

# St Nicholas Tackley Church Guide

This journey will take you on a tour of our Grade II\* listed church, highlighting both the historical features, the Christian symbolism and how the church is used today.

You start where you came in through the North door and follow a path clockwise around the church.

Please be respectful if others want a time of quiet contemplation and prayer while you are here.

After your visit, please turn off any lights that you have put on and please close the door to stop the wilder inhabitants of the churchyard from entering.

You can access an online version of this guide or download a pdf by scanning the QR code, or visit our website at [www.sntchurch.com](http://www.sntchurch.com)

November 2022

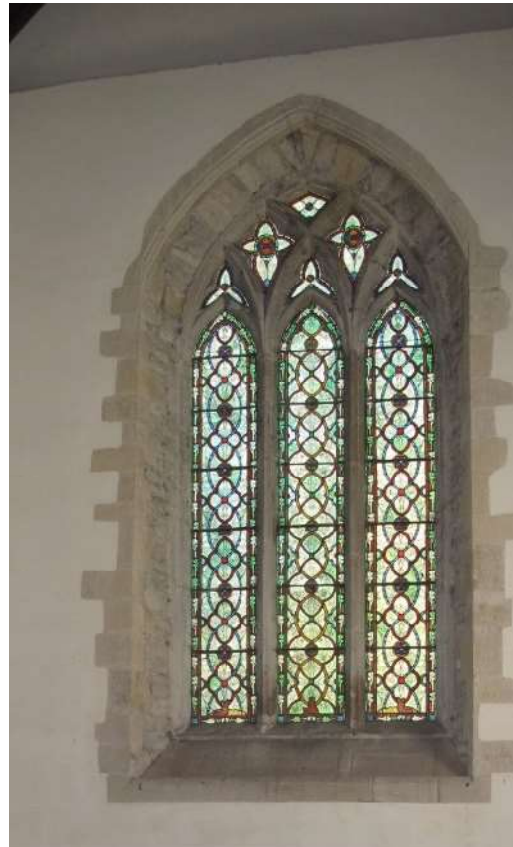




We have strong links with the Church of England Primary School in Tackley. The children visit the church on special occasions throughout the year for Services and post some of their work on this board.

The church is laid out in the classic form with the Nave due west and the Chancel due east.

On your right you see the West Window which is from about 1300, with Victorian glass.



Traditionally, the font is near the entrance because the door is the entrance to the church and baptism is the entry into the church family.

This font is a 1921 replica of the original Norman font because the original was lost during the Victorian repairs.





Parts of the nave walls are from before the Norman Conquest in 1066. The nave was extended to its current length in Norman times.



The columns are 13<sup>th</sup> Century. Each has different detailing and the west column is much smaller, presumably because the weight is taken by the wall.



<b>Q</b>	Can you find the corbel which is a carved face? How did the mason make it humorous?
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The circular arches are Norman and separated the nave from the north aisle when it was built around 1120.

They were filled in when the North aisle was demolished around 1300.

The small circular arches were the windows in the clerestory before the nave was made taller in the early 1400's..

The 1864 window is called the Farmer's' Window because the flowers were traditionally put there each week by the farmers' wives. Even though that is no longer the case, we still call it that.



This was the only village War Memorial until the Parish Council recently installed a new one at the village hall.

<b>Q</b>	<p>How many people from the village lost their lives in the First and Second World Wars? In WW2, if you enlisted, what were your chances of making it back home at the end?</p>
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Most Anglican churches have a pulpit. In the past it would have been used to preach the sermon, but we very rarely use it these days. It is now felt better to be down with the people when talking to them.

This pulpit is from 1930. You can see the marks on the floor to your right where the previous stone pulpit was located.



The lectern is normally used when we read from the Bible.

There are many different theories about why an eagle form is often chosen, apart from it being a very practical shape to hold the Bible. Eagles fly high, travel great distances and can look into the sun.

It might be a reference to St John, whose Gospel starts 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God'.

Or maybe it was adopted from Roman symbolism.

The 4 Gospel writers are often represented in church decoration by the four symbols of Christ from Ezekiel 1:10:

- Matthew man or angel because his Gospel focuses on the humanity of Christ
- Mark lion because his Gospel focuses on the humanity of Christ
- Luke ox because his Gospel focuses on the sacrificial character of Christ's death
- John eagle because his Gospel describes the Incarnation of the divine Word, because the eagle is a symbol of that which comes from above and because John, in his Revelation, saw beyond what is immediately present

The cross is the most common symbol for Christians today, reminding us that Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins.

There is frequently a crucifix above the pulpit.



Q

Churches often have many crosses. Here are 5 of the ones in St Nicholas – can you find these five, and how many more can you find in the church?



These are the church wardens' wands, which are symbols of office carried by the wardens when they are in a procession.

Our wands are both the same with a cross on the top of each, but in other churches they are often different, with different tops such as a mitre, a crown, a coat of arms, etc.

In the past they were used for controlling disruptive people and waking up anyone who dared to fall asleep during the sermon.





There are nine shields on the roof corbels.

Eight of them are from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, of which seven represent the families who paid to increase the height of the nave, add the Clerestory windows and replace the roof circa 1420.

The shields were carved in the stone, and were painted in 1935.

Q

Can you find the family trees of the eight 15<sup>th</sup> century patrons?

Q

One of the shields is more recent, to commemorate numerous benefactions to the church. Can you see this family crest on some of the memorials in the church and can you find the family name?



The Chancel Altar

Before Christian times, altars were used to sacrifice animals to various gods, but that is not part of Christian theology or practice.

The altar is used to prepare the Holy Communion, when we take bread and wine to remind us that Christ's body and blood were shed for us to pay the price for our sin.

Altars do not have any specific design and can be anything from a simple table top on 4 legs, through to a complex stone structure. One of the altars is clearly no longer used as such, so is it still an altar, or is it just an elaborate table?

Q	These are our three altars. Can you find all three of them?
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The Lady Chapel altar is from 1942.



The nave altar was made in the village in the Arts and Crafts style.

The altar frontal that you see here is a special one made in Tackley for Harvest Thanksgiving.

We have different colours for the different seasons in the church calendar:

- |              |                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| White & Gold | Feast Days, such as Christmas and Easter                                                                                            |
| Red          | Represents the blood of Christ during Holy Week and the Holy Spirit during Pentecost                                                |
| Purple       | Advent when we remember the coming of Christ at Christmas and Lent which is a time of regret for the things that we have done wrong |
| Green        | Other days                                                                                                                          |





The medieval rood screen would have had a staircase leading up to it. You can see the bricked up doorway to the right, which is visible on both sides of the wall.

You can see a similar redundant access point in many of the Medieval churches in our area



Rood screens were very common in Catholic churches before the Reformation, separating the chancel from the nave. In England, most of them were removed during the reign of Edward VI.

'Rood' is a Saxon word for cross, so they would normally have a cross above the rood screen

Our rood screen was installed in 1896 as it suited the then current form of worship in Victorian times.

The original rood screen would probably have been a gallery facing the Nave for various uses during services, as well as providing a barrier between the clergy and choir in the chancel area and the lay people in the Nave.



John Harborne bought Tackley Manor in 1612. The barns, stables, arch and fishponds that he built remain to this day.

Unfortunately his family only remained in Tackley after his death until 1653, partly because the area was laid waste by the Parliamentarians as punishment for supporting the Royalists during the Civil War, and partly because the main inheritors were drunkards and ran up large debts.

<p>Q</p>	<p>John Harborne had many children. How many did he have. Is the correct number of figures carved on his memorial.</p>
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<p>Q</p>	<p>At what age did John's son William Harborne die?</p>
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John Harborne rebuilt the north transept in 1616 as a private chapel for his family, but it didn't last. These days it is the vestry where the minister gets ready for the service.

This was the last major change to the shape of the church.





	Can you find the two piscinas and the dogtooth carving?
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We have two piscinas. They are stone basins from before the Reformation, which were used to pour away water that was used during Mass.

They could be located either in the sanctuary, where the main altar is, or in the sacristy, where communion is prepared.

The bricked up door and piscina are all that remain of the North Transept from before 1616.



Somewhere between the two piscinas there is a dogtooth carving, which is probably a remnant of an earlier Saxon arch. A dogtooth pattern is an ornament found in the mouldings of medieval work from the early 12th century.





The east window is 13<sup>th</sup> century. The glass from 1863 depicts the events of Holy Week through to Ascension, from bottom left to top centre.

The south chancel windows are 15<sup>th</sup> century, with stone clergy seats called sedilia.

In the Catholic tradition, which applied to St Nicholas Church before the Reformation, during certain sections of the Mass, especially the Gloria and the Credo, the priest, deacon and subdeacon sat in a three-seater sedilia.



The south east chancel glass from 1870 is dedicated to Lancelot Sharpe's two daughters and depicts Jesus blessing the children.

<b>Q</b>	Lancelot Sharpe was prior of this parish 52 years – can you confirm this elsewhere in the church?
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The south west chancel glass from 1891 depicts Christ the Good Shepherd.

It is dedicated to Lancelot Sharpe.

There are 6 members of the Sharpe family buried in plot number 120.

The square under the tower is called The Crossing. In it there is a memorial to the infant daughter of John Standing, who died in 1615.

John Standing was Rector from 1613.



The organ is by George Jackson, thought to have been constructed in the early 20th century, perhaps around 1910, originally as either an early cinema organ or for someone's house, and then moved to the church around the middle of the 20th century.

This set of four Chest Tombs in the graveyard are Grade II listed monuments.

John Standard died 1647. His tomb is the first one on the left, numbered 118, which bears the inscription Standard Vexillifer, where Vexillifer means Flag Bearer.

He was the father of Robert Standard, who died 1685 and whose tomb is 119, the second from the left.

Q

Apart from these 4, the other Grade II listed monument is Ann Allen's Chest Tomb. Can you find which one it is in the graveyard?

Q

What do you think you would see if you looked inside a Chest Tomb?





Behind the organ is the south transept which has the maps of the graveyards on the back of the organ. This is sometimes referred to as the Lady Chapel, but today it is set out as an area for children during the services.

The stairs lead to the bell loft where the bells are rung. Before 1862 the bells were rung from the crossing.

Treble Bell 1924

Second Bell 1859

Third Bell 1689

Fourth Bell 1859

Fifth Bell 1664

Tenor Bell 1664

Sanctus Bell 1595



The memorial statue to the 4<sup>th</sup> and last Tackley John Morten, 1715-1780, was made by John Bacon. You can see more of his work in Oxford; he carved the statue of George III in Christ Church Cathedral and the statue of Atlas on top of the Radcliffe Observatory.

N <sup>o</sup>		Died	Year of our Lord	Aged
1	Elizabeth Daughter of John Whicker and wife of John Morton N <sup>o</sup> 3	Jan. 16	1682	48
2	John Whicker Morton Eldest Son of John Morton N <sup>o</sup> 3	May 15	1693	33
3	John Morton	Jan. 31	1702	68
4	Emanuel Morton Youngest Son of John Morton N <sup>o</sup> 3	Nov. 13	1703	37
5	Arabella Youngest Daughter of John Whicker Morton N <sup>o</sup> 2	June 27	1729	29
6	Emanuel Son of John Morton N <sup>o</sup> 10	June 2	1720	1
7	Henrietta Maria Daughter of John Morton N <sup>o</sup> 10	Feb. 8	1724	8
8	Eliz. Daughter of Edmund Medlycott and Wife of John Whicker Morton N <sup>o</sup> 2	Nov. 7	1734	70
9	Mary Daughter of George Bruere and Wife of John Morton N <sup>o</sup> 10	July 12	1735	30
10	John Morton Eldest Son of John Whicker Morton N <sup>o</sup> 2	Feb. 26	1746	55

Apart from the Sanctus Bell, all of the others are dated after the Restoration. It is probable that the former bells were melted down during the Civil War.

**Q** Why would they melt down the bells during the Civil War?

**Q** Who is in grave 205. How old was he when he died?

**Q** The memorial is to John Morton, Chief Justice of Chester. Is he listed on the plaque?

**Q** When the plaque refers to John Morten No 3, what does that mean?



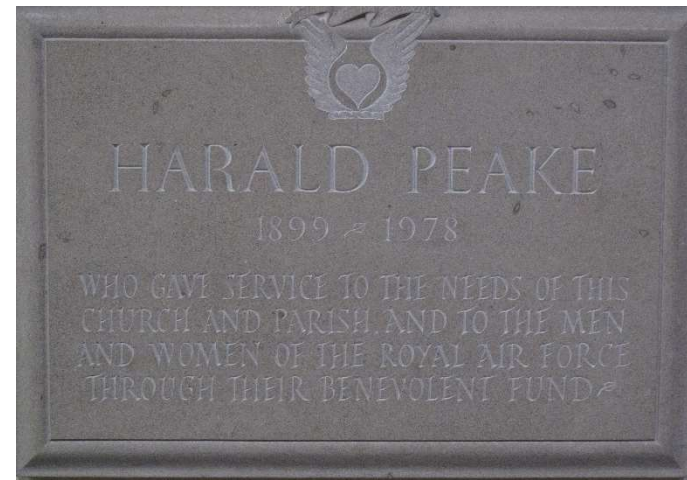


The Evetts were local landowners from 1846 to the present day. These are 6 of the Memorials to the family in the church.

There are numerous Evetts graves in the old churchyard. You can find these at 128 (cross with kerbing), 129 (cross with kerbing), 145 (headstone with iron railings), 146 (stand alone cross) and 151 (stand alone cross), plus an unmarked grave in the new churchyard.

The 1905 window in the Lady Chapel depicts Christ above the Archangels Uriel, Michael, Gabriel & Raphael, plus numerous minor angels. It is dedicated to William & Charlotte and Charlotte, John & Florence Evetts.

	<p>Can you find the dedication for this window?</p>
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The Smythe Gardiner family were the local landowners from 1784 until the 1840's.

This memorial is to John Gardiner, who died in 1797.

<span style="font-size: 2em; color: red;">Q</span>	<p>The Gardiner memorial is by John Bacon. Which other memorial is by John Bacon. Can you see a similarity in style?</p>
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Harald Peake bought Court Farm in 1952 and Tackley Park/Hill Farm in 1955.



The 1845 shipwreck of the *Cataraqui* in the Bass Strait between Australia and Tasmania is the worst peacetime disaster in Australian history.

When the poor were sent to Australia, was it a good thing or a bad thing?

You could argue that it was an act of kindness to pay for them to go to a new land with new opportunities after the enclosures led to significant rural unemployment.

Or you could argue that it was a cheap and cynical act to dump your problems, somewhere out of sight and out of mind.

**THE CATARAQUI DISASTER**  
400 people drowned on 4th August 1845, when the *Cataraqui* was shipwrecked during a storm in the Bass Strait. 42 were emigrants from Tackley. It was Australia's worst civil maritime disaster.

The first leg of the journey would have taken the ship to the Canary Islands, then east to the Cape of Good Hope, and on to the Bay of Port Phillip, Australia. Passengers were able to follow these progress on 19th August. On July 27th the weather became stormy, with heavy gales and sea swell, and the ship was forced to stop for a fortnight. The bad weather had prevented the Captain from reaching the ship's position to be 17 miles from King Island in the Bass Strait between Tasmania and Australia. The night the *Cataraqui* was wrecked was a stormy one, but by 4:00 am the sea had calmed and the ship was heading for the galle. The calculation of the ship's position was disastrously wrong. The sailor's death was that the *Cataraqui* was a few miles from King Island heading straight for the reefs off the island's west coast.

At 4:30 am on 4th August, in complete darkness, torrential rain, and a driving gale, the ship struck the reef. The sea burst into the hold immediately to a depth of four feet. The screaming emigrants rushed to the cabin to escape into the deck. Those who made it onto the deck were swept overboard as the sea broke over the ship. At 5:00 am the ship rolled over onto her port side and the Captain ordered the men to attempt to get the ship upright, but to no avail. The *Cataraqui* began to drop to wreckage until daylight. As day broke they could see the land. The only remaining boat was launched but was immediately capsized. The only remaining boat was launched but was immediately capsized. The only remaining boat was launched but was immediately capsized. The only remaining boat was launched but was immediately capsized.

The rocks were strewn with mangled corpses, but miraculously nine survivors, one passenger and eight of the crew, were found by a party of mail horses who came for them for 5 weeks until they could be taken off the island. Money was raised by the Queen Street Theatre in Melbourne and funds were made available for the dead to be buried on King Island. After the wreck, the government advanced for a memorial to be erected on the island, overlooking the disaster where it still stands today.

On 28th February 1846 a report appeared in the newspaper Jackson's Oxford Journal:

... it may readily be imagined that the people of Tackley were full of anxiety and expectation to hear tidings of the arrival of their old neighbours and friends at their destination... judge what must be the surprise, the grief and bitterness of heart... throughout the village on the arrival of the intelligence that young and old, the Fathers, Mothers and Children, who but a few months before had left in health and full of hopes, were all speckled, and almost on the very shore they had set out to reach.

The sinking was Australia's worst ever civil disaster incident.

*"On daybreak of the third day, the boat commenced breaking up altogether, when I was washed away from the spar-tree yard, and do not remember scarcely anything until I found myself on the rock, when I had been washed up. On my landing mind I could not see any part of the vessel above water."*



The story of the *Cataraqui* can be seen on the board at the back of the church.

The door of the aumbry in the sanctuary is a carved memorial to the lives lost on board the *Cataraqui*.

The aumbry is a small safe for the Reserved Sacrament, which is built into the wall of the church. They are generally situated close to an altar.

The reserved sacrament is when a minister has blessed additional bread and wine and left it for a lay person to administer at a later date.

**Q** Look at the ages of the victims. How many villagers sailed from Liverpool, and how many babies were born on board, considering that the journey was from 20 April to 5 August?

**Q** How many different family names were there on board?





Although we do not know the history of this item, it is similar to a funeral bier from 1900. Today it would be a lightweight folding trolley with small wheels, but the purpose is the same, to manoeuvre the coffin inside the church and to provide a platform for it to sit on.

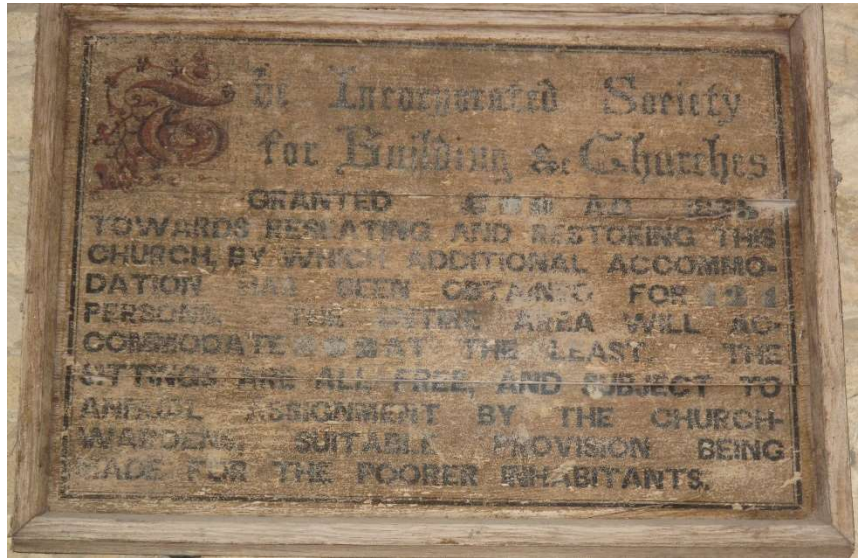
In 2012 the Warmer Welcome project ran water and drainage to the church for the first time and completed the installation of a disabled toilet and a servery.

This has enabled drinks, cake and biscuits to be served after services, and made flower arranging and cleaning easier.

The other essential part of this project was level access from the lych gate.



As you approach the south porch, the corbels have faces carved on them and there is a plaque above the door from 1828.



**Q** Can you find this 1833 plaque acknowledging the support of The Incorporated Society for Buildings & Churches? It commemorates replacing the old box pews with pews for everyone.

The Tackley Local History Group have an exhibition in the south porch called Tackley Through Time, which gives a time line going from pre historic times to the present day.

In the cabinets below are some of the many archaeological items and local memorabilia that have been collected over the years.

- Q**
1. When was the first Roman settlement in Tackley?
  2. When was the Battle of Tackley in the Civil War?
  3. When did the road which is now Church Hill get moved from south of the church to north of the church?
  4. When did the Oxford Canal open?
  5. When was the railway from Oxford to Banbury opened?
  6. When was Tackley Halt station opened?
  7. When was electricity first connected in Tackley?
  8. When was Tackley connected to mains drainage?
  9. When was Tackley connected to mains water supply?





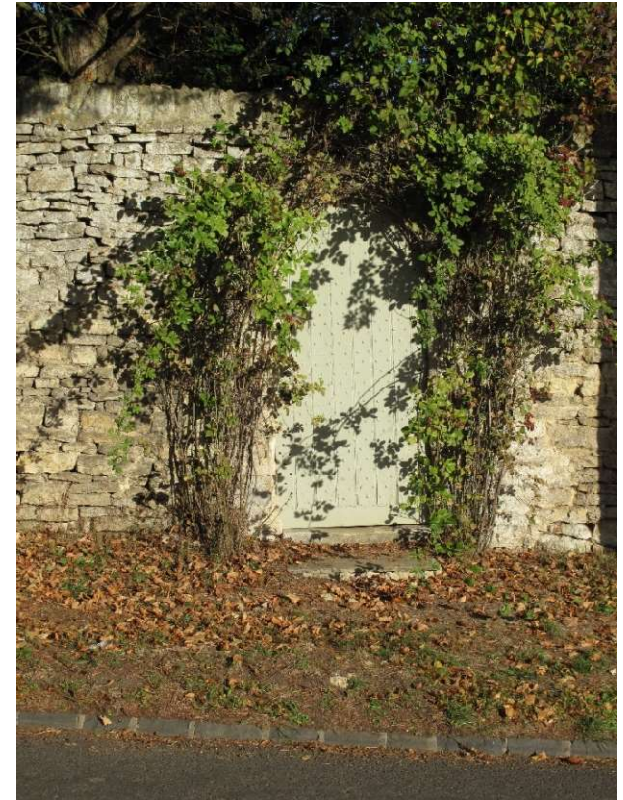
The north door was probably from the 12<sup>th</sup> Century north aisle, relocated to its current position when the north aisle was demolished. It permanently became the main door into the church when the level access path was laid.

Having an entrance on the north side is unusual because before and during the Middle Ages, the north face of a church was considered to belong to the Devil and people considered it heathen.



This was probably the back door for the Rector to get to the church when the village was below the south side of the church and before Tackley Park House was built.

The lintel is Norman, and was probably moved here from another part of the church during modifications.



This door is on the road outside and enters into Little Manor, which was the Rectory from 1774 to 1928. This provided a direct walking route for the Rector from the Rectory to the church.





Can you see the faces of the four gargoyles which act as water spouts?

The clock dates from 1885.



There are three mass dials or scratch dials on the south wall of the South Transept. These were common between 1100 and 1600.

They were used to tell the priest when it was time for Mass or some other major service.

The higher one has been relocated, but the others may be in their original place.



Half way up the south face of the tower are 3 small beakheads from around 1150. These are thought to be repositioned from the dismantled north aisle. A beakhead is architectural ornament used in some Norman doorways.





Box



Lime



Cedar



Holly



Yew



This Evergreen Oak was planted by Dame Felicity Peake in memory of her Butler Bill Walker 1997

Cherry Laurel



**Q** Can you find these 7 trees in the Churchyard, plus 4 more Yew trees? Which of them are coniferous and which are deciduous?



The original Rectory was in the old village to the southeast of the church. In 1774, John Morton demolished the Rectory to make way for him to build Tackley Park, and he built Little Manor in the William & Mary style on the north side of the church as a replacement.

Little Manor was sold in 1928. From then until 1975, the Rector lived in the red brick house now known as the Old Rectory. In 1976 Tackley joined with Steeple Aston to form the current Benefice, so with no Tackley Rector, there was no longer any need for a Rectory in the village.

