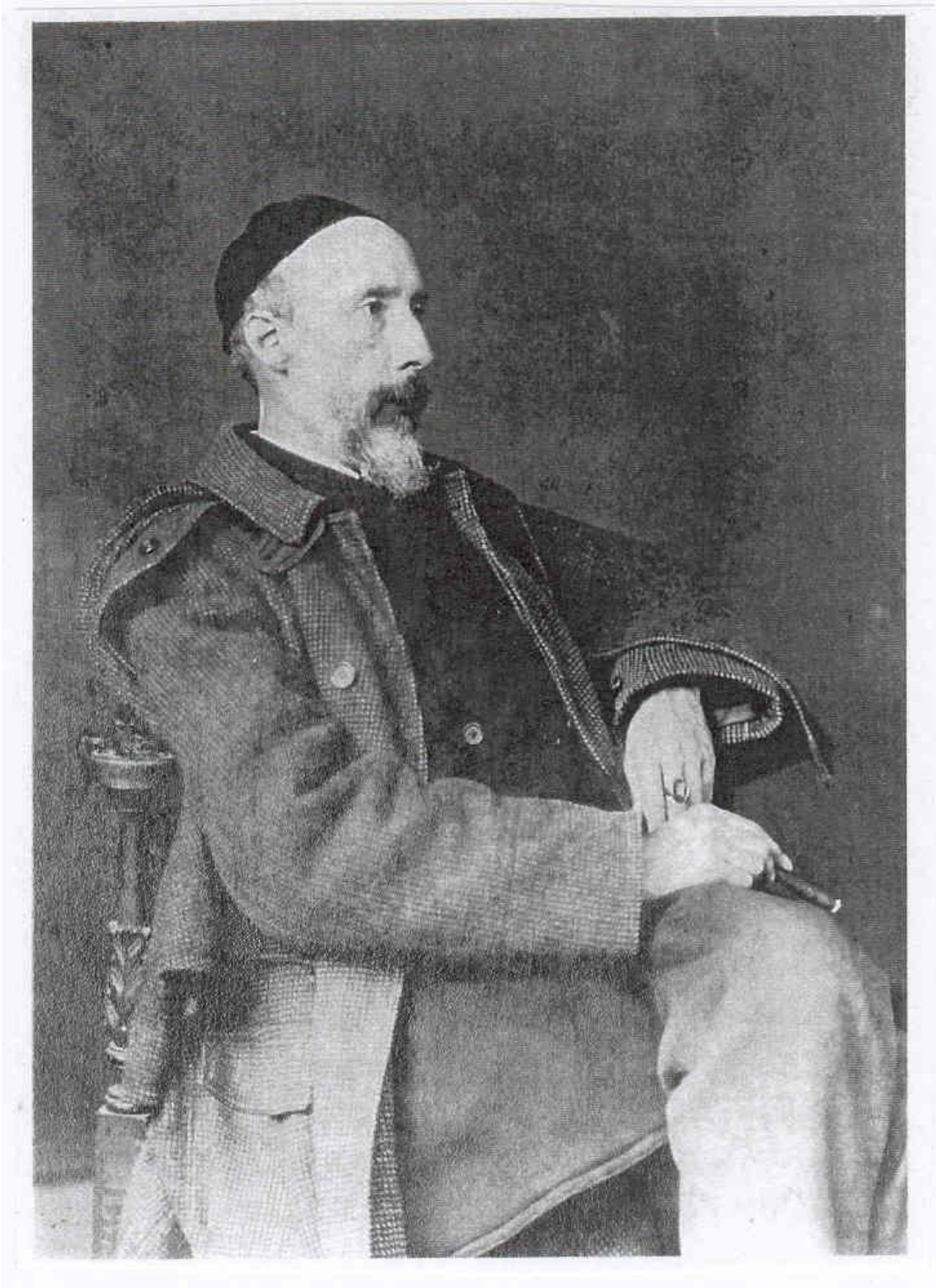
A letter to the ICBS from Ewan Christian with reference to John Henry Middleton's work on the church at Capel Bach, in 1886, explained that 'Middleton is very able, but has dedicated himself to archaeology.' It would seem appropriate to conclude this study of the life of John Middleton and the continuation of his architectural practice with a short account of the life of his son, John Henry and of his sad and untimely death.

## References, Chapter XXI

- 1 National Library of Wales, Cilgwyn Mss.(II) 72.
- 2 GA P78/1 CW3/6/7
- 3 *Gloucestershire Echo* 10.02.1885 at Cheltenham Reference Library.
- 4 *The Cheltenham Examiner* 11.03.1885. The Library referred to was the Permanent Library for which subscriptions had to be paid. This opened in 1863 and closed in 1908. The Public (Free) Library was opened in 1899.
- 5 Presidential Address at *RIBA 07.11.1885. Transactions 1886* p11.
- 6 Maria Margaret Middleton, 22, Kensington Court Mansions, Middlesex, widow, died 23.12.1898. Probate granted London 18.01.1899 to Thomas Henry Morris JP, and Richard Charles Pritchett, accountant. Effects etc., £1,236.16.07.
7. GA. Will of John Middleton. About £1,000,000 in today's purchasing power.

**CHAPTER XXII**

*John Henry Middleton*



*John Henry Middleton*

John Henry Middleton was an only child, the grandson of James Pigott Pritchett the York architect, and great-grandson of Prebendary Pritchett of St Petros, Pembrokeshire and of King's College, Cambridge. Prior to his arrival in Cheltenham it would appear that he spent some time in Italy with his parents and also studied at the school attached to the Benedictine Abbey of La Cava near Naples. (1) It is no surprise that on his arrival in Cheltenham in 1859 or perhaps as late as 1861, he could speak fluent Italian as well as his native tongue. His school years and his Oxford days were not outstanding and he left Exeter College without a Degree after just over a year there. This was as the result of depression caused by the sudden death of a very close fellow student. John Henry returned to the family home in Cheltenham and spent the following five or six years deep in study, which must have caused his parents some concern as he kept very much to himself and made very few friends. He never looked a very healthy person and was very lean and fragile in appearance. He was very much a loner and suffered from long bouts of depression and isolation. The reading and study he did in these Cheltenham years between roughly 1866–1871, laid the foundation for the tremendous and accurate knowledge of Art and Archaeology, for which he was in later years so highly respected. However there must have been some interest shown in his father's practice and no doubt he accompanied him and his partner Mr Goodman on site visits to restorations or new projects. But Art and Archaeology fascinated him and no doubt memories of the things he had seen in Italy stirred up in him the urge to explore more adventurously the hidden wonders of the ancient world. He spent some years visiting America, Mexico, Greece, Asia Minor, Egypt and North Africa. He must have been a determined and courageous traveller for 'he gained entry into the Great Mosque at Fez in Morocco, disguised as a pilgrim and gaining an audience with the Sultan, both feats previously unaccomplished by any one other than a Muslim.' (2)

In 1873 he set off for Iceland and on the boat *Diana* he met William Morris and James Faulkner, one of Morris' partners. Faulkner was already known to Middleton. Morris' letters make many references to him and a strong friendship developed between Morris and Middleton. This friendship lasted to the end of their lives, both dying in 1896. (3) Middleton spent weekends at Morris' home, Kelmscott in Oxfordshire, as one of the many house-guests who were to become famous for their contribution to the Arts and Crafts Movement. Morris makes many references to these visits in his letters. He also accompanied Morris on walking or train expeditions to many of the Cotswold villages, such as Burford, sometimes staying overnight at places like Minster Lovell. What their conversation was about does not need much imagination but considering the vast amount of church restoration and rebuilding with which the Middleton firm was involved, and also knowing of Morris' strong opinions about such restoration, the atmosphere must have been at times quite heated. However although frequent, the visits were often very short - "John Middleton came on Sunday but only stayed his usual short time afterwards," and "Middleton called today but as usual went away very early". Morris often used the familiar name of Jack when talking and writing about John Henry to close friends: "I hope that Jack is pleased with the slate colour as he calls the English blue sky." (4)

Perhaps to test his vocation, perhaps out of loyalty to his father, John Henry Middleton returned to London after his wanderings abroad and spent some time studying in the offices of George Gilbert Scott for which his father paid a tuition fee of £1000. There he appears to have spent his time mainly on church work. From 1875

his London address was 122 Mount Street, Grosvenor Square, until he set up a branch office for his father's firm in 1877 at 4 Storey's Gate, almost half way between Horse Guards Parade and Westminster Abbey. This office continued until 1886. He must have made a favourable impression on Scott for when in 1875 he was elected RIBA Scott was one of his proposers together with FP Cockerell and his father's former partner and brother in law, JP Pritchett. (5) From his position in the heart of London and with his many contacts through Morris, such as Rossetti and Burne-Jones for example, his future in the world of Art was assured. His extensive knowledge made him a much respected and sought after adviser on ancient buildings – for a while in his later years he was secretary to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, a William Morris initiative. He accompanied Morris on many site visits writing and signing reports on works to be done on ancient churches. Some of these reports were quite scathing in their comments and recommendations and no architect was safe from criticism if Morris and Middleton thought it was deserved. He served on the committee in 1890 with such illustrious names as EJA Balfour, James Bryce, George Howard, SC Cockerell, J Comyns Carr, George Webb Dasent, William de Morgan, FS Ellis, CJ Faulkner, JL Gerome, RL Grosvenor, JR Halliday, W Holman Hunt, E Burne-Jones, James Russell Lavell and Viscount Lushington. (6)

However his real passion in life was still Art and Archaeology. He followed a course at the Royal Academy, wrote articles for learned journals, gave lectures and conducted field excursions to ancient buildings. Some of these activities involved returning to Gloucestershire and he was a regular contributor to the meetings and the Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society. At the 1879 Annual Meeting of the County Archaeological Society held at the Plough Hotel in Cheltenham, a three-day event, he, as secretary, had helped to organise the programme. He delivered a paper and led a site visit to Cheltenham's medieval Parish Church. Earlier, in 1872 it will be remembered, he was greatly involved with his father in the discovery and subsequent restoration and preservation of the frescoes at Kempley Church, Gloucestershire. He wrote a paper on the frescoes just before his journey to Iceland with Morris. This paper was read to the Herefordshire Woolhope Naturalist Field Club six years later. He was elected Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and contributed frequently to their publications. Amidst all these activities he continued to travel abroad, especially Italy, which he once visited with Morris to study the work being done on the restoration of St Mark's Venice. He did many drawings while on these travels, some excavation work and eventually published his findings. Was his father delighted at his son's rewarding interest and developing reputation or did he regret the passing of his hopes that his son might eventually take over and continue the practice? This we will never know as no Middleton diary has come to light.

He certainly maintained an interest in the business and he continued to be involved with the life of Cheltenham and the county. In the 1870s he and his father were members of the Cheltenham Freemasons Foundation Lodge No 82. (7) He involved himself with several county antiquarian societies. He also enjoyed artistic design and undertook several commissions. It has been mentioned earlier that he designed the altar frontal, lectern and possibly the pulpit for Sowerby Church in Yorkshire; an altar frontal for All Saints Church in Cheltenham; and in 1880 he exhibited a carved oak mantelpiece at the Bath and West of England Local Art, Sculpture and Carving Exhibition. Just prior to this commission he had designed a fine oak chair for the



Bishop of St David's, carved by Martyn and Emms of Cheltenham, (8) and the oak desk presented to the Bishop when, as Archdeacon of York, his appointment to the See of St David was announced, may well have been to his design, rather than to that of his father.

John Henry soon admitted that provincial architectural practice was not for him, but after his father's death in 1885, he continued in the business for a while with his father's newly formed partners, H Prothero and G Phillott, the partnership maintaining branches in Cheltenham, Newport (Monmouthshire) from where Prothero came, and Westminster. The Newport address of Middleton, Prothero and Phillott was Albion Chambers, Commercial Street until a least 1890. However shortly after his father's death, John Henry Middleton at the age of 40 was elected Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge, a position to which he was twice re-elected between 1886 and 1895. He was given the Honorary Degree MA (Cantab) in 1886 and MA (Oxon) in 1887. In 1888 he was elected Fellow of Kings College Cambridge, an honour also held previously by his great-grandfather. (9) The practice address now changed to Cambridge, Cheltenham and Newport, Mon. In 1889 he was appointed Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, a post he held in addition to his other positions. He was now able to devote time to publishing the wealth of knowledge he had gained in his short life. Among these publications were numerous contributions to the new edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, some published jointly with William Morris, and 'Ancient Rome'. In preparing the latter for publication he had spent long periods in Rome – a whole year at one time – and his architectural training helped him in the study and investigation into ancient buildings. There was hardly any subject connected with the history of art and archaeology upon which John Henry was not well informed and upon many, he proved that he was an authority.(10) This is supported in the Testimonial in favour of JH Middleton as candidate for the Slade Professorship at Cambridge in 1886. His own covering letter refers to his many publications, including books, articles and encyclopaedia entries for which many of the illustrations were from his own drawings. His own appraisal of his career up to 1886 mentions his study of art as a student in Paris and Rome (11). He revealed that not wishing to pursue his interests in painting, he became a pupil of Sir George Gilbert Scott RA, and since that time he had practised as an architect. He listed his study of the art of many countries, followed up in the countries themselves - prehistoric art in Mexico and Arizona; Egyptian art in Egypt; Greek art in Athens, Asia Minor, the Aegean islands and many other Hellenic sites; Roman art in Italy and Moslem art in Egypt, Arabia, Syria and Morocco. He added that he had been especially devoted to the study of medieval and later art, and had made studies in all of the chief galleries of Europe where he had spent altogether six years in Italy studying art, sculpture and architecture in the chief Italian towns. This is an impressive list of interests and accomplishments, supporting the belief that John Henry was indeed a devotee of the ancient and the aesthetic rather than the contemporary and functional.

A contemporary letter from Jane Morris to her close friend Wilfred Scawen Blunt, written in May 1889, opens a window into his personality: people either like him extremely or not at all, he is a great favourite with all of us, but we see little of him he is such a busy worker. I was almost sorry when he was re-elected Slade Professor last year. Still he is paid for that and he is not for much of his work. I never can think of him belonging to this century, or Western civilisation at all, he is like a bit of old world thought and feeling re-embodied and wafted from the East. (12)

John Henry's supporters for the professorship included Sidney Colvin of the British Museum; the Dean of Westminster; several university Fellows or Tutors; the Director of the National Gallery, Sir Frederick Burton; William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. (13) Morris' confirmation of his support was given in a letter to John Henry written in February 1886:

Dear M, hear you are a candidate for the vacant Slade Professorship. I consider you thoroughly qualified for the post which seems to me requires a man of your accurate and detailed knowledge of Art and Archaeology. I am sure you will bring your extraordinary painstaking industry to bear on the work you would do if elected. (14)

Comments in his favour emphasised his 'great retentiveness of eye and mind and conclusions based on soundness of knowledge rather than ingenuity of speculation'. (Sidney Colvin.)

'...in other departments of medieval art, whether concerned with bronzes or ivories, coins or gems, pottery or porcelain, gold or silver work, with mosaics, enamels or textiles, his mind is as well furnished as if each had been his single study. In Oriental Art he ranks as one of the few English experts. In ecclesiology his learning and research are justly famous. (A J Butler, Fellow and Tutor, Brasenose College, Oxford)

Other comments tend to stress his wide travel and practical grounding in technique. (15)

Middleton's nomination was approved as we know, and perhaps his colleagues and friends hoped that this new challenge might in some way take his mind off the death of his father just a year previously and provide some other interest apart from his mental and health problems. He obviously felt the loss of his father very deeply and Morris who had seen him in Oxford wrote to his daughter of his concern for him. Writing from Hammersmith in March 1885, just a month after Middleton senior's death, Morris told her that he had seen John Henry in Oxford for only a few minutes where he was on some matter to do with his father's death. "He looked very ill and has grown a thin, woeful looking beard." (16)

In addition to being twice re-elected to the Professorship and being Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, he also became at the same time, a lecturer at London's Royal Academy. Yet he still found time for travel. Jane Morris writing to WS Blunt in February 1892 informed him that Middleton would be leaving in a fortnight's time to spend three months in Greece. Later that year, he was on a visit to Rome, where he took great delight in conducting friends and tourists around the ancient historical ruins. Jane, again writing to WS Blunt informed him that she had received a letter from JHM telling her that he had proposed to Bella Stillman and had been accepted. Bella was the daughter of the Times correspondent in Italy. They married there at the end of December that year A further letter in March the following year, again to Blunt, told him that Middleton and his bride had visited Jane's family in London, and that they were seeking a suitable piece of land on which to build a nest for themselves. (17)

Walter James Stillman, John Henry's father in law, was born in New York State in 1828. He was keenly interested in art and related studies and as a young man he edited an Art Journal in New York, called Crayon, in response to Ruskin's popularity in the USA. (18) He had heard about the exciting things happening in England in the Art world and moved to England to take up painting as a career. He was soon noticed by the pre-Raphaelites and became part of their circle. Ruskin whom he had first met in 1850 became a sort of mentor and took Stillman with him on a drawing-cum-painting holiday in Switzerland. On their return, Stillman met and eventually married the daughter of a Cambridge doctor. They returned to America and Stillman accepted the post of US Consul in Rome, but this did not last for long, and he resigned over some policy disagreement. However the rift was soon healed and the concern of both himself and his wife for the oppressed minorities in Europe persuaded him to accept the post of US Consul in Crete. He and his wife championed the cause of oppressed Christians when attacked by Muslims in 1865 and they opened the Consulate as a refuge. The pressures of the job forced him to resign and in 1868 they moved to Athens where his wife committed suicide in grief over the Cretan atrocities, leaving him a widower with three children - two daughters, Lisa and Bella, and a son to whom he was devoted. Because of his son's serious hip disease, Stillman returned to England and sought out his former art contacts, for a while sharing a house with DG Rossetti. It was through these contacts that he met, and married in 1871, Miss Marie Spartali, the daughter of the Greek Consul in London.

Marie was fifteen years his junior and closely involved professionally and personally with the pre-Raphaelite Circle. WS Blunt writing in 1890 referred to Middleton's "culte for her and Mrs Morris, dating from the time when Rossetti loved them both." Marie had been born in England into a very wealthy and socially important family, a family which became sponsors of the pre-Raphaelite movement. Marie grew up with a flair for languages and a passion for drawing, and by 1864 she was a pupil of Ford Madox Brown. She had her first exhibition in 1867 and in 1870 exhibited at the Royal Academy. She was welcomed into the pre-Raphaelite Circle in 1871, the year of her marriage to Stillman. The marriage was strongly opposed by her family because of the difference in their ages, and because he was a widower with three children. (19). Their first child was born the following year. In 1875, Stillman went as volunteer war correspondent for the Times to cover the anti-Turkish uprising in the Balkans. From there he moved to Italy continuing as correspondent for the newspaper, leaving Marie in England with their own daughter and her step-daughters. She continued to paint and exhibit her paintings and also continued to sit for Rossetti. In 1878 she joined Stillman in Florence where they settled and where their son Michael was born. William Morris and his wife visited them there in 1880. The Stillmans seemed to spend their time moving between Italy and Greece but in 1886 upon his appointment as Times correspondent covering Italy and Greece, Stillman and his family made Rome their base and lived there for the next ten years. The family at this time comprised Stillman, Marie, their two children Effie and Michael, and the two girls by his first marriage, Lisa and Bella. Marie obviously got on well with her step children treating them as her own and taking responsibility for them during her husband's frequent reporting absences. She also continued to paint and her example may well have been the inspiration behind Effie and Lisa's decision to become artists. When in England they were frequent guests at Morris' home at Kelmscott.

It is probably safe to assume that through his contacts with Morris, John Henry Middleton met Marie Spartali and Lisa and Bella Stillman and it is even more probable that during his many visits to Italy, Rome in particular, he met Walter Stillman and the larger family. Whatever the circumstances, John Henry Middleton married Bella in Rome just before taking up the appointment at the South Kensington Museum. (20) Director of Art was a newly created post and Middleton accepted the challenge with obvious enthusiasm. This of course added to his national and international reputation and perhaps this added pressure contributed to his early death. (21)

His role was to modernise the Department and to add to its treasures, many new exhibits being bought on his recommendation.. However there was much in-house squabbling and politics which caused his health to suffer. (22) One who had supported his appointment wrote: "I had hopes that the strength of his position through his unquestioned knowledge would have been supplemented by a strong will and capacity for fighting. I am afraid now from all that I can learn, that this will not be so." It was at this time that his mother, Maria, moved from Cheltenham to London and his health may have been one of the reasons for her move. Jane Morris, William's wife, writing to WS Blunt in July 1894 remarked that she had seen John Henry just a day or so previously and how very ill he looked "hopelessly so to my thinking." He spent a lot of time out of doors, walking or resting, and seemed totally lifeless .His wife Bella read to him for several hours each day and now and again he dictated letters to her. In Jane's opinion he had lost interest in everything apart from wife and baby and if it were not for them he would not seek medical help. He took sick leave for a year (23), spending most of it in Italy, and while there his health deteriorated quite dramatically. Jane Morris again writing about him in February 1895 said that he was little better than when he left England. "The head trouble goes on which after all is the chief thing". (24) He eventually returned to London, but the strain of his work, brought on further attacks of the depression which had visited him since his youth and for the relief of which he resorted to the frequent use of drugs, morphia in particular.

On Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June 1896, *The Times* carried the report of the enquiry into the sad circumstances surrounding the death of Professor John Henry Middleton, DCL, aged 49, Director of Art at the South Kensington Museum. He had died at 2, Museum Residences, Exhibition Road, South Kensington, on 10<sup>th</sup> June. The cause of death was an overdose of morphia. Mr J Winterbotham, solicitor of Cheltenham, watched the case on behalf of Middleton's family and there were several friends of the deceased in the Court. It was stated that he had been at his post at the museum for only three years and he was an MA and DCL of Oxford University. His body had been identified by Mr Richmond Thackeray Ritchie of the India Office, a son in law of the Stillmans. He had last seen the deceased in February but was well informed of the deceased's illness as his wife was an intimate friend of the family. Ritchie was one of the executors of Middleton's will and confirmed that his life was insured for £2000.

Middleton's widow Bella was asked to take the stand and she described the head pains which he had had for the past three years and which the doctor put down to depression. John Henry had disagreed with this diagnosis and believed that there was something wrong with his brain. Recently he had been victim to insomnia and loss of appetite. He had seen a specialist who confirmed that he was not suffering delusions and that there was definitely no organic disorder. Mrs Middleton explained that as an

undergraduate he had had brain fever and his life was despaired of for want of sleep. He had therefore been prescribed morphia three times a day but had become so anxious that he purchased large quantities of it so that he would never be in a position of not having any at hand. His doctors had told him to come off it or else he stood no chance of getting better but he admitted that this was not possible.

His widow explained that on the previous Tuesday he had had two doses, one at eleven am and one at three pm. He usually took a third dose before bed time. She read to him during the evening and he seemed cheerful when he retired to bed at the usual time of 9 pm. There had been no disturbance during the night and when she went out next day, she did not wake him. On her return at 6 pm she found two doctors in attendance, and John Henry lying unconscious. He died the same night. The inquest report confirmed that he had been on morphia for 22 years, since the age of 27, and was addicted to it. He had possibly, unintentionally taken an overdose as he could not sleep. The body was extremely emaciated but the brain was healthy and there was nothing abnormal to report. Death was undoubtedly due to a coma from morphia poisoning and a verdict of 'Death from Misadventure' was recorded.

The diary of WS Blunt of June 17<sup>th</sup> 1896 records Middleton's death and his opinion was that it had the appearance of suicide. "He is a great loss, or has been rather, for he has been dead to the world and his friends for something like two years." (25) Immediately after the inquest the body of John Henry Middleton was taken by rail to Woking and cremated by the deceased's own wish. Only a few friends and relatives were present. Of his relatives, there may have been some from his mother's side of the family but from available evidence, it would appear that his father had none living at the time. Whether his in-laws, the Stillmans returned from Italy we do not know, but John Henry's ashes were buried on 13<sup>th</sup> June in Plot 2S at Brookwood Cemetery, Woking. In adjacent plots are buried his father-in-law who died in 1901, his mother-in-law Marie Spartali Stillman who died in 1927 and in John Henry's plot, his sister-in-law, Lisa Stillman who died in 1946. (26)

Many were the published appreciations of John Henry's life among which is that of the Society of Antiquaries of London, to which he had been elected Fellow in 1879 and Vice President in 1894. (27). Much was made in this appreciation of the many literary contributions Middleton had provided and of the 84 articles which he had produced for the Encyclopaedia Britannica. The American Architect also devoted much space to his obituary. (28) William Morris spent June 1896 in Folkestone, and his health was affected by the news of Middleton's death. In a letter nine days after receiving the news, Morris wrote to Georgiana Burne-Jones:

I did like him very much. We had a deal to talk about and much in common as to our view of things, and the world, and his friendliness to his friends was beyond measure. (29)

According to Jane Morris also writing to Georgiana, Morris received the news of the death on the train on his way to Folkestone, "it having been kept from him." She also wrote to WS Blunt that news of John Henry's death "threw (her) over for the day. I knew of poor Mr Middleton's habit, (opium). I discovered it soon after we first knew him. He nearly killed himself then but his mother came and carried him off and had him nursed. I wonder that Bella ever left the bottle within his reach." (30)

John Henry Middleton had written his will just six months before his death - December 18<sup>th</sup> 1895. His appointed executors were his wife Bella and his friends Thomas Henry Morris JP of The Lodge, Halifax and Richmond Ritchie Esq., of The India Office, London. In the event of Bella surviving him, he left everything to her. Naturally he also appointed her sole guardian of their only child Mary Margaret. Should Bella die at the same time as he did, then three trustees, Thomas Henry Morris, Richmond Ritchie and his friend Somers Clarke of 3, Whitehall Court, London, “ were to administer the estate on behalf of Mary Margaret until she reach the age of 25, or upon her prior marriage”. His wife’s sisters, Lisa and Effie Stillman were appointed joint guardians within the above terms relating to age and marriage. Maintenance was to be paid by the trustees out of the income of the Trust, for the daughter and for the guardians’ expenses. Should Lisa or Effie die before Mary Margaret reached the rightful age of inheritance, then the trustees were appointed to fulfil the guardians’ role in their place. Should Mary Margaret die before the realisation of the bequest, the estate was to be shared between Marie Spartali Stillman, his mother-in-law, and Lisa and Effie Stillman, his sisters-in-law.

The witnesses to the will were Caspar Purdon Clarke, Assistant Director of the South Kensington Museum and Arthur Banks Skinner, Keeper of the Museum. Probate was granted on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1896 - value net being £18,217.0.6. The final value, resworn in October of that year amounted to £23,052.4.5. No mention was made in the will of John Henry’s mother who was living near him in South Kensington and who did not die until two years after him, in 1898. Of the executors, Richmond Ritchie was the same person who gave evidence at the inquest and identified the body. Thomas Henry Morris was the son of William and Barbara Morris, William being the founder of the firm of worsted spinners, William Morris and Sons, of Sowerby Bridge. (31). They were married in York in 1846 and were friends of John Middleton senior. Their son Thomas was a contemporary of young John Henry and in the 1861 Census it is recorded that Thomas was staying with the Middletons in Cheltenham on Census night, aged 13.

John Middleton senior was spared the unpleasant publicity surrounding his son’s death but sadly did not live to witness his son’s marriage nor to see his granddaughter, Mary Margaret (Peggy). Of John Henry’s career and involvement with the firm little actual evidence exists. Plans bearing the legend ‘Middleton and Son’ begin with the restoration of Charlton Kings Parish Church in 1876. Those signed ‘Henry Middleton’ include library work for a large mansion, The Elms, Darlington, 1878; Kempley Church Record of Mural Paintings by H Middleton, not dated; the altar frontals already mentioned of c1886 and Broadway Church alterations 1889. It was at about this time that he retired from active involvement with the firm, although it continued as Middleton, Prothero and Phillott until the year of his death.

The *Building News* of 1890 in celebrating his Directorship of the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, does however credit him with a considerable contribution to the second phase of the designs for the Cheltenham Ladies’ College, Ss Phillip and James Church, Cheltenham, the Picture Gallery at Hampton Court House, and both Coleshill Court and Beckford Hall. In partnership with Prothero and Phillott he was responsible for the additions to St David’s College mentioned earlier; the completion of Trinity

Church Aberystwyth; the Red House, Oxford and the major alterations to Christ Church, Cheltenham. I quote Christopher Bishop:

“The only building for which we can be certain that he was responsible, in Cheltenham, was the adaptation of the Regency Gothic Christ Church, into an Early Christian Roman Basilica. I like to visualise him working in his set of rooms in the Fellows’ Building at King’s, sending his drawings back to Cheltenham for working up by his partners’ assistant. There are cryptic notes such as “Romanesque Corinthian Capitals; see Bramente’s Cancellaria in small note book,” and “Memo, no cross over altar” a reminder of the problem of imposing a high Roman style of architecture on a Cheltenham Evangelical congregation”.

How appropriate that the son should leave his mark on Cheltenham in the very church in which his father first worshipped on his arrival in Cheltenham and which he served as Churchwarden for 25 years.

Both the *Athenaeum* and the *Academy* provide the ultimate testimonials to one of Cheltenham’s adopted sons:

At Cambridge he did far more than fulfil the bare requirements of his professorship and there and elsewhere he was always ready with help and advice for those who sought them of him, and his death will be felt as the loss of a friend by many, in many parts of the world. There is little doubt that Middleton toiled beyond his strength for the greater part of his life, and that when he went to South Kensington, he was not equal to the hard work which had to be done there. (32)

The characteristic of all his books is the intimate acquaintance shown with technical processes. For in truth, Middleton was not so much a scholar in the German sense, as a trained observer with a keen, sympathetic eye, and an unusual power of lucid exposition...It remains to say that Middleton possessed in the happier periods of his life, a genius for friendship. He would devote himself to the service of others – even when they had little claim on him - with an affection that was almost feminine. At the same time he could burn with righteous anger against whatever was base in conduct or in art. His character indeed was half Italian, strengthened by the religion of Positivism, which, at one period at least, exercised a powerful influence upon him. (33)

## ***18 References, Chapter XXII***

- 1 *The Athenaeum* 20.06.1896
- 2 DNB entry for John Henry Middleton
- 3 Lindsay, and Kelvin..ed.
- 4 Kelvin.op.cit.
- 5 RIBA Biographical File.
- 6 Kelvin.op.cit.
- 7 Cheltenham Masonic Association Records per the Curator.

- 8 *Cheltenham Examiner* 23.06.1880
- 9 Christopher Bishop ARIBA
- 10 *The Athenaeum* op cit.
- 11 This information courtesy Anthony Burton, author “*Vision and Accident, the Story of the Victoria and Albert Museum*”. V&A Publications. Reference: BL 1414.f.84/6
- 12 ‘*Jane Morris to Wilfred Scawen Blunt,*’ edited Peter Faulkner 1986
- 13 Burton op cit.
- 14 Kelvin op cit.
- 15 *The Athenaeum* op cit.
- 16 Kelvin op cit
- 17 Peter Faulkner, op cit.
- 18 *Times Obit.* 09.07.1901 p4;Who Was Who, 1897-1916
- 19 *Women Artists and the pre-Raphaelite Movement*; J Marsh and PG Nunn, Virago .
- .... Press 1989. and *The Times Obit.* 08.03.1927. Also DNB Missing Persons, edited by
- . C S Nicholls 1993.
- 20 *The Academy* 20.06.1896. Also *The Architect and Contract Reporter* of 19.06.1896.
- 21 Anthony Burton op cit.
- 22 Anthony Burton op cit.
- 23 *The Academy* op cit.
- 24 Peter Faulkner op cit.
- 25 Fitzwilliam Museum, Blunt Archive: Diaries of WS Blunt June 17 1896, quoted in
- .. Kelvin op cit.
- 26 The Director, Brookwood Cemetery Ltd, Woking. Also Probate Records: Marie . ....
- .....Stillman, 19 Ashburn Place, Cromwell Road, South Kensington, widow d. 6.3.1927. .
- .....Probate London 18<sup>th</sup> May to Bella Middleton, widow. Effects £155.1.2.
- 27 Proceedings, 1895-1897 pp 360-361
- 28 *American Architect* Vol 53 p10 1896
- 29 Kelvin op cit. Letter 2471 1896
- 30 Peter Faulkner op cit.
- 31 West Yorkshire Archive Service, Calderdale. Thomas Henry Morris died at Sowerby
- .....in 1927 having married at Notting Hill, London , Florence Ethel Crompton in July
- ..... 1909.
- 32 *The Athenaeum* op cit.
- 33 *The Academy* op cit.



## APPENDICES

### A. Development of The Practice.

1860 – 1868.                      John Middleton

1868 – c1876:                      Middleton & Goodman

1876 – 1883/4:                      Middleton & Son. (John Henry) The son settled in London and according to LW Barnard in *Ninety Years Past*, remained with the firm after the death of his father, until about 1889. Plans are signed J Middleton in 1876, up to April. Thereafter they are signed Middleton & Son.

However in 1870 drawings – sketches and details – of Coberley Church bear the following instruction: “to be sent to Henry Middleton, 4, Storey’s Gate, Westminster.”

Details of Leonard Stanley Church in 1872 are also signed John Henry Middleton.

1884 – 1893:                      Middleton Prothero and Phillott.

John Middleton died in February 1885. His son John Henry continued to be involved with the Practice until 1889 by which time he was firmly established at Cambridge, having become Slade Professor of Fine Art in 1886. One plan – for The Red House, Oxford c1886 - bears the legend ‘Middleton Prothero and Phillott, Cheltenham, Cambridge and Newport, Mon. This description is also to be found on the plans for alterations to the Swan Hotel in Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire.

Plans for Llandyfriog School and Dinnington Church, both 1883, are inscribed Middleton and Son, Westminster and Cheltenham while those for Tredunnock Rectory are inscribed, ‘Westminster, Cheltenham and Newport, Mon. 1883.

This does present some confusion perhaps complicated by the following information:

*The Cheltenham Examiner* report of John Middleton’s death informs us that he ‘took former pupils Prothero and Phillott into partnership as late as 1<sup>st</sup> July last...’ (ie 1884).

A drawing of the Cemetery Chapel at Risca in 1883 is signed, H Prothero, Albion Chambers, Newport.

The plans for the Board Room at Leckhampton are signed and dated, ‘Geo. H Phillott & Henry G Prothero Architects. 19, Regent Street, Cheltenham and Albion Chambers, Newport. December 1884.

*The Newport Directory* for 1887 – 1890 includes John Henry Middleton, George H Phillott and Henry G Prothero at Albion Chambers, Newport but in 1898 there is no further mention of their presence in Newport.

Biographical details of Prothero and Phillott are to be found in *Ninety Years Past* by LW Barnard and in *The Cheltenham Examiner*.

HA Prothero MA, FRIBA died a bachelor in his 58<sup>th</sup> year November 1906. He was the son of the Reverend Thomas Prothero of Malpas Court, Newport, Monmouthshire and was educated at Cheltenham College, and Balliol College Oxford. He was articled to John Middleton and did some work with an architect in London before returning to Cheltenham with a former colleague, George Henry Phillott. They entered into partnership with Middleton forming a new practice as Middleton Prothero and Phillott. He specialised in ecclesiastical buildings and designed many new churches as well as undertaking many restorations. Between 1886 – 1895 he was architect to Cheltenham Ladies' College. The Chapel at Cheltenham Gentlemen's College was also to his design and is perhaps his finest memorial.

*The Architects' Directory of the RIBA* however gives more comprehensive – if somewhat confusing – information. HA Prothero was articled to John Middleton from 1875 to 1878. He then worked in the office of Somers Clark and John Thomas Micklethwaite. He began practice in Newport, Mon., in 1879, in partnership with John Middleton and GH Phillott of Cheltenham, and this continued until 1885, the year of John Middleton's death. Thereafter he was in partnership with JH Middleton and GH Phillott as Middleton, Prothero and Phillott until 1896, when the firm became Prothero and Phillott, and the practice address was 13, Promenade, Cheltenham. He became FRIBA in 1896. His proposers were AW Blomfield, FW Waller and MH Medland.

The following information concerning GH Phillott probably gives a more reliable account of Prothero's early years with Middleton's firm, as most of it is taken from a directory of important Cheltenham personalities *Who's Who in Cheltenham* c1918, compiled and published during Phillott's lifetime.

George Henry Phillott, MA, died in September 1926 and the biographical details referred to above are supplemented from the *Cheltenham Chronicle* report of his funeral. He was born in 1852 at Staunton-on-Wye, Herefordshire, the son of Canon Phillott, Chancellor of Hereford Cathedral. He gained his MA at Christchurch, Oxford and then began his studies for the profession of architect. He was articled to John Middleton and then moved to London to gain experience in Civil and Mechanical engineering. He returned to Cheltenham in 1884 with his partner, Henry Prothero who had been in Middleton's office with him during his training, and they both joined Middleton's practice as partners, just before the death of John Middleton. The practice then continued with John Henry Middleton as Middleton, Prothero and Phillott. He married in 1888, and had two sons and two daughters by his marriage. He began the Gloucestershire Sanitary Inspection Association but his specialism was domestic architecture, thus complementing Prothero's interest. He was a keen and competent campanologist and much sought after for advice on bells and bell hanging.

**It would seem appropriate to suggest** that after their time as pupils of Middleton, Prothero and Phillot joined together in their own practice in Newport and Cheltenham for a while. John Henry formally became his father's co-partner in 1881 and his father invited Prothero and Phillott to become partners (July 1884) from which time the practice continued as Middleton Prothero and Phillot. After his father's death, John Henry continued to be involved with the Practice from London, - and Cambridge for a while – until withdrawing totally from it in 1889. However the Practice continued to include the name Middleton until 1896 when it then became Prothero and Phillott. In 1908, two years after Mr Prothero's death Mr LV Barnard, FRIBA joined Mr Phillott in the Practice which continued as Prothero, Phillott and Barnard.

## **B. FURTHER NOTES:**

### **INDENTURE**

#### **COPY OF INDENTURE 1881.**

(The following is a summary of the indenture, made by the author, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2003)

#### **Gloucestershire Records Office D2216 Box 25 (part 2)**

Articles of Partnership between Messrs Middleton and Son, Architects.

Deposited with (F?) and E Griffiths.

Signed sealed and delivered by the within named John Middleton and John Henry Middleton in the presence of Edward Lloyd Griffiths, Solicitor, Cheltenham.

INDENTURE made 1<sup>st</sup> January 1881 between John Middleton of Cheltenham Architect, and John Henry

Middleton of Cheltenham, Architect, do covenant that they shall become co-partners in the profession, in

Cheltenham aforesaid and London, or elsewhere.

The conditions: This will be for a ten year period. John Middleton shall retire if he desires provided that he give

three months notice.

The style of the partnership shall be Middleton and Son.

The premises shall be 1, Bedford Buildings and 4, Storey's Gate, Westminster.

All the resources of the firm shall be the property of the firm.

The profits shall be shared equally.

Neither partner shall interfere with the other's plans.

If John Middleton retires he still receives his share.

Each partner can design gratuitously whenever, including John Middleton after retirement.

Any payment, gift or reward as a result of the work of the partnership becomes the property of the partnership.

All accounts, except those for the London Office shall be kept in Cheltenham.

The London Office books shall be sent to John Middleton in Cheltenham monthly.

If John Middleton dies, the firm's goodwill passes to John Henry Middleton.

Signed, John Middleton and John Henry Middleton.

### **C. NEWSPAPERS**

#### **Examiner**

April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1838 – Laying of Foundation Stone of new Philip and James Church immediately opposite Greville House at corner of Grafton Street and the road leading to the Park, in front of Argyle Place. Its situation will therefore be unexceptional.

#### **Middleton entries in Cheltenham Looker On**

Jan 3 1885:

Departures: Mr Mrs Middleton, Westholme, Overton Road, to Westholme, (formerly Gresham House) St George's Road.

12<sup>th</sup> Jan 1885:

Westholme, Cheltenham. Engal Sanders etc.

I have received instructions from John Middleton esq, (who has disposed of the property) to sell by auction upon the premises on 27<sup>th</sup> January at 12 o'clock ....

13<sup>th</sup> June 1891

Arrival – Professor Middleton from Cambridge, for Westholme.

(arrival announced on 13<sup>th</sup> – probably arrived before then for the following, his dad's solicitor.)

13<sup>th</sup> June 1891

Death on Monday last of E L Griffiths, Clerk to the Bench of Magistrates for 40n years. Clerk to the Gas Company; will be missed at St Mark's Church where he was churchwarden. Funeral yesterday (Friday 12<sup>th</sup>)

16<sup>th</sup> Jan 1897

Bishop of St David's Rt Rev Basil Jones died Thursday at Abergwili Palace. Born Chelt 1822, educated Shrewsbury School. 1840 scholarship to Oxford. Prebendary of St David's 1859-1865; Archdeacon of York 1867-1874; Bishop St David's 1874 to present.

## APPENDIX D

### MIDDLETON IN THE Files of Collins and Cullis :

**D 843** at Gloucestershire Record Office.

p326 July 1873

To Middleton & Goodman. We are willing to execute a Picture Gallery **at Hampton Court House**, Hampton Court for Mrs Heurtley for £3,160 according to your drawings. Collins and Cullis. (Lowest Tender included in this entry is given at £2,980 by Mitchell of Dulwich.)

p356 July 14<sup>th</sup> 1873.

In Middleton esq, Dear Sir, we are willing to build and complete the Chancel of the **Tivoli Church** according to your specifications for £1,275 Collins and Cullis.

p366 13<sup>th</sup> Sept 1873

To Captain Hopton for porch to **Canon Frome Court House**: encaustic tile floor, oak for seats to be provided by yourself but worked by us approximately £225 Collins and Cullis.

16<sup>th</sup> Jan 1871. Middleton and Goodman

We agree to do various works at **Coleshill for** the sum of £13,200

p255 Revised contract for **Coleshill for** erection of mansion house £11,350

p268 Middleton and Goodman 4<sup>th</sup> August 1871.

**Coleshill Schools**, willing to complete for £1,350

p315 September 1872 **Coleshill**

Middleton and Goodman; Dining room chimney piece in Caen stone £17.10.00  
Boudoir chimney piece in Caen stone £3.12.6

p371 9<sup>th</sup> October 1873 **Coleshill**

In Middleton esq. Please find enclosed, garden pattern file, Collins and Cullis.

p147. Middleton and Goodman. 10<sup>th</sup> August 1868

We have examined the spire of **Bredon Church** and find it collapsed, ten feet from the top. Recommend that it be immediately rebuilt. c£100 Collins and Cullis.

p169 May 11<sup>th</sup> 1869. Middleton and Goodman. We will restore the spire of **Bredon Church** in accordance with your plans and specifications for £85.0.0 We will also restore if required an additional seven feet for £12.0.0 Collins and Cullis.

p153 **Little Marcle Church**. Collins and Cullis specs according to plans of SW Hingall (?)

p158 Middleton and Goodman  
Feb 1869 Rebuild tower at **Woolstone** and provide extra foundations £280

p159 Feb 1869 **Forthampton**: organ chamber and vestry for £260

p167 To Joseph Yorke, to provide and complete organ chamber and vestry as per drawings of Mr Middleton, architect, £98.10.0: archway of aisle and vestry, new window and fire place.

6<sup>th</sup> April 1872. Middleton and Goodman, Wood ceiling for chancel at Forthampton, £96

D843 4/1 p30 **Leigh School** by Humphries of Cheltenham.

D843 4/1 p239 11<sup>th</sup> October 1870

Re **Mr Vivian**, to John Middleton esq.

Honoured sir, Alterations in basement, new offices and under morning room: cost of plans you showed me yesterday £547

Alteration to ground floor and above, £679  
Extra if oak used in morning room ceiling £16  
Extra for ornamental plaster in drawing room £24  
Total £967

D843 4/1 p218 **Coberley**:

All restoration for Middleton and Goodman, £1,070. Plus £126 extra if oak used in roofs

D843 4/1: **DYMOCK: Tender**:

p215 April 1870: outside drainage, flagging etc; heating chamber; west part of church; nave and chancel; transepts : £536.7.0

p218: 16<sup>th</sup> May 1870: Will provide window at Dymock £41.10.0

p235: To Major Raikes at Dymock: Will strip plaster and colour except in chancel and chancel arch, and repoint same; £49.0.0  
If NOT repointed, cost will be £25.0.0

Dec 20<sup>th</sup> 1870

Major Raikes: Removing gallery and making good broken walls: £10.0.0 Materials of gallery to be property of contractors.

D843 4/1 p270 **Rural Hospital, Tewkesbury:**

5<sup>th</sup> October 1871: According to plans of Messrs Middleton and Goodman, £1017.

3<sup>rd</sup> June 1872 Walls and gates for Tewkesbury Hospital, £188.0.0

D843 4/1 10<sup>th</sup> October 1871 p271

Twynning Church: Choir stalls agreeable to your designs for: Riga Oak, £120

Pitch pine £89

D 843 4/1 21. December 1871

Agree to erect **Ladies College** according to plans of Messrs Middleton and Goodman for £5,700

The House for

1,260

The three lowest tenders received were: Welsh £5,350

Harvey 4,800

Channon 4,775

## D. TIMELINES

### John Middleton.

1820	born York
1838/9	became pupil of JP Pritchett
1843/4	Own Practice in Darlington
1855/6	Left Darlington Practice
1859	Cheltenham
1864	Watson Fothergill as pupil
1867	Began Welsh contracts
1868	Joined by Goodman. Opened Bedford Buildings Office
1876	Goodman left; John Henry formally joined practice.
1881	John Henry formally admitted as his father's partner.
1885	Middleton died in Wales. Buried in Cheltenham.
1893	Middleton's widow moved to London

### John Henry Middleton

b1846	York
c1859-1861	La Cava, Naples
1861-1864	Cheltenham College

1865	Exeter College Oxford
1866-1871	Cheltenham/Travel
1870	Address 4, Storey's Gate, Westminster
1872	Work on Kempey Frescoes
1873	Iceland – met Morris
1874	Pupil with GG Scott in London.
1875	Grosvenor Square London and became RIBA
1876	Middleton & Son
1877-1886	Office at 4, Storey's Gate, Westminster Firm becomes, Cheltenham and Westminster
1879	Papers/Talks for BGAS Fellow, Society of Antiquaries.
1881	Official Contract of Partnership with his father.
1885	Father died
1886	Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge. MA Cantab
1887	MA Oxon
1888	Fellow, Kings College Cambridge The Firm's Address becomes Cambridge, Cheltenham and Newport.
1889	Director, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Left Firm.
1892	Italy, Greece. Married
1893	Art Director, South Kensington Museum.
1894	Vice President, Society of Antiquaries.
1896	Died. Cremated and ashes interred at Woking.

### **E. John Henry Middleton:**

VICTORIA AND ALBERT READING ROOM, Blythe House, 23, Blythe Road,  
Olympia W14 0QX Tel 020 7602 5886 [j.sutton@vam.ac.uk](mailto:j.sutton@vam.ac.uk)

MA/1/M2045

Objects received from Dr Middleton per Art Museum.  
9 items from ruins of Old Cairo, all chipped or broken.  
Delivered 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 1893.

\*\*\*\*\*

8 ivory plaques in 32 pieces on loan, now a gift.- see 38. Signed JHM  
8 Dec 1893.

.....

28<sup>th</sup> December 1893

Fragments of Persian wall tiles 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. Presented  
Four fragments. Teheran given by JHM.



\*\*\*\*\*

12<sup>th</sup> Feb 1894;  
2 plaster casts of female hand form nature.

.....

9 pairs silver waist buckles  
plus various items.  
30<sup>th</sup> 4 1894.

Silver plated items delivered back to JHM 7<sup>th</sup> May 1894 and 3pairs waist buckles delivered to the Lords in Council 14<sup>th</sup> January 1896.

.....

Fragments of pottery found in the rubbish heaps of Old Cairo.  
Presented by Dr Middleton LHD: DCL: FSA< The Residences, SK Museum. 29<sup>th</sup> May 1895.

.....

Small sculptured angel bought £2.5.0 JWL. 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept 1895.

.....

Mrs Middleton offers to give certain small collection to the Museum. 10<sup>th</sup> August 1896

.....

The Museum is glad to have these. When received, a letter of thanks be sent to her. Sent 24<sup>th</sup> August 1896.

Continued over:

Mrs Middleton's letter: 10th August 1896, 2, The Residences.

My dear Sir John,

I should like to give the museum two or three small collections, not intrinsically of much value but which may be useful to other students as they were my husband.

- 1, a collection of the materials of which ancient Athens was built.
2. a collection of the precious building materials of Rome.
3. fragments of Mummy wrappings and Coptic embroideries.
4. some Coptic vases.

I offer them without any conditions only it is a pity to waste materials which have been useful to one student and may be to others.

Yours very sincerely, Bella Middleton.

13<sup>th</sup> August 1896:

Memo: send in afternoon of 19<sup>th</sup> to receive from Mrs Middleton at 2, The Residences certain things she wishes to present to the museum and which have been accepted.

(The receipt for items listed in her letter is dated 20<sup>th</sup> August 1896)

16<sup>th</sup> Sept 1896:

Mrs Middleotn, 12, Campden Hill Gardens,  
Per Somers Clarke esq, 3, Whitehall Court.

18 sheets of plans  
9 packages of Mss  
3 books containing sketches from Encyclopaedia Britannica  
1 book – articles of late Dr Middleton from Ency. Brit.

On approval for presentation.

Accepted – the diagrams are those prepared for his lectures.

Letter of thanks sent.

.....

23<sup>rd</sup> Dec 1893

8 ivory plaques presented as gift, previously on loan.

.....

8<sup>th</sup> May 1893

Science and Art Dept, South Kensington.

On retirement of Sir J Cunliffe Owen,  
Science and Art Dept now to be separated  
Post of Director of the Art Museum has been offered to Professor J H Middleton,  
Slade Professor of Fine Art and Director of the Fitzwilliam, and he has indicated his  
willingness to accept the post.  
Prof Middleton holds a high position in the – of the Art world, is a lecturer at the  
Royal Academy and besides being the author of Ancient Rome, has contributed  
numerous articles to Encyclopaedia Britannica and other artistic and antiquarian  
journals in England and in Italy.

.....

9<sup>th</sup> September 1893.

Dear Sir Reginald (Welby) KCB

Private:

Could we please have reply today re Directorship of the museum.

Professor Middleton is practically appointed on the basis of your verbal consent and it is most important to announce the matter properly and not let it get out  
Sincerely, truly, Signed A H D Acland.

\*\*\*\*\*

Kings College June 10<sup>th</sup> 1893.

Dear Donnelly (General, CB (BT) )

I think I can make arrangements for the beginning work at SKM after next week.

I could attend on Mon, Tues, Wed, each week.

Going back and forth will be expensive so you will arrange for my pay to begin?

I shall be prepared to begin Mon 19<sup>th</sup> inst.

I cannot bind myself if it is incompatible with my duties here, but will do my best to carry it out.

Yours very faithfully, JHM.

.....

10<sup>th</sup> June 1893

Prof Middleton- Memo as to taking up duties as Director Art )

Seen by Board; Gen Donnelly; Clerk of Accounts; Mr Trendell; Gen Fesley; A Sec.; C.

This letter is result of my conversation with JHM in which I pointed out to him the importance of taking up duties asap. As he did not apply for the position, but was appointed, he couldn't do so without inconvenience.

I therefore recommend that he attend 3 das a week, 'till he comes into ? in the autumn as previously arranged.

I have written to Professor Middleton 14<sup>th</sup> June 1893.

.....

Directors. 11<sup>th</sup> June 1896

Note: decease and expresion of condolence with widow.

June 11<sup>th</sup> 1896. Science nd Art Committee of the Council on Education. Police Duty Book.

I beg to report that Police telegram was sent to Coroner at Notting Hill at 12.30 am 11<sup>th</sup> to acquaint him of the death of Dr Middleton. William Fenley.

.....

Draft letter to Mrs Middleton for sanction of Lord President:

22<sup>nd</sup> June 1896.

Madam,

I am directed by the Lords Council Committee on Education to convey to you our expression of their lordships' sympathy with you on the sad bereavement you have

sustained and of their appreciation of the services which your husband rendered to the service of the Department during the time he was connected with it.

I am (?)

.....

23<sup>rd</sup> June 1896

Sir,

Please convey to my Lords of the committee of Council on Education, my thanks for their expression of their sympathy in my bereavement and of their appreciation of my husband's services.

Yours very truly,

Bella Middleton

**NB:** Festing = Maj Gen.

Sir J F Donnely

Mr C Acland.

.....

MA/1/M2045

Short note from Times of JHM's appointment. 15<sup>th</sup> May 1893.

.....

Burton's book: Middleton took sick leave for a year but when he returned to his post, the end came suddenly.

.....

Times report of JHM's death/inquest 15<sup>th</sup> June 1896.

Dr James Black, had known deceased 20 years, had attended him 2 and a half. Did not know he was addicted. No organic disease, simply debility and nerve affection  
Took dose as he couldn't sleep. Took another as still unable to sleep. As in dazed state he found it difficult to know how much he was taking.  
Dr did not think death was in any way intentional.

Dr John Harold of Harley St. When I did autopsy there was Bright's kidney disease.

Mr JHM Litt d; DCL; VPSA; educated first at Italy then Chelt College. For a time practised as an architect.

BROOKWOOD CEMETERY; VISITED 7<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2010.

GRAVE INSCRIPTIONS:

In Memory of John Henry Middleton, LLD Cambs; DCL Oxon.

Born October 5<sup>th</sup> 1846

Died June 10<sup>th</sup> 1896

'Nec tibi earum. Jam desederium rerum super insider una' ( Lucretius Book iii . 900)  
Grave alongside:

In memory of William James Stillman  
Born 1828 at Schenectady, USA.  
Died 1901 at Frimley  
And of his wife,  
Marie Spartali Stillman  
Born 10<sup>th</sup> March 1844  
Died 6<sup>th</sup> March 1927

Wonderfully out of beautiful form  
Soars her dear spirit waxing glad the while  
And is in its first home, there where it is. Vita Nueva.

There follows the verse from Isaiah 10 verse 4

The Lord shall give thee rest.....wherein thou wast made to serve.

'Thou hast made us for thyself O Lord and our heart is restless until it rests in thee. (St Augustine.)

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Middlesbrough Reference Library.  
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Details of references are to be found in the text notes.

*Cambrian News and Welsh Farmers' Journal, Carmarthen Journal, Cheltenham Examiner, Gloucestershire Echo, The Tivyside Advertiser; The Welshman.*

## **ARCHIVE SOURCES**

Without the help of the Staff of the following Agencies and Institutions, this study of the work of John Middleton in Wales would not have been as comprehensive as it is. All the original documents consulted are listed in the references at the end of the relevant chapter.

CADW. Welsh Historic Monuments, Cardiff.  
 Cardigan Archives at Aberystwyth  
 Carmarthen Archives at Carmarthen  
 National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.  
 Pembrokeshire Archives at Haverfordwest.  
 RCHAM Wales, Aberystwyth.  
 The Local Studies' Libraries at Aberystwyth and Carmarthen.

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*Details of references are to be found in the text notes.*

*The Cambrian News; Cheltenham Examiner, Gloucestershire Echo, South Wales Daily News, The Times, The Western Mail, Cardiff.*

## **ARCHIVE SOURCES**

Brookwood Cemetery Archives, Woking.

Halifax Central Reference Library, Local Studies Department.

National Library of Wales. Cilgwyn Mss and the Fitzwilliam Diaries.

St David's University College, Lampeter, Archives.

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