

## Saint Giles, Shipbourne, Kent

1722

Parish church, demolished, new church built in 1879

Architect: James Gibbs (1682–1754)

Son of a merchant in Aberdeen, James Gibbs was trained in Rome by Carlo Fontana. Back into England his career was struggling under his Catholic reputation. This smoothed under Queen Anne's Tory and High Church regime. He was—thanks to Wren—appointed one of the surveyors of the 1711 Church Act. Gibbs was active as a church builder (see also the church of St Martin in the Fields (CS34)) as well as a designer of country houses and public buildings including the Radcliffe Camera, Oxford (with Nicholas Hawksmoor).<sup>1</sup>

### Historical note

Shipbourne church was originally a chapel depending on the parish church of Tonbridge. The church was rebuilt in 1722 by order of Christopher Vane, first Baron Barnard and a Whig MP from 1675 to 1690. Vane was the second son of Henry Vane. Henry Vane had been educated at Geneva and distanced himself from the English Church and monarchy. During the Civil War he became an inveterate member of the rebellion against the monarchy. At the Restoration he was sentenced to death. After the death of his eldest brother Thomas, without issue, Christopher inherited Raby Castle, Durham and Fairlawn Kent. For both estates he commanded partial rebuilding by James Gibbs.<sup>2</sup> It is uncertain why Lord and Lady Barnard ordered the rebuilding of the church in Shipbourne.<sup>3</sup> Gibbs also designed their monument in the church between 1723 and 1725.

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1 Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600–1840* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 399–407.

2 Edward Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent* (Canterbury: Brinstow, 1798), vol. 5, 45–53.

3 George E. Cokayne, et al., eds, *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct or Dormant, new ed.* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publishing, 2000 (re-edn. 1910–1951)), vol. 1, 425.

Hasted describes the building as a “neat fabric.”<sup>4</sup> According to Terry Friedman, the exterior was a simple rectangle with roundheaded windows on the north and south. It had pediments on the east and west ends, a rusticated west doorway and a square tower rising directly from the pitched roof. The tower ended in an open octagon surrounded by urns.<sup>5</sup>

## Sermon

**Sermon title:** The Honour and Vertue of building, repairing and adorning, Churches: and the sacredness of them, when built and consecrated. A Sermon preached at Shipburn in Kent, upon the opening of the new Church there, entirely rebuilt at the sole expense of the Right Honourable the Lord and Lady Barnard.

**Imprint:** London: printed for Jonah Bowyer, 1723.

**Author:** Joseph Trapp (1679–1747)

High Church clergyman and writer, Trapp was appointed the first professor of poetry at Oxford in 1708. As a writer he mainly addressed High Church subjects and anti-Catholic topics. He was severely opposed to Dissenters and Methodists (whom he compared to the 1640 Puritans).<sup>6</sup> He was highly regarded as a preacher and actively involved in politics (Tory) and the High Church.<sup>7</sup> In 1712 he became lecturer of St Olave Jewry and of St Martin Ironmonger Lane, in 1715 of St Martin-in-the-Fields, in 1722 of Christ Church Greyfriars and St Leonard Foster Lane. As a parish lecturer he was mainly concerned with the duties of private and public devotion, a topic to which he dedicated a tract.<sup>8</sup>

**Status:** Sermon preached at the opening of the rebuilt church, 1722–3.

4 Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary*, 399–407. Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey*, 52.

5 Terry Friedman, *James Gibbs* (New Haven and London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 1984), 73.

6 Richard Sharp, “Trapp, Joseph,” in: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online* (2004), doi: org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27666.

7 John W. Yolton, John Vladimir Price and John Stephens, eds., *The Dictionary of Eighteenth-century British Philosophers* (London: Thoemess Press, 1999), vol. 2, 891.

8 Sharp, “Trapp, Joseph.”