

## St Michael and All Angels, Bussage

In 1827, Thomas Keble, reformer and member of the Oxford movement, came to the parish of Bisley to be vicar. Keble was motivated to attend to the spiritual needs of his parishioners and went about setting up new churches and spiritual institutions, funded by appeals and private donations. He built the churches of Oakridge, Chalford and France Lynch and the school at Oakridge. He saw the need for the hamlets of Bussage and Brownhill to have a church, which would be funded in a unique way.

In 1839, 20 anonymous young men from Oxford University formed an association for sacrificial giving and agreed to contribute to a fund for five years. The money would then be used to build a church in a suitable place. Isaac Williams left Oxford in 1842 and became a curate to Thomas Keble. In due course it was agreed that the funds should build a church in the Bussage area.

The church was designed by J.P. Harrison - architect and it was stipulated by Thomas Keble that the tower should be capable of bearing a spire. A slightly later south aisle and south porch were added by Bodley and are of particular architectural interest. In October 1846, the church was consecrated by Bishop Monk of Gloucester. The foundation stone of the church, hidden from view and laid by Thomas Keble, bore a Latin inscription:

"To the honour of God, the Lord of the dead and the living and for the care of the poor ones in Christ this church was founded on the 21<sup>st</sup> November in the year of our lord 1844. Twenty alumni of the University of Oxford built it at their own expense. They are unknown in this place, but known to God".

