

**PARISH CHURCH OF  
SAINT PETER and SAINT PAUL  
UPPINGHAM IN RUTLAND**

***A CHURCHYARD TRAIL***



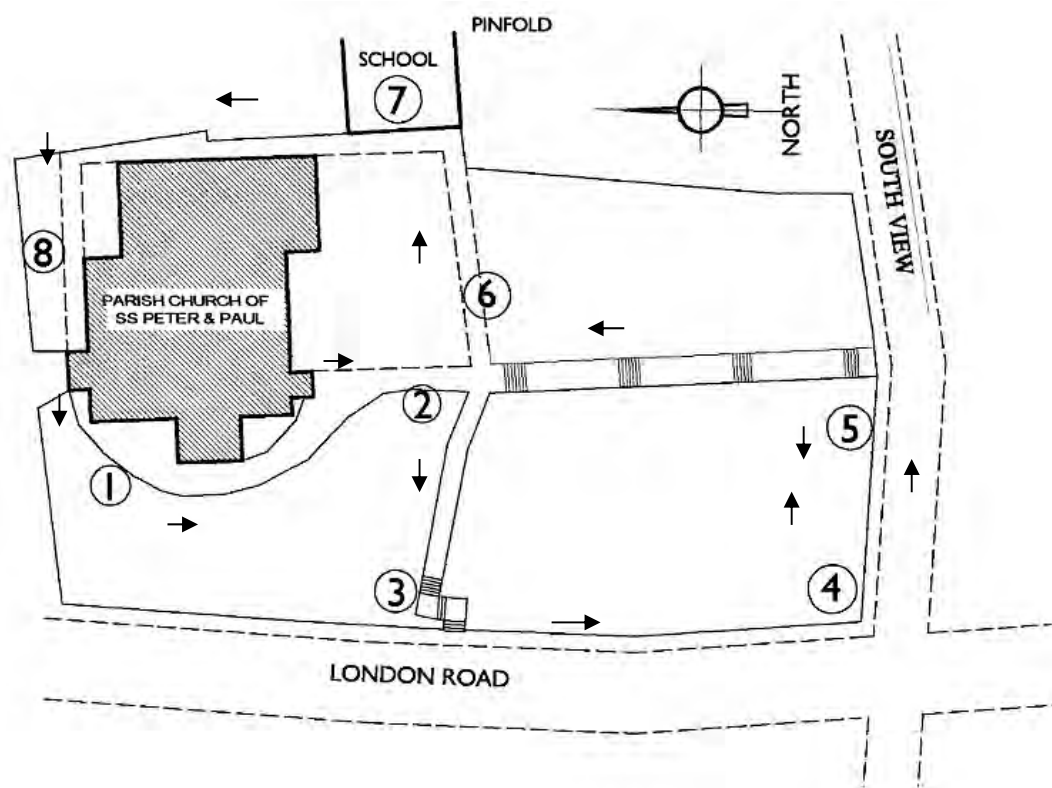
Norman Tomson

***The Churchyard Steps***

For over a thousand years our Church has been a centre for Christian worship. Throughout this time the people of Uppingham have been baptised, grown up, married, raised their children and lived out their lives following the cycle of the Christian year. And in the fullness of time they have come to rest within the shadow of their Church. In all some three hundred generations lie buried here, mostly unmarked and recorded only from 1572 when the burial registers start.

It is a quiet and shaded area. We invite you to look around, reflecting on some famous names and others of local importance and to enjoy its tranquillity.

Please say a prayer for the souls of those who lie here.



Norman Tomson

If, as we think, our Church is a Saxon foundation then the churchyard is nearly as old.

At the beginning, our mother church was at Ridlington, where the King's Steward lived, and there it was that the people of Uppingham had to take their loved ones for burial. By his Will, Edward, the last Saxon king, gave Martinsley Hundred in Rutland to his widow Queen Edith during her life and after her death its revenues to endow the Abbey Church of St Peter at Westminster. His successor, William the Norman, thought differently but relented in so far that he allowed the monks the advowsons of the Rutland churches and the tithes if they could collect them. Uppingham paid the Abbey a pension of 40s a year.

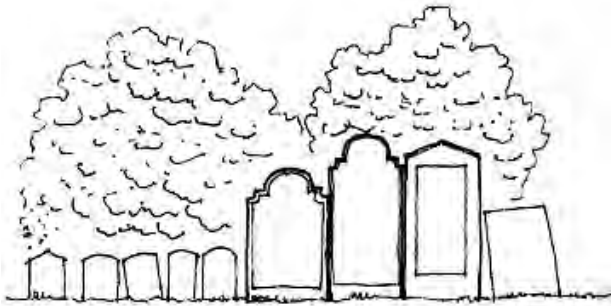
We do not know when it ceased to be a chapel-of-ease, but from the time of the Conquest at the latest, there was a parish church and churchyard at Uppingham; the centuries of use witnessed by the ground level topping the higher and older of the two churchyard walls on London Road.

Gravestones came much later; our earliest (2) dates from the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The churchyard was closed in 1980. A Faculty for the burial of ashes against the church's south wall was granted in 2002.

## THE CHURCHYARD TRAIL

Leaving by the north porch of the Church, turn left. Ahead (1) three carved Swithland slate headstones stand side by side commemorating members of the Ingram family. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century this was a wealthy and numerous local family of innkeepers, farmers and shopkeepers. George Ingram the husband of Anne was a horsedealer, but his son also George is described as a gentleman – in point of fact a farmer with land in the Brand & Wood Fields, who lived with his brother Edward where Meadhurst school boarding house was later built.



Norman Tomson

### *Ingram Family Headstones*

These headstones, and others like them, are the work of generations of the Drake family, builders and stonemasons living in Queen Street, whose names can be found hidden by the grass at the foot of each stone.

Beyond the tower note the coffin lid set into the west wall almost hidden behind the Yew tree. One would like to know more, its age (query medieval) what the carved blacksmith's tools signified, and how it came to be here – but no record of its history has been found.

The small monument set high on the west wall commemorates Leonard & Anne Bell. He was a liquor merchant owning The Vaults with a bottling

plant located in Swan Yard, who found time also to be an insurance agent

In contrast to the approach to the Church from the Market Place, on the south the ground falls steeply to open country and the School's 'Hill Houses'.

At the right of the path (2) leading from the south porch a single low gravestone commemorates John Beaver (d. 1632), once owner of the White Hart Inn in High Street West –

*that honest man which stood up for  
the Common of Uppingham*

More precisely, he prevented the take-over of the common pasture called The Brand by the people of Lyddington. The stone is the oldest yet found and is listed.



Norman Tomson

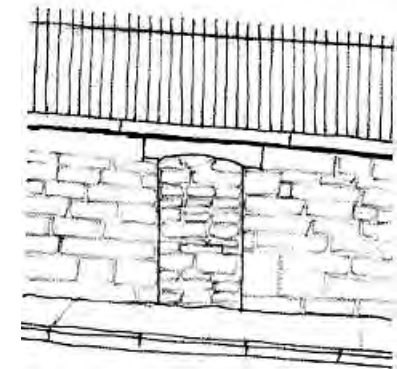
### *John Beaver's Memorial*

The lime trees (6) shading the E-W path are all now left of twenty one planted in 1784 for the School's bi-centenary and recorded in Church Inventories of 1825 and 1831. For over 400 years boys have hurried this way to and from lessons, between Archdeacon Johnson's School (1584) and the Hospital of Christ Almshouse (1592), now the School's Library.

Turning right, the path ends in steps to London Road. Built into the corner (3) a 13<sup>th</sup> century coped coffin lid with floriated cross found during the 1861 church restoration at the W end of the S aisle.

Here the School paid for the railings to prevent impetuous pupils dashing under the wheels of carts and now of motor vehicles that hurtle down Scale Hill to bump the sleeping policemen at the bottom. The hill was once much steeper and hazardous, as witnessed by the death of John Blyth, Mayor of Huntingdon, recorded in the Burial Register in July 1751, that his horse slipping beneath him, his leg was cut off first below the knee and then above it.

Between 1802 & 1804 the road was lowered by some ten feet, it is said by prisoners from the Napoleonic Wars, necessitating the building of a second lower churchyard wall. Even so, it was found necessary to provide refuge niches in the lower wall, whose filled-in outlines can be seen a few yards up hill from the steps.

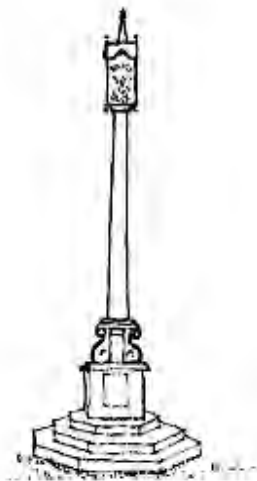


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### *Churchyard Wall Refuge*

From the steps downwards, the wall was built in 1724 as a condition of the Bishop giving permission to enlarge the churchyard by taking in a field – Wing Close - belonging to the Rector.

Proceed downhill. At the corner stands the War Memorial (4) to the 42 & 10 men from Uppingham who died in the two World Wars of the last century. Nearly 700 pupils from the School also died. Both the wall and memorial are listed. Originally the Memorial stood on the corner but was moved when it proved too heavy for the wall.

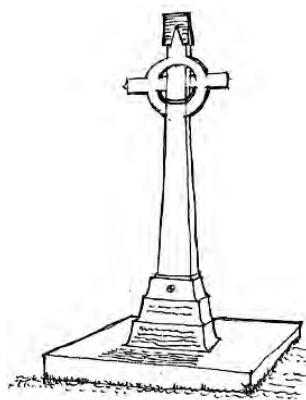


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*The War Memorial*

Walk along South View and re-enter the churchyard by the gate at the bottom of the steps. On the left (5) is the grave of the Revd Edward Thring (1821-87) the great reforming Victorian educationalist and second founder of Uppingham School, headmaster from 1853 until his death. The cross is finely carved with Celtic style tracery.

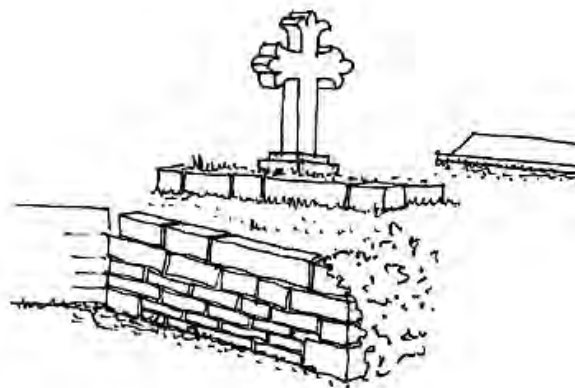
It used to be the boys' custom when walking up Scale Hill to keep to the western pavement to avoid stepping on the shadow cast by the memorial of Thring's grave, as they believed. But in truth it was the shadow from the gravestone of a Mrs Stubbs former school matron, as the shadow from the Thring Memorial does not reach that far.



Norman Tomson

*The Thring Memorial*

Nearby, lies the grave of the Revd Robert John Hodgkinson, that energetic and able assistant master founder of Old Constables and The Lodge boarding houses, who played a leading part in helping Thring realise his vision of creating a modern (Victorian) boys' public school from the small undistinguished grammar school that existed before. The Rowan tree planted nearby was donated by the Hodgkinson family.



Norman Tomson

*A Mystery Grave  
Can you find it ?*

From Thring's Memorial, the more robust can climb the steps up the path bordered either side by 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> century gravestones and noting the cottages on the right that are built upon the wall of the churchyard constructed in 1754.

At the lime trees (6), turn right to reach the Old School (7). Until 1754 the churchyard ended at this path. Then the Vestry petitioned -

*“That the bounds of the Churchyard are so small and narrow there is not room enough to bury the dead So that the dead are often laid so near one another that the graves of such as have been lately buried are often opened and broke into to the great disquiet uneasiness and complaint of the parishioners and inhabitants.”*

The solution was to extend to South View, taking in Wing Field that belonged to the Rector, and in medieval times had been used for plague burials.

To avoid climbing the steps, continue along South View to the open space, the town's former Beast Market, and up the path to the Old School (7), then back to the churchyard.

Archdeacon Robert Johnson's School built in 1584 to provide free grammar education for local boys is the origin of Uppingham School. Above are inscribed three Biblical Quotations in the languages they were taught at the time -

*Train a child in the way he should go.*

*Proverbs 22.6 (Hebrew)*

*Suffer the little children to come unto me.*

*Matthew 19.14 (Greek)*

*Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.*

*Ecclesiastes 12.1 (Latin)*

And above the door -

*Let nothing unseemly spoken or seen touch these wall wherein are boys.* (Latin)

The building is Grade I listed.

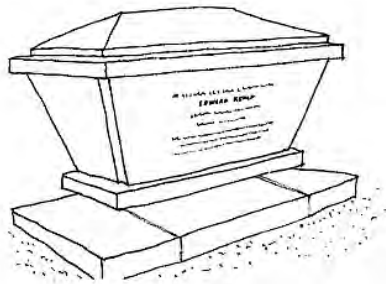


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*Archdeacon Johnson's School 1584*

Below, lies the medieval Pinfold belonging to the Church near where once stood the town's stocks. Previously let to the owners of Pinfold Cottage for a nominal rent, the PCC is currently (2004) considering its future.

Continue by the path around the east end of the Church. On the north or 'evil' side are the graves, including the fine chest tombs of Edward Kemp and William Dean, of many leading dissenters prominent in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when non-conformity flourished at Uppingham.



Norman Tomson

*Kemp's Tomb*

This is the end of the Trail. We hope you have enjoyed discovering a little about our past.

## FURTHER READING

Much has been written about churchyards and the recording of their monuments, amongst which the following are suggested.

Child, Mark. *Discovering Churchyards*,  
Shire Publications.

Burgess, F. *English Churchyard Memorials*,  
Lutterworth Press.

Lindley, K. *Of Graves and Epitaphs*,  
Hutchinson.

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for the Rector & PCC of Uppingham.

May 2004.