



(New) St. Nicholas Church,  
dedicated 1749

## Parish Church History

### Fonthill Gifford



Holy Trinity Church,  
dedicated 1866

### History of the Churches in Fonthill Gifford

The current church of Fonthill Gifford is the Holy Trinity Church, a Grade II listed building, situated on the road from Tisbury to Hindon, not far from the junction with the Fonthill Bishop-Semley road. This church was built in 1864-66, by the second Marquis of Westminster, to replace the Church of Saint Nicholas on the same site which had fallen into disrepair. The Holy Trinity Church was designed by the Gothic revival architect Thomas Henry Wyatt (1807-1880), who designed many churches in Wiltshire, including the nearby All Saints Church at Fonthill Bishop. Parish services were held in the new village school-room whilst the church was being built, the first services being held in Holy Trinity in September 1866.

The previous church on the same site, St. Nicholas, was built in 1747-49 by Alderman William Beckford (1709-1770) and consecrated in 1749. It was a neoclassical style building, with a Tuscan portico, and was built on the current site in order to move the parish church away from Alderman Beckford's mansion, Fonthill House. The nineteenth century church of Holy Trinity was built directly on top of the Church of St. Nicholas.

Alderman Beckford had purchased the Fonthill Estate in 1745, which included the parish church. The original church had stood next to a stream in the north east corner of the parish since 1291 and had been dedicated to St. Nicholas in 1566. This medieval church of St. Nicholas was in a ruinous state by the early eighteenth century and was demolished in 1747 when Alderman Beckford relocated it to the current site. Local inhabitants had enjoyed access to this church via a public footpath across the Fonthill Estate and the footpath was closed when the church was relocated.

When referring to baptisms, marriages and burials, family historians may like to use the following naming convention for these churches:

(Old) St. Nicholas Church,	1566 - 1748
(New) St. Nicholas Church	1749 – 1866 (Aug)
Holy Trinity Church	(Sept) 1866 – date