

ST PETER'S CHURCH, ST MARY BOURNE

CHURCH GUIDE

50p

THANK YOU for coming to visit our Church. We offer this brief Guide to help you make the most of your time here. It will help you as you walk around the building. We hope that, during your visit, you will also take the opportunity of sitting quietly and remembering the life and work of this community in your prayers. For as you look around, you will discover that this building is both a witness to those who used to live here and their faith, but also the modern community of all ages who seek to follow the way of Jesus Christ.

What was it like here in years past?

Our first church in St. Mary Bourne was small. It had perhaps a fifth of the present stonework. When you first enter the church your eye probably goes to the main arch, graceful and low, dividing the nave from the chancel. It is unusual. When similar Norman churches were first enlarged this main arch would have been completely rebuilt, made wider, and more significantly, swept up out of the semi-circular shape into a Gothic point. This would make the arch more dominating and the church much higher. So, by keeping the Norman shape when enlarging, St. Peter's has kept a "cosy" character. As you walk towards the arch, notice the ornamental pellets curving around immediately above it. Now walk through the arch and look up at it from the altar side. The ornamental pellets look rougher and they are incomplete! Imagine them bent into a semi-circle and you may well be seeing the first main arch. As you look at it you may feel that you can tell which were the new stones positioned for the second arch, and which were the older and smaller ones then used again. Also where you are standing now is probably where the first altar stood nearly 850 years ago. Imagine you are the priest giving the blessing (in Latin!) and the congregation is standing before you in a simple rectangular nave with the walls running along the lines of the pillars - which are not yet there. Perhaps there is room for 100. We can imagine the first church drawing people to worship inside its simple beauty. After just one generation it was virtually pulled down and rebuilt on a larger scale. The pillars are the main feature of this new building. Mysteriously they are not lined up across the church, and the masons enjoyed carving a different design on each capital.

It was about this time that the very distinctive font arrived, made from the blue-black marble quarried on the river Scheldt near Tournai in Belgium. There are only seven others in this country. Ours is quite easily the largest and there are some who say it was never intended for here - it fell off the back of a wagon!

Back to the altar - we may presume that in the new building the chancel will have been enlarged in proportion to the present main arch. Then, about 1300, the present shape of the yet larger chancel was made, and in 1855 the roof was lifted to make room for the present sized east window - giving more room and light, while leaving the homely character of the nave unaltered. The Wyke (south) aisle would also have grown by stages and later the roof and wall were raised for the two side windows to be added.

When you are in that side chapel, think about the remains of the once ornate memorial to the crusader, Sir Roger des Andelys. You are a soldier of Cromwell now, and you enter the church afire with zeal for the true, simple faith. These statues and ornate furnishings have too long led the people astray. They have become idols, the wrongful object of worship. You set to and hack down everything in the church which will distract the people from the true worship of God in Spirit. You have no idea that history will judge you so harshly because of the works of art you have destroyed.

Let us move on to the tower which is almost modern - it was started in about 1420 and completed in the reign of Elizabeth I. In the reordering of the church in the mid-19th century, it was planned to cut a door through the west wall, however, nothing came of it. Extensive repairs had to be undertaken in 1930 and 1936, when the roughcast was removed, exposing the original flints. The clock was given in 1826.

The bells

Six bells are hung. Five were cast by Knight of Reading in 1683 and were recast at various times in the late 17th and early 18th centuries by Carr (Corr) of Aldbourne.

Inscriptions on the Bells.

- Treble: ADMG DD Chris et Ada Burne 1926. Mears & Stainbank, London.
- Second: HC.FF.-CWR.COR 1724 (Henry Carter, Francis Flower, Church-wardens and Robert Carr the bellfounder).
- Third: Mr. Robert Longman, Mr. Michael Hedges CW-RC 98 (The Cw identifies the names as Church-wardens with Robert Carr, bellfounder in 1698.)
- Fourth: Robert Rolfe - John Harbett CW John Corr BF 1737 (BF identifies the bellfounder.)
- Fifth: Robert Thorngatt - Richard Holdaway CW 1683
- Sixth: Michael Hedges - Robert Longman CW Robert Corr 1698
- Tenor: (12cwt. in F sharp)

On the Tenor Bell is inscribed:

"On earth Bells do ring. In Heaven Angels sing Halalutiah."

Bell-ringing still is practised keenly here. Details of Peals which have been rung are displayed in the Tower.

A Prayer on entering a Church:

We adore you, most holy Lord Jesus Christ, here and in all your churches throughout the world and we bless you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Francis of Assisi

The Parish

The Parish of St Mary Bourne includes the larger village of that name (population c.1000); the smaller village of Stoke (population c.170) and the hamlets of *Binley, Dunley, Egbury, Upper-Middle-and Lower-Wyke* (pronounced "Wick" or "Week") and *Wadwick*. The old hamlet of *Swampton* has now been incorporated into St. Mary Bourne, as has the area known as *Link*, which stretches from the main village south to the viaduct. In the past, our parent church was *Hurstbourne Priors* (2½ miles south, and mentioned in the Domesday Book). St Peter's was built as its *chapel of ease* - for the convenience of inhabitants of St Mary Bourne. Now this parish is joined with that of *Woodcott*, some 4 miles in the direction of Newbury. There are rival theories why *St Mary Bourne* is so called: its main feature is the seasonal stream, the Bourne Rivulet (a tributary of the River Test), and under the old calendar it may well have risen on St Mary's Day (2nd February). Another theory is that the church was originally dedicated to *St Mary* - but why, then was it changed to St Peter?

Chandelier (18th century)

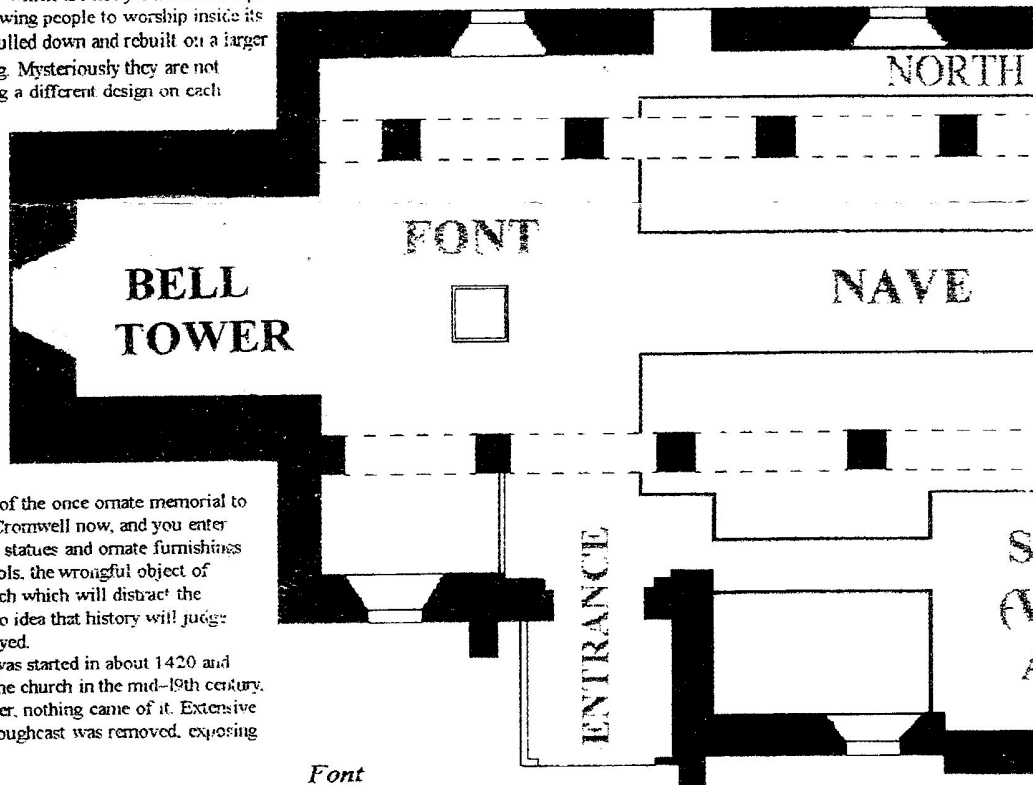
Above you, as you came in, it was originally hung in the nave or chancel in 1807. Later in that century it was adapted to hold three oil lamps, and restored and electrified in 1956. The workmanship of the *flambeau* (flame) is interesting.

"Vinegar" Bible

In the glass case by the north door is a copy of the "Vinegar" Bible of 1717, so called because of the misprint "Vinegar" for "Vineyard" in the heading of the parable in *Luke ch. 20*.

Altar Frontal

To the left of the door is part of a frontal of 1687 with the initials RB : WB. These were the Churchwardens of the year - Richard Berkeley and William Bond.



Font

Generations of infants have been baptised here, bringing them into membership of the family of the Church. As noted already, the font is carved from black *Tournai* marble. The other similar fonts in Hampshire are in Winchester Cathedral, East Meon and St. Michael's Southampton. It was probably brought over here in its finished state, possibly by the Norman Bishop of Winchester, Henri de Blois.

The base is modern, made in 1927 of the same marble - not without some hitches! The earliest base would have had four separate pillars around the central one. These may have been destroyed by puritans - one corner also bears the marks of rough usage. The earlier sandstone base is now outside the church, on the north side of the tower. The carving is less intricate than the other local examples and has no figures. Two sides, east and south, have vines with bunches of grapes: this symbolises Christ. "I am the true vine" (*John 15: 1*). On the other sides, are arcading of Norman arches, with four doves drinking out of two cups on the west side. This possibly symbolises the souls of the faithful receiving the Holy Sacrament. On the north side are Fleur-de-lys - a symbol of purity. The top has drinking doves at the corners.



The Church dates from c.1153 and as with every ancient building has been much changed from the original. There are some puzzling questions: why are the pillars not opposite each other? Why does this small village have a font which is such a treasure? For those interested in the architectural questions, Pevsner (*Hampshire p.493*) provides some possible answers. He believes that there may originally have been a Norman south tower, built over the present south entrance.

Museum Case

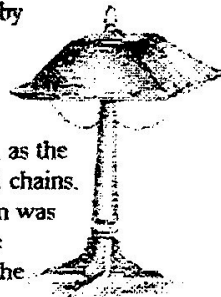
This contains a number of items found locally, but which do not all relate to the church. Roman coins are still found in fields. A Roman road cuts through the parish, fording the Bourne south of the church.

North Aisle Windows

Opposite the font, one panel was given by the Bank of England to mark their appreciation of the kindness shown to them by Canon Seaz during their evacuation to the district during the 1939-1945 war. This contains the figure of St. Christopher, patron of the Bank, surmounted by the "Old Lady of Threadneedle Street". The second panel has the Good Shepherd, given by the Sunday School children in 1901. The glass above, showing the arms of the Diocese of Winchester, is the only ancient stained glass in the church. The other two windows depict the four Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) and were given by A.H.White, one time organist here, by bequest in 1946.

Lectern

From here the Bible is read at Services, offering a choice of four versions, as the desk rotates. It dates from c1700. Hanging from it are two hand-wrought chains, originally one for the Bible, the other, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. The lectern was



removed to the vicarage in the mid-19th century and, unfortunately, sold with the vicar's effects when he died. The purchaser presented it to Reading Museum, from where it was returned in 1909.

The Chancel

This dates from the late 12th century and was rest Hospital of St. Cross in Winchester, and the Earl of then that the roof was raised to enable the height. The window itself was given by Mr. A.H. White in St. Dunstan (patron saint of church organists - the our Lord on the cross; St. John; St. Elizabeth (mother and, above, the cherubs and Christ in Majesty. All Mary. Angels are seen playing musical instruments of the Holy Spirit. The north and south windows when the roof was raised.

There are few memorials in the chancel, most to Easton was vicar between 1817 and 1831. He died in a riot in 1830 (4 years before the *Toipuddle Martyr* local men, being transported to Australia. (The story of the *Andover Workhouse* (London 1973), pp.6 unseal, is a memorial in the east wall to *Smith St* interestingly, his name is not recorded on the list. The altar rails, of oak, are from the time of Archdeacon altars from desecration. The piscina - the small round south wall of the Wyke Aisle) was for water for use at Communion.

Looking from the font, you may notice that the altar because Jesus is shown as resting his head to the left. The Organ dates from 1853 and was originally in the was moved to its present position in a specially built added.

The Churchyard

The south entrance is dominated by the ancient yew of 20' 7" at 3'. It is hollow and although yew trees as the church itself. The next largest yew tree was this south west corner are a number of fine 18th century earliest dated 1708. The churchyard has been extended brick and flint walls marking the boundary of the characteristic of the area. Part of the old east wall the grave of Dr. Joseph Stevens, the village physician archaeologist. His book, *The Parish* (1838), is the authoritative local the second extension is the grave of Kitchener of Khartoum.

The South (Wyke) Aisle

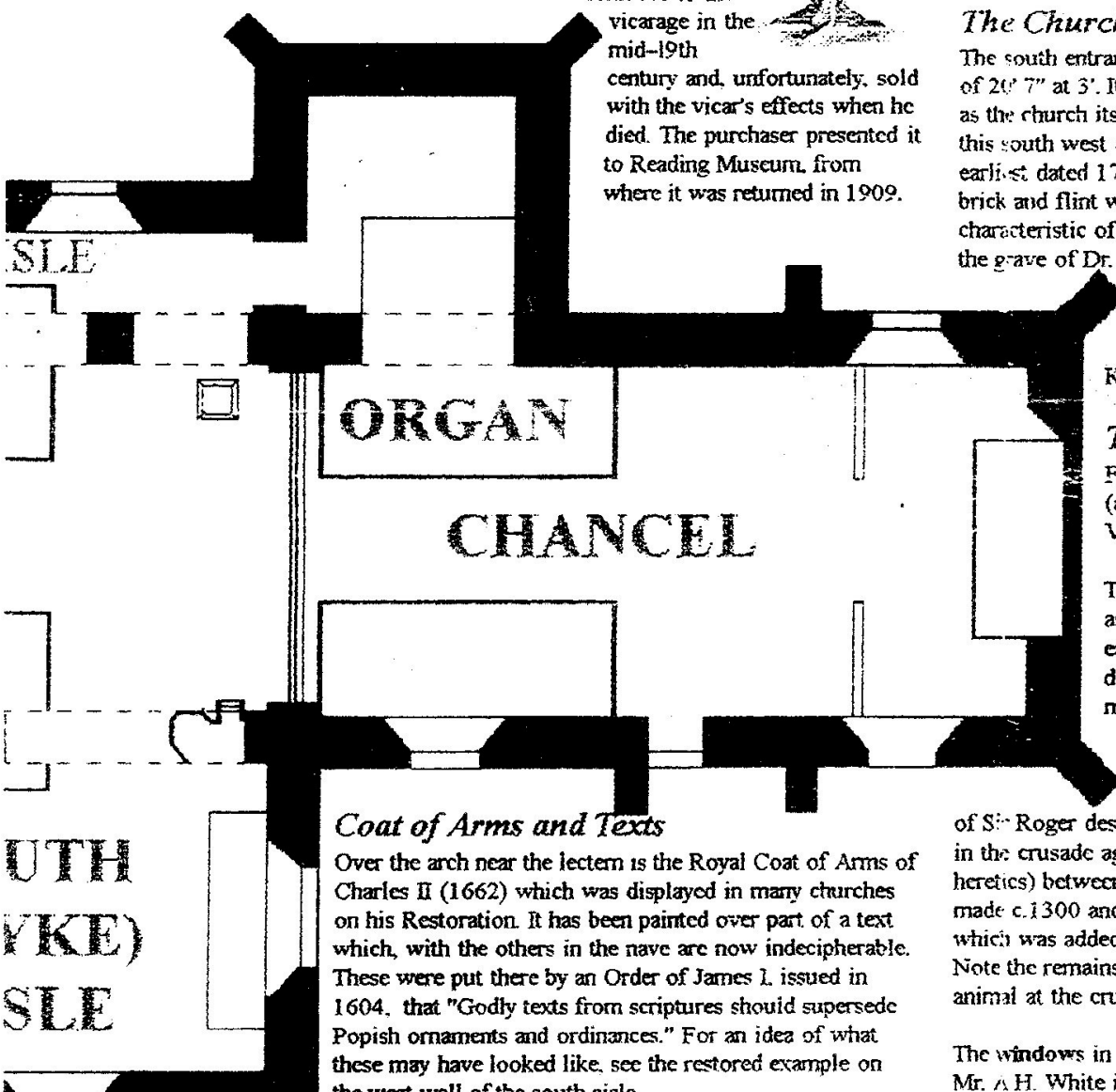
Filled with pews from 1855, this (a number of pews being removed) Virgin Mary and St. George, patron saint

The east window (1889) is in memory ascension of Jesus, with St Peter on east wall is the base for a statue (of destroyed). In the south wall is a piscina marks the aumbry, a safe built into for the sick.

This south wall is dominated by

of Sir Roger des Andelys of Wyke Manor, killed in the crusade against the Albigenses (French heretics) between 1209 and 1217. The tomb was made c.1300 and was placed in this chapel which was added in about the mid-14th century. Note the remains of a canopy over it, and of an animal at the crusader's feet.

The windows in this wall were given (left) by Mr. A.H. White in memory of his wife in 1934



Coat of Arms and Texts

Over the arch near the lectern is the Royal Coat of Arms of Charles II (1662) which was displayed in many churches on his Restoration. It has been painted over part of a text which, with the others in the nave are now indecipherable. These were put there by an Order of James I, issued in 1604, that "Godly texts from scriptures should supersede Popish ornaments and ordinances." For an idea of what these may have looked like, see the restored example on the west wall of the south aisle.