

A History of Dadlington by **Arthur Tomlin**
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The village of Dadlington is situated on the eminence of the east side of the Ashby-de-la-Zouch canal, three and a half miles west of Hinckley.

Dadlington is renowned for growing orchard fruit, especially nonpareil for a number of choice varieties and in the past, absinthium, otherwise known as worm wood grew there in abundance.

The village was originally known as “Dadelintona” which suggests that it was once a Saxon settlement.

Prior to 1055, the Earl of Mercia presented the Lordship to Coventry Priory which he and his famous wife Lady Godiva had founded.

The Earl of Leicester, Robert D Bossu, confirmed that his father had given the church at Hinckley and the chapels of Stoke Golding and Dadlington to the Benedictine Abbey of Lira in Normandy and in 1220 the Abbey also held the land in Dadlington.

During the reign of Henry I the Lordship of the Manor of Dadlington passed to William de Hastings.

In 1280, Dadlington, Barwell, Stapleton and Potters Marston answered collectively as one village.

Sir Henry de Ferrars of Groby in 1387 held a quarter of a knight’s fee in Dadlington and Higham.

In the court rolls in the reign of Edward II the inhabitants of Higham were fined at the court in Dadlington for not providing bows and arrows for the peasants, which was compulsory in every village.

The Vicar of Hinckley, Gilbert de Burstal, agreed to provide two “presbyters” one officiating constantly in the chapel of

Stoke and the other saying divine service three days in every week at the chapel in Dadlington.

The vicar received an annual rent of 67p from the inhabitants of the village for the privilege of having a bell in the church.

The village remained in the parish of Hinckley until 1865 and in the Diocese of Lincoln until 1887.

A poll tax in 1377 indicated that the population of Dadlington was 37 but by 1801 it appears that there were 27 houses inhabited by 29 families consisting of 65 males and 66 females, of whom 30 were employed in agriculture and 18 in manufacturing.

An alarming event took place on the village green in 1401. Two strangers called at the villager's house to inquire the way to Fenny Drayton.

While walking with them on the green, one of them struck the villager upon the head with a knife. He fell to the ground broke his leg and died the following day. The motive of this strange murder was never ascertained.

In 1390 John de Hastings was killed at a tournament at Woodstock and all his land including that at Dadlington passed to his wife Philippa until her death in 1400.

Eventually the Lordship of the Manor of Dadlington came into the hands of Lord Grey of Ruthin and remained in this family until 1585.

In 1485, Richard III died at the Battle of Bosworth. The battle took place on near to the village of Dadlington and many of the 4,000 who were killed in the conflict were buried in open trenches in and around the village.

Centuries later masses of human bones were unearthed which was a grim reminder of the bloody battle of the wars of the roses.

The victorious Henry was crowned King of Stoke Golding,

with his assailant's crown, which had been retrieved from beneath a hawthorn bush in the village.

In 1511, Henry VIII gave instructions to the Archbishop of Canterbury to make out a licence for the churchwardens of Dadlington to ask for arms for seven years in the Diocese of Lincoln, Chester, Worcester and Norwich towards building a church to be called St James, to stand on Bosworth field and also the stipend for a priest to pray for the souls of the persons slain in the battle.

No structure was ever built as a result of this appeal. The licence has since been framed and now hangs on the wall of the church.

It is recorded that in 1563, Dadlington and Stoke Golding had collectively 33 households and the population was around 60.

In 1573 the church was endowed with a beautiful silver cup, the donor is unknown. The cup is now stored in a local bank for safety.

A historical event occurred in 1585 when John Grey sold the Manor of Dadlington to Ralph Burton of Lindley Hall near Higham.

Ralph Burton's two sons were two of the great writers of the day.

In 1622, William published his History of Leicestershire, while his brother Robert became famous with his outstanding work called Anatomy of Melancholy; William's history of the county was the earliest and most comprehensive ever written.

Ralph Burton died in 1619 and his eldest son, William, succeeded to the Lordship of Dadlington.

William Burton died in Jutbury where he was buried. In 1645, his son, Cassibelam, who inherited his estates, sold the Manor of Dadlington to William Cox of Lea Grange.

From the middle of the 17th century there was a steady growth of nonconformity in the village.

In 1669 there were 20 Presbyterians in Hinckley and Dadlington, although in 1676 seven nonconformists were recorded, as living in the village itself.

A chapel was not erected in the village until the 19th century. It was a small independent chapel and was situated adjacent to Hall Farm, but by 1850 it was used very little and eventually became a barn.

It is believed to have been built by a member of the Hurst family who were the Lords of the Manor at Dadlington and well known nonconformists at Hinckley. There are now no signs that a place of worship ever existed.

At the beginning of the present century hall barn was owned and farmed by the Chaplin family who were held in very high esteem as farmers and builders.

In 1871, when the railway which ran close by the village was being constructed, soil from Hall Farm was used to form the embankment. An act of parliament was passed in 1794 for the building of the Ashby-de-la-Zouch canal, which now passes through the south of the village which is crossed by three bridges within the boundary of the village.

The village inn, named the Dog and Hedgehog was built around 1715 and accommodated the ever increasing traffic which used the canal.

The village now has a very admirable village green. On the hillside at the back of the green stands the small parish hall built for £100 in 1886.

Dadlington's church is dedicated for St James the Greater. St James was the first of the 12 apostles to be martyred for his faith.

The church is recorded to have been in existence before the Norman Conquest, and would probably have been a wooden

structure.

It stands on a hill overlooking Redmore plain, with Ambion Hill in the distance.

At the west end of the church is a bell-turret which was lifted at the restoration 1890. In the turret are two small bells, one is inscribed "E Arnold fecit 1793". Edward Arnold was a bell founder in Leicester, and the other bell is simply inscribed "A.O." all eight windows in the church are not plain glass except the east windows in the south aisle.

The chancel was restored by Ewan Christian in 1887 at a cost of £500.

The south aisle is divided from the church by a 13th century arcade of two low arches on short octagonal piers.

In the south wall of the chancel is a piscine which was used to wash vessels after the communion service and also two "sedilia" which were seats used by priests, which date back to the 13th century.

The present gothic porch, which is built of wood and stone, was erected in 1896. The church possesses a well-reserved bible in black lettering which was printed by Robert Barber in 1613.

The altar table is ancient but the pews, pulpit, lectern and chancel screen date from the restoration in 1890.

The organ was originally in a mission church at Nuneaton and later at All Saints Chilvers Coton who gave it to Dadlington church in 1990.

The original font was very ancient, but replaced in the 19th century.

In 1900, Holy Communion was celebrated once a month but now takes place very Sunday.

The wrought iron gates at the entrance to the churchyard are the village's memorial to the five men who gave their lives in the Great War 1914 to 1918.

The village was enclosed in 1760 but has primarily been agriculture community, but the history trade gradually had its influence on the villagers.

In 1782 there were 200 framework knitters in Stoke, Wykin and Dadlington but by 1844 there were 34 frames in Dadlington alone. Over the last decade Dadlington has grown steadily but it still regards itself as a rural village community.