

# Church and Tithes

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Gilbert of Ghent gave the parish church of St Mary in Edlesborough to the monks in Bardney Abbey, Lincolnshire. This was



probably built of wood and might have been on the same sight as the present church. Work began on the present church at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The first Rector was Simon de Belecampo in

1199, and the first vicar was John Moget in July 1396.

A Rector held the office of presiding over an ecclesiastical institution such as a church or parish. He might appoint someone to perform the duties of his office, ie to act for him “vicariously”, that person was termed his “vicar”.

Church and clergy were supported by tithes, traditionally 10%, levied on the personal and agricultural output of the village and they were the legal property of the person who held the office of Rector, not the vicar, who was his employee.

Tithes were classified as “great” and “small”, the great tithes were usually corn, hay and wood; small tithes were all other produce including produce from stock and industry such as mills.

Parishes with rectors often had glebe lands attached to the parish. The rector was then responsible for the repair of the chancel of the church whilst the rest of the building was the responsibility of the parish.

The size of the 16<sup>th</sup> century tithe barn gives some indication of the parish's wealth at this time. When the Barn was built, the parish of Edlesborough was considerably larger than now so the large amount of tithe collected need a lot of storage room.



The construction was of oak and brick set on plinths of Totternhoe stone and originally it was thatched. It was tiled in the early 1900's.



Ownership of the lands passed through many hands and by the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Earl of Bridgewater owned half the village as well as the rights to the great tithes of Edlesborough. The Bridgewaters lived at nearby Ashridge, which had been a monastery before the dissolution.

After the end of the 1924-18 war a Committee was formed to raise



funds to erect a Memorial to those who had lost their lives. On an autumn afternoon in 1920 a large crowd came to witness Lord Brownlow unveil the memorial. This was his

last public engagement, he died 17<sup>th</sup> March 1921.

The church was closed for regular Sunday services on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1971.