



*The Altar and East Window*



*Village Children c1890*

The 1851 chandelier now hangs in the Vestry. The chandelier at the west end of the Nave hung previous to 1957 in the chancel and is a memorial to Reverend F. P. Parker's mother.

The frontals, some of the embroidery of the original white frontal is on the cape made by Mothers Union members in 1977. A new White frontal was donated in 1977. The embroidery on the Red frontal dates from 1851, the Red frontal was refurbished in 1996 the velvet dating from then. There is a Violet frontal and a Green frontal was donated in 1957 and the cross from the old White frontal added to it in 1977.

The organ dates from 1879 and incorporates the 1851 organ. The "bird gates" were given in 1884 by the people of Colton in memory of Ellen Oldham. Electricity came to Colton during the early 1930's electric lights were installed in memory of Captain Oldham. The organ blower was given in memory of W. E. Cooper in 1950. The church grounds were laid out as seen now between 1957 and 1962. To facilitate easier grass mowing. In 1962 a new window to the memory of F. W. Cooper was donated by his family. A kitchen in the church has made after worship catering better during recent years.

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# Colton History Society

## St Mary's Church

The early Christians sited their place of worship near to water. The Moreton Brook flows nearby so it can be assumed this ground has from Saxon times, been a place of worship.

A priest is recorded in the Domesday Survey. Parts of the present building is of early English architecture i.e. 12<sup>th</sup> century.

Also when excavations for the building of Bellamour Lodge (circa 1850) were made remains of a "chapel" and a burial ground were found. Fields close by are called Chapel Yard and Chapel Meadow. A carved stone head of ancient date (not dissimilar to those on Easter Island in format) was also found.

Frescoes (late 14<sup>th</sup> century) were discovered beneath plaster when restoration work was undertaken in 1850/51 in what had been the Chancel, now the Vestry. These depicted the story of St Nicholas, the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden and the Salutation of Elizabeth.

Three sedilia and an ancient piscina are still to be found in the Vestry albeit the floor is now at a higher level.

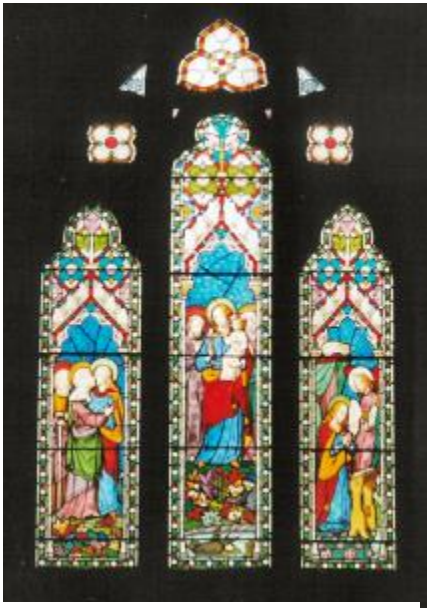
Also remaining from the 12<sup>th</sup>



*St Mary's South Entrance*

century is the tower, a window there holds three pieces of medieval glass (this could have been manufactured in Colton which was a prominent glass producing place in that period). The squint, or leper window is still in situ on the south wall where the unclean could witness the elevation of the host at Mass. The base of preaching cross is now situated between the tower and the porch. Pre 1957 it lay amongst the graves to the south west of the porch. In 1270 Nicholas de Colton took sanctuary in the church having stabbed someone in a brawl. In 1271 John "the Chaplain of Colton" killed Christina wife of Nicholas de Colton whilst intervening on a quarrel between Nicholas and a stranger. The knife

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*North Aisle Window*

had been aimed at the stranger. John fled and was outlawed and his goods confiscated.

The Registers date from 1647.

There are six bells dated 1704, 1791, 1852 (given by Ellen Oldham) another was added during the 1980's and two more in the year 2000. The metal bell frame was installed to hold 6 bells in 1953. The church underwent alteration during the 18<sup>th</sup> century but the line drawings that exist do not give a good representation. Buttresses were also added to the Tower and original Chancel.

In 1749 the Reverend John Taylor son and grandson of previous John

Taylor's Rectors of Colton was gaoled at Stafford for preaching the Jacobite cause. He was a nephew and great nephew of marriages between Taylor ladies who married into and established the Landor family of Colton and Rugeley and latterly other parts of England, Canada and the United States of America. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century repairs costing £85/8/7½d were carried out in 1813 a gallery for singers costing £25 was erected.



*The Tower in 1995*

John Landor Rector 1767-1806 was in trouble with the authorities for keeping pigeons in the belfry. He built the present Old Rectory (added to in 1875 and changes made in 1945 and parts demolished in 1956-7) to house his family. His original Rectory stood where the lawn of the Old Rectory is. He maintained the dampness of this building caused the deaths of 7 of his children. John Landor was succeeded by his nephew Charles Savage Landor brother of the poet Walter Savage Landor. When he

died in 1847 the Reverend Abdiel Seaton became Rector.

The Church was ready for a restoration project. Abdiel and Harriet Lucy his first wife, the daughter of a wealthy Lichfield banker, together with Ellen Oldham mainly financed this major work. They employed George Edmund Street, an eminent Victorian architect. The work was in Early English style G. E. Street designed the altar rails, screens including gates to divide Chancel from Nave, pulpit, font, the communion vessels and alms dish.



*The Tower from the North West from the Illustration in Colton and the De Wastneys by Rev F. P. Parker in 1879*

Herbert Minton gave tiles "for the alter place" and this gift is recorded

by the Minton factory as 1<sup>st</sup> January 1851. The chancel is tiled with Minton tiles. The Misericords are medieval in date and were purchased by Reverend Abdiel Seaton from a summerhouse of a property in Tenby, Pembrokeshire. One is, as far as can be ascertained unique, it portrays Janus.



*The Font & Pulpit*

