

Notable Bletsoe Dates c1520 - 2015

Date	Event	Reference
c1520	StJohn of Bletso Carpet, earliest example English petit-point. Now V&A	
1553	Mob confronts Sir John StJohn and remove the hedges of 43 pasture fields	Queen Mary's Chronicle, August 1553
1578	"Our chancell is a little oute of repayre" April 1578; [later] being repaired	
c1610	StJohn family decamp from Bletsoe Castle to new mansion at Melchbourne	
1650	Record of watermill at Falcon Inn	
1720	Lord St John buys Castle Inn (now Bletsoe Cottage)	SJ1303 & SJ1304
1727	Bedford to Higham Ferrers road turnpiked.	
1737	Cottages adj. & SW of churchyard occupied rent-free by old/infirm.	CRO 36/2/6 & 36/25/6
1786	Five bells in F# cast by R Taylor of St Neots	Inscriptions
1796	Enclosure	
1811	"doing the leads (£25 15s. 6d), repairs to roof (£14 2s. 4d) and to church (£4 3s. 6d)"	
1811	Repair of parsonage house	
	West Gallery removed prior to Archdeacon Bonnie's Visitation.	
1822	Ref. to cottages adj. & SW of churchyard occupied by old/infirm rent-free.	CRO 36/2/6
1829	Chestnut trees planted in churchyard	CRO P36/1/6
1829	Mention of alteration to Box Pews	Archdeacons Visitation Documents
1834	Rectory rebuilt by Rev John Tomlinson Day	CRO P36/1/8
1838	Mention of organ repairs, & rebuilding churchyard wall (£29 14s)	
1843	North transept modernised and continued use as cemetery of Lord Bolingbroke & St.John family. South transept is used as a school	
1844-5	Repairs to porch (£39 11s) by Warren, plumber, and Miller, builder	
1852	Chancel out of use at present. "memorials of earthly pageantry so offensively prominent on the belfry arch". West end as singing gallery	
1853	Land gifted for National School	CRO 36/29/1
1853	Clock dial erected on the church steeple, and drains laid round the walls - connecting to sewer in street - to combat the damp	
1856	Church chest destroyed by fire	CRO 36/25/9
1863	Contract (draft) with William Osborne of St.Neots, builder, for restoration of nave, porch & tower arch for £704, with specification (not signed)	
1864-5	Estimate by Osborne to restore chancel (£451 less old materials, net £410)	
1864-6	Nave and south transept restored at a cost of £958, north transept restored earlier at the expense of late Dowager Lady St.John, and chancel re-roofed in 1866 (cost £460); pulpit, lectern, and seats done at expense (£100) of Lady Isham. Total cost £1419;	
1864	Frescoes discovered under whitewash during restoration. West wall of nave with crown and Tudor rose, destroyed in restoration. Signs of colour on south wall. Figure on north wall, possibly St.George and the Dragon (described).	
1865	"A Grant has been voted ... to assist in the renewal of the pierced parapet which formerly surmounted the tower of Bletsoe church, a small portion of the original having been discovered during the progress of the works "	
1868	Major restoration of church	CRO 36/5/6 & VCH p490
1870	Vestry minute re settlement cracks in NW angle of the church,; suggestion that it was caused by drain from the vault being laid too close to the walls.	Oct.1870
1875	Alterations to Bletsoe rectory, 1875; mortgage only	
1882	"New reredos was erected in the style of the chancel by the Rev. the Hon. Edmund Tudor St.John, MA, late Rector. The reredos occupies the whole width of the chancel, the central portion being divided into three compartments by marble columns, and finished with pinnacles and carved finials; a white alabaster cross on a marble background occupies the centre, and on either side in the other two niches are figures of St. John and the Virgin Mary; under canopies on each side of the reredos proper is an arcade of four arches; the whole has been carried out by Mr. R.L. Boulton, of Cheltenham.	
1882	New organ purchased at £200 from Trustam & Sons, Bedford	CRO 36/8/1
1883	Henry Campion occupies Castle Farm	
1883	Diaper work in nave erected by Hannah Brown, daughter of John and Dorothy Thomas, described as "a beautiful arcade of marble panels, divided by shafts, and surmounted by a handsome cornice, extending on each side of the eastern end of the nave to the north and south walls, also continued for two panels along the walls.	

1884	Rev Edmund StJohn dies as result of cricketing injury	
1885-6	New East Window by "Meyer & Co, London & Munich" with scene showing Jesus delivering the Sermon on the Mount, put up in memory of Rev. Hon. Edward Tudor St.John (d.1884) having been rector for three years; new doors to north transept by Rattee & Kett, and memorial tablet by Mr. Boulton of Cheltenham.	CRO 36/5/7
1886	New bell frame installed & bells rehung by Taylor of Loughborough	CRO 36/5/8
1888	First record of method ringing at Bletsoe	Bedford Mercury 27-10-1888
1888	New stained glass memorial window to Lord St.John on south side of chancel to St.Andrew, 15th Baron St.John (1840-1887). Angel of the Resurrection. By Mayer & Co, Munich & London	
1896	Land conveyed for Churchyard & dedicated new burial groud at south-east corner	CRO 36/2/1
1899	Rev Moss, Bletsoe's only 1 st class cricketer, appointed Rector	
1900	Treble bell given at Easter 1900 in memory of Eleanor, widow of St Andrew, 14th Baron St John of Bletsoe	Old notice in church.
1901	First peal (5040 changes) rung 23 Feb 1901	BACR Year Book
1902	Church Organ altered, by Miller of Cambridge	CRO 36/8/1
1908	Church heating installed	CRO P 36/2/15
1913	New Lychgate erected in memory of 16 th Baron StJohn of Bletsoe	
1908-9	Hot water apparatus to be fitted by Messrs. John King of Liverpool . Walls of the church to be taken in hand by Francis Fox of the firm of Sir Douglas Fox, engineers. Work to begin at once; new heating apparatus installed and grouting of church walls under Sir Douglas Fox also finished. 15 tons of liquid cement blown into the cracks and hollows in the walls (March 1908); further cracks in NE angle of chancel, now underpinned by S.Foster of Bedford on a solid concrete foundation (Dec.1908); accounts received, work cost £264 including £67.14.0 for heating apparatus, £88 for grouting, and £107 for underpinning the wall (Sept.1909)	
1910	Bletsoe Sparrow Club formed	
1913	Lychgate erected as a memorial to the 17th Baron St.John of Bletsoe. G.Ogilvie, architect. Pacey of Sharnbrook, builder.	
1917	Campions depart Bletsoe Castle on Edward's death & Henry's retirement. Frank Campion occupies Bourne End Farm. Scott family occupy Castle Farm.	
1919	Clock replaced in memory of Arthur McWilliam Lawson-Johnson, killed in Great War. Old clock later placed in Bedford Museum.	
1922	Death of Henry Campion	
	Measures family occupy Castle Farm	
1928	Fire destroys rickyard and several outbuildings at Castle Farm	
1931	Frank Campion gives up Bourne End Farm due to agricultural depression. Arthur Smith takes tenancy at £150 p/a; less than half that pd in 1886	
1932	Stoke Mill transferred to Sharnbrook Parish	
1937	Electricity installed	CRO P 36/2/16
1937	New West Window in memory of Harry Cheetham, rector's brother	
1951	Arthur Smith surrenders tenancy of Bourne End Farm. StJohn estate auctions all remaining Bletsoe properties.	
1955	Electric blower installed & Organ cleaned by Fraser of Bedford	PCC Minute Book
1960	Removal of 112 headstones from churchyard	CRO P 36/2/20
1965	Organ moved from south transept to north-west corner of nave	PCC Minute Book
	StJohn Memorial moved from north transept to north side of nave	
1976	Chancel bricked-off and altar removed to the crossing	CRO 36/2/22
1996	Organ cleaned and repaired.	
1997	Electric clock winders installed in memory of Pat Woodfine, by Dorcas Engineering of Eaton Socon.	
1999	New ringing band formed in preparation for the Millennium	
1999	Churchyard wall rebuilt on west side as far as corner gates. Gates rehung.	
2000	New ringing band welcomes new millennium at noon on 1st January.	
2001	Centenary Peal on 24 February 2001 to mark anniversary of first peal on these bells, the methods rung deliberately replicating those of the original.	
2011	A new band of ringers formed	
2015	Bells completely refurbished and rehung by Taylor of Loughborough	
2015	East Window completely rebuilt using original glass (see also 1885-6).	