



The Parish Church of St. Thomas & St. Edmund, Salisbury



A Brief History of St. Thomas's Church

Traditionally believed to be a place of worship for the men working on the new Cathedral.

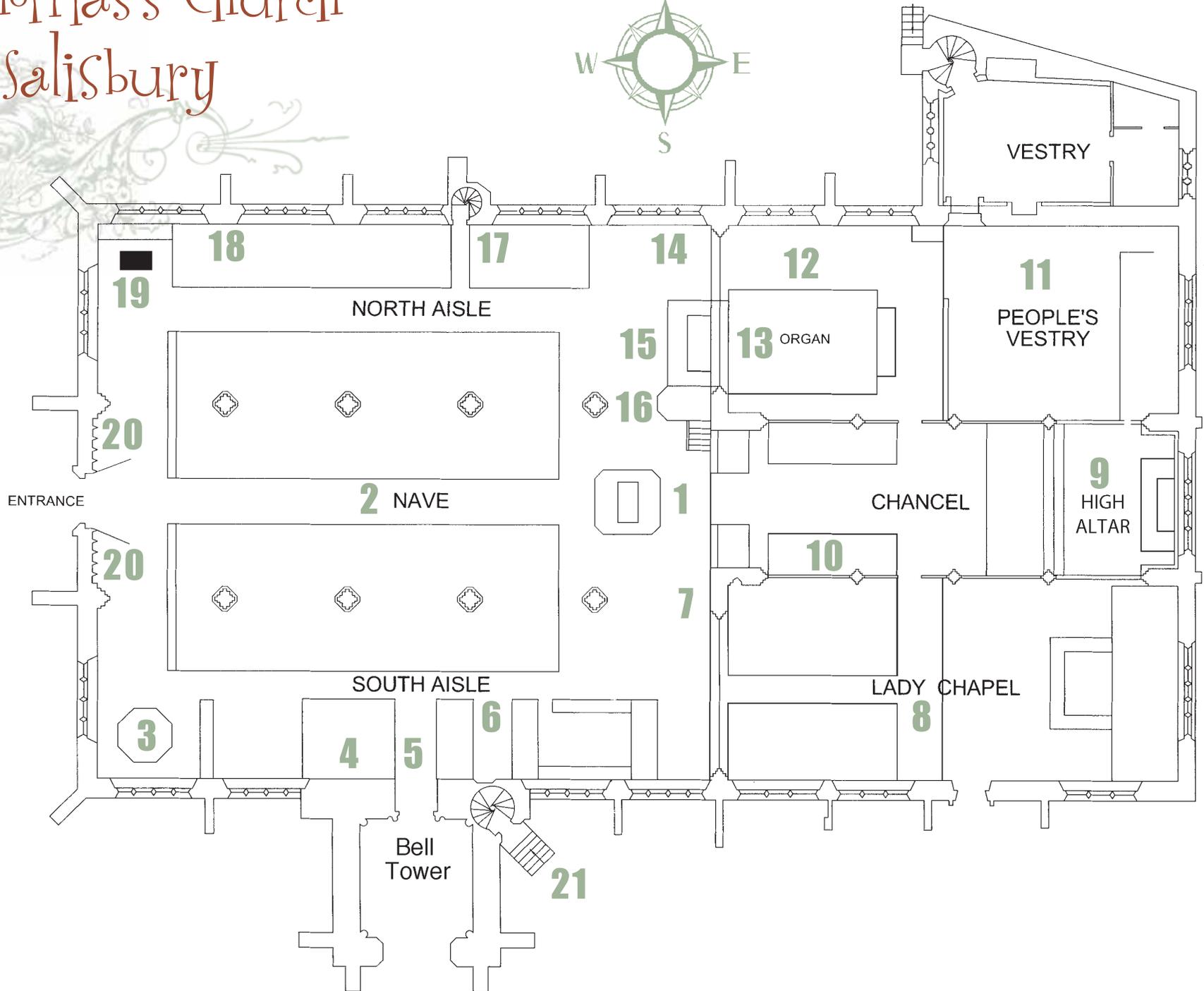
It was dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury around 1220.

St. Thomas's Church Salisbury



MAIN KEY

1. Doom Painting
2. Somerset Angel Roof
3. Font
4. Beckham Panel
5. Royal Arms above door
6. War Memorial
7. Lectern
8. Lady Chapel
9. High Altar
10. Choir Stalls
11. People's Vestry
12. Panels
13. Organ
14. Statue of St Thomas
15. St George's Altar
16. Pulpit
17. North Door
18. Mayoral Shield
19. Wooden Chest
20. Donation Boxes
21. Quarter Jacks



Dear Visitor,

You are now standing in an ancient medieval church, chiefly famous among visiting tourists for the remarkable Doom Painting over the Chancel Arch, but containing other strange and venerable treasures.

This small booklet will give you an outline of the Church's history, will tell you something about the more interesting contents and will be a souvenir for you to take away to study at leisure.

The contents of this Church were recorded in 1984-85 by members of the Wylde Valley Decorative and Fine Arts Society under the following headings:

| | | | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Memorials | Stonework | Textiles | Library |
| Metalwork | Woodwork | Paintings | Windows |

We are indebted to them for some of the information in this booklet. A copy of the complete recording is held in the Vestry and people with an interest in research may be allowed to refer to it on application to the Rector.

Besides this booklet, at the back of the church there are postcards for sale, and also walk-around guides in several languages. Please put money for items you choose in the safe. We have to admit that, as with so many old churches, the fabric of the building is in constant need of repair and we never have enough money to do all that we would like to do, or even what is barely essential, and your gifts are gratefully acknowledged.

Remember that this is the City Church of Salisbury and is very definitely not a museum. It is filled on Sundays with a lively and dedicated congregation of all ages. We would be most pleased to welcome you to any of our services as advertised on the notice boards at the west end of the Church, and we hope that this booklet will remind you of a much loved and much used house of God, and that you will be refreshed and uplifted by the memory of this beautiful place.

To quote from Pitkin's Guide to Salisbury, "*Most visitors may be expected to begin their tour of the city in the Cathedral and the Close, but they must not fail to finish it at St Thomas's. Here is the quiet heart of the townsman's town. Here is the place to end.*"

The original Church is supposed to have been a small wooden chapel which Bishop Poore built in about the year 1219 just before work started on the new Cathedral of New Sarum. Bishop Poore had just received the King's grant to build the new Cathedral in the marshes of what is now Salisbury when the old Cathedral on the hill at Old Sarum was abandoned, and he built the chapel as a place of worship for the men working on the new Cathedral site only a few hundred yards to the south.

Soon after 1226 the original wooden building was superseded by a small stone church dedicated to St Thomas of Canterbury. This small building, which bore no resemblance to the Church you see today, had a nave and choir with north and south transepts, but no side chapels, aisles, clerestory or tower.



St Stephen's Chapel

At the end of the century a new chapel, St Stephen's Chapel, was built on the south side of the choir (roughly where the Lady Chapel is now) and it is still possible to see a fragment of the original chancel arch if you look in the north west corner of today's Lady Chapel.

The Bell Tower

It is generally believed that the tower was built in 1400 standing apart from the church, with arches on the north and south faces to allow access to the church itself. A recent archaeological study has cast some doubt on this but the matter still lies unresolved and the description of further enlargement on page 4 below still stands.

The Lady Chapel

In 1447 the wall of the choir fell down, destroying the chapel of St Stephen in its fall, which left the church in a sorry state, but which gave the opportunity for some extensive rebuilding and enlargement.



A Brief History of the Church

The Dean and Chapter on the north side and the Merchants and Citizens on the south side undertook the construction of a longer and more lofty chancel, and at the same time William Swayne, a rich wool merchant and Mayor of Salisbury, undertook the rebuilding of St Stephen's Chapel to correspond with the longer new chancel.

This new chapel, which is our present Lady Chapel, was highly decorated and ornamented with fine stained glass in the windows, but most of this was destroyed in about 1548 at the time of the Reformation. However you can still see a few fragments of old stained glass in the east window, one of which depicts the merchant mark of Swayne, and three medieval paintings of the north wall.

These paintings represent the Annunciation, the Visitation and the Nativity. The surrounding badges are those of the Order of the Garter (the Bishop at the time was Chancellor of the Order) and pots of lilies which traditionally accompany the subject of the Annunciation. It has been suggested that there were originally six of these paintings, three on either side of the chapel, and that they represented the three joyful and the three sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary, but if this was so no trace remains of the other three.



Note particularly the beautiful perpendicular roof of this chapel of which the beams are ornamented on each side with shields bearing the sacred emblems of the Passion and the Trinity, as well as an inscription asking observers to pray for the soul of William Swayne and Christian his wife. This is decorated with Swayne's merchant mark. *Note also the monuments on the east wall to members of the Eyre family, of whom more below.*

The Godmanstone Chapel

While William Swayne was building his enlarged chapel on the south side of the new chancel, members of the Godmanstone and Hungerford families undertook to build a chapel on the north side of the Chancel which would be of the same length as the Swayne Chapel. This Godmanstone Chapel was given a roof to match the other roofs of the church thanks to the generosity of William Ludlow, and later became the Chapel of the Mayor and his brethren as the Guild of St George. This is where today we have the organ and the People's Vestry, but at the time of completion the two new Chapels of Swayne and Godmanstone must have added a splendid new symmetry to the old Church.

A Brief History of the Church

Further enlargement of the Church

During the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries much new building was done so that eventually the Church assumed the roughly rectangular shape which we see today. Sometime between 1470 and 1490 the Nave aisles were built. One effect of this was that the north side of the tower became part of the new wall of the south aisle. The door and windows of the tower were blocked up and new ones made outside, but an entrance to the church was retained and in recent times the ground floor of the tower has been converted to a room for prayer and teaching. The roofs of the new aisles were made to conform with the Swayne and Godmanstone Chapels, and a little later the clerestory, the great west window and the beautifully carved nave roof were added. All this stands today and adds up to the beautiful perpendicular church of St Thomas's.

There was originally a porch on the north side of the nave, but this was demolished in 1835 to save the cost of repairs. There was a room above this porch and there is still a doorway in the north wall leading to a stone staircase which now leads on to the aisle roof. It is said that at one time an alchemist lived in the room above the porch - and earlier an anchorite - and that he might, at times, be seen escaping through the small door at the foot of the steps from the noxious fumes of his experiments.

In the north east corner of the Church there was a house built by William Swayne as a residence for his Chantry Priests in 1465-67, this is now the Rectors Vestry and choir practice room above.

In Thomas Hardy's time there were galleries round the sides covering much of the windows, and below them the boxed pews would have cut out a lot of the light. In his last novel *Jude the Obscure* Hardy described the church as a gloomy place, which is certainly not the impression visitors receive now. In 1850-60 the high pews were taken out of the chancel, the floor was raised and the High Altar and oak screens added. Twenty years later the nave was restored, the old box pews taken out and the present oak benches installed. At this time the old privileges of reserved pews were abolished and all seats made free for ever. St Thomas's was the first church in Salisbury to do away with high pews, to have evening services, and to do away with the pew-rent system.



Why St Thomas?

It is sometimes asked why this church should be dedicated to St Thomas who had no very direct contact with Salisbury.

In 1982 the Rector wrote:

"St Thomas's Church was the very first building to be put up in the new City of Salisbury. Founded as a place of worship for the men working on the new cathedral it was dedicated to St Thomas Becket around 1220"

"On 7th July 1220 the revered remains of the martyred archbishop were removed from the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral and translated to a new and magnificent shrine before the High Altar there. Among those who supervised this was a man named Elias of Dereham. At that very moment he was also engaged on another important project - the building of Salisbury Cathedral so it was perhaps natural that the new chapel nearby should be dedicated to the martyred saint of Canterbury for whose shrine a Salisbury citizen was doing so much."

However it is also worth mentioning that the murder of an archbishop in the sanctuary of his own cathedral shook the then civilised world to its foundations and for a time the cult of St Thomas in the Christian Church almost equalled that of the Virgin Mary. Churches and chapels all over Europe were dedicated to St Thomas, so it is not difficult to understand why a chapel in Salisbury, newly built in 1220, should have been dedicated to him. Indeed Salisbury was on the pilgrim route from the West Country to Canterbury; a pilgrim's cross can still be seen in the south churchyard in a wooden case hanging on the wall.

There is in this Church a small wooden effigy to St Thomas. This is a statue carved from a single piece of timber taken at some earlier restoration from an ancient beam in the roof, and presented in 1954 in memory of Edith Hope. It stands in a niche in the eastern end of the north aisle and, ironically, looks down on a memorial slab in the floor below to an 18th century descendant of Hugh le Breton, one of the four knights who murdered the Saint. This modern statue occupies the niche where there was originally a stone figure of St Thomas destroyed at the Reformation.



The Doom Painting

By far the most striking feature of the church is the 'Doom' above the chancel arch. For those who wish to study this painting in greater detail there is a separate booklet devoted to the subject. Here we give but a brief description.



Doom in old Anglo-Saxon means Judgement, and medieval representations of the Last Judgement were very common in churches throughout Christian Europe though few are left today. This one is unquestionably the largest and best preserved of any now remaining in England. If possible you should view it on a spring or summer evening when the light floods in from the west window and the detail can be seen most clearly.

In the centre our Lord appears, seated on a rainbow, with the twelve Apostles in line at His feet judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19 v 28). On His right is the Blessed Virgin and on His left John the Baptist. In the background we see the New Jerusalem (Rev 21 v 10) with the faithful crowding the walls. As we look at this picture we see on the left the dead rising from their graves, assisted by angels who are taking the more fortunate into the Kingdom of Heaven above, whereas on the right the others are handed over to the Prince of Darkness who stands with one foot projecting out of the picture. Around him are the infernal regions where demons are dragging the damned towards the mouth of Hell, represented here by the gaping mouth of a monstrous dragon.



The whole scene is clearly designed to emphasise the terrors of Hell and to point the moral to medieval minds - and even perhaps our own - that God in His final judgment is no respecter of persons. Note the bishop and crowned heads among the condemned, and also the motto at the bottom, "Nulla est Redemptio" which we might translate as "There is no escape for the wicked".



The history of the Doom is extraordinary. The painter is unknown, but he is believed to have been English, influenced greatly by contemporary Flemish schools, and he painted it in about 1470.

In 1593, at the Reformation, the painting was obliterated by coats of whitewash and was eventually forgotten until, in 1819 faint traces of colour revealed in cleaning showed that something was there. The whitewash was then carefully removed and the painting revealed, but today we do not know what state it was in or even exactly what it looked like, as for some extraordinary reason it was covered with whitewash again. A drawing was made at the time but there is considerable doubt as to its accuracy. The painting was not uncovered again until 1881 when the whitewash was finally removed and the painting restored. It was cleaned and retouched again in 1953, but has not since been touched.

It has obviously been the subject of numerous scholarly examinations and it has been suggested that in 1881 repainting the heads of all the angels as well as various features of the composition were modified to represent Victorian rather than medieval characteristics.



The two figures within the spandrels at the bottom of the painting have been variously identified at times but are now known to be St James of Compostella, Patron Saint of Pilgrims, on the left, and on the right St Osmund, who was canonised in 1457.

The Royal Arms

This painting now hangs above the entry to St Michael's Room under the Tower, Queen Elizabeth ordered all churches to put her arms over the chancel when the

roods were taken out, and for centuries this was on top of the whitewashed Doom. Church accounts of about 1580 include a payment of £8/1/6d to Roger Lovell for making the Arms, and £4/6/0d to Reynold Beckham (father of Humphry) for making the frame (and mending ye pulpit). They show a gilded Lion and Dragon holding between them the coat of arms of Queen Elizabeth I framed within the Garter and surmounted by a crown.

Two Tudor Roses are in the background. This is an unusual coat because it shows that the arms are those of the Tudor Queen Elizabeth with the Welsh Dragon.

Later coats have the Unicorn of Scotland which the Stuart Kings introduced. The coat was restored by a Mr Hefford in 1952, and more recently by Mr Roger Hardy, Churchwarden 1981-83.

Hatchments

The word "hatchment" is a corruption of the French word achievement and in heraldry shows the armorial bearings of a deceased person. It was painted on canvas stretched across a lozenge shaped wooden frame with sides four to five feet long.



The hatchment was carried in front of the funereal procession and, after the funeral, hung on the front of the deceased person's house for six to twelve months. Because of this they were heavily painted to withstand the weather. The hatchment was then taken to the church where the dead person worshipped, where he was patron, or where he had his estates, and placed on the wall.

The heraldry in hatchments is seldom accurate and although the motto is sometimes that of the family, more usually it is something sentimental. The detail of the hatchment indicates whether the dead person was a bachelor, spinster or married, and if married whether he or she died before or after his spouse.

There are eighteen hatchments in this church of which nine belonged originally to St Thomas's and nine came from the Church of St Edmund when it was closed down and amalgamated with St Thomas's. All are of wood (probably oak) and date from the 18th and 19th centuries. They belong to members of the Merchants Guild, but several of the persons to whom the arms refer are, at present, unidentified. Detailed heraldic descriptions of all eighteen are contained in the Church Record.



The Chancel Paintings

There are eight paintings arranged continuously in each of the four-bayed stone screens in the chancel. They portray two rooms of angels with pointed wings each playing a musical instrument, those in the back row standing and those in the front kneeling. There are brief Latin inscriptions beneath each.

They were painted in oils on metal in the 19th century, but little is known of their origin or history.

Close examination of these paintings shows that they are obviously Victorian in style. The faces of the angels have the charming freshness of youth, so that they look like members of a youth orchestra on a musical outing. Because of their colours these were known by choirboys as the "mustard angels".



The Tower Clock

Apart from in the south churchyard, this can only be seen from a point well away from the Church, probably best in the Market Square though this may require field glasses! It used to be an eight day clock wound by hand once a week with three heavy weights (driving the clock, the quarter chimes and the hours' striking) which descended from the clock to the floor of the ringing chamber seven metres below.

In 2005, it was completely refurbished and converted to electric rewinding by the Cumbria Clock Company. Its present mechanism was made in 1904 by Burden and Co of Salisbury for £104. This firm was later bought out by W. Carter who still operate in nearby Minster Street. The hands were made by John Walton of Salisbury (who also made the South Porch gates). It has a flatbed mechanism, with winding squares for time, hour strike and quarter strike which are now no longer useable since the rewinding conversion. The clock face on the east wall of the Tower is square with gilded Roman figures and hands on a black background.



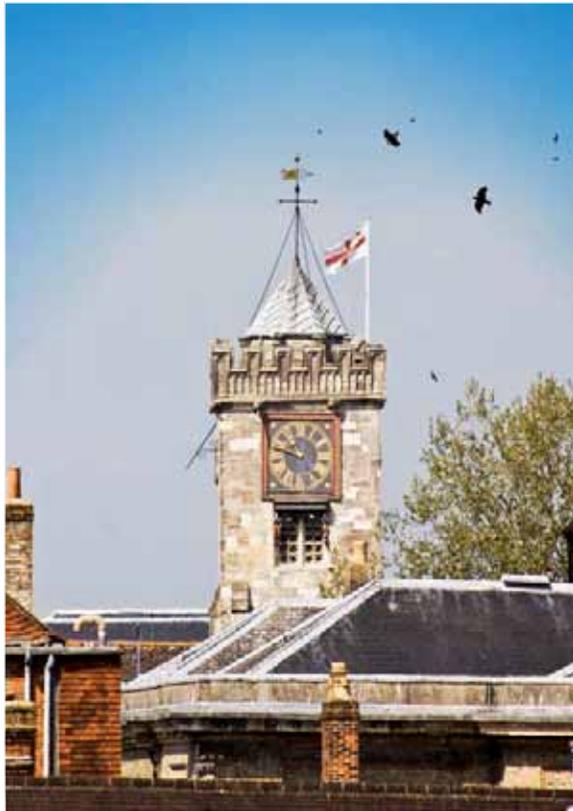
Below the clock face are two quarter bells (cast by local founder John Wallis) and two wooden figures ("jacks") about one metre high. They each hold a halberd and they rotate at each quarter and simulate hitting the bells, although in fact they do not. The bells are actually struck by hammers from behind. The Jacks represent men in late 16th century armour. The installation dates from 1581, but it is not known when the present

jacks date from; paint analysis suggests late 17th century to late 18th century.

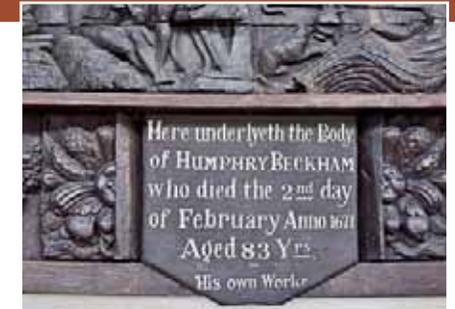
The clock face and the Jacks were restored by the then Churchwarden Roger Hardy in 1982 and 1983 respectively. At that time, the jacks were in a very poor state and had been in the church for some time. There being no physical evidence, he created the halberds to be of approximately the correct period for the costume of the jacks.

When the jacks were taken down as part of the 2005 clock refurbishment, they were found to be in need of further extensive restoration; this was done using the latest materials and additional thin lead sheets to protect the more vulnerable parts of the figures.

This work was subject to protracted discussions with The Council for the Care of Churches and not completed until 2010. The work was paid for in memory of Rodney Hoare and Miles Hoare.



The Church Record describes nearly two hundred monuments, with tablets, floor slabs, etc., many of which have been moved at various times from their original positions. Of these, three or four are of particular interest:



The Humphry Beckham Panel



On the south wall of the south aisle is a large oak panel carved in about 1660 by Humphry Beckham "His Own Worke". This detailed panel is now somewhat damaged but the story is clear enough. The left half of the carving depicts the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham, the angel above holding back the (now broken) sword; the ram caught in the thicket and two men with an ass (now difficult to decipher). The right hand half depicts Jacob's dream. In it Jacob's sleeping head lies on stones with which he is shown building a well on the far right.

The ladder to Heaven has disappeared, but you can see where it was. Behind this is Laban and the parting of the flocks, and in the distance is probably a view of Salisbury as it was in Humphry Beckham's day. Above the memorial are two Tudor roses and we note that Abraham on the left is wearing Cromwellian boots.

Beckham (1589-1671) appears to have been a well-known figure in his day. He was a Master Joiner, one of a family of skilled joiners and woodcarvers, Warden and Chamberlain of the Joiners Guild 1621-35, and the creator of many fine works in and around Salisbury, as were his father and brothers.

The only otherwork by him in the church today is a communion table which is now used as an office table in the vestry.



The Eyre Family Memorials

Just by the entrance to the Lady Chapel you see on the floor a slab dedicated to Jane Eyre, who died of an apoplexy in 1695. She was the second wife of Nicholas Eyre. This serves as an introduction to the important series of monuments across the east end of the Lady Chapel.



In the centre, occupying the full width of the chapel, oak-panelled and consisting of a low platform containing a burial vault, is the memorial to Sir Robert Eyre, who was buried here on 7th January, 1736. He was the son of Sir Samuel Eyre of Newhouse, a judge and husband of Martha Lucy. Sir Robert's father is said to be buried in this vault, as is Sir Robert's wife Elizabeth and their son. Sir Robert was Recorder of Salisbury in 1696, MP for Salisbury 1698-1710, Chancellor to the Prince of Wales (later George II) and Lord Chief Justice to the Common Pleas.

In the south-east corner of the Lady Chapel, above the panelling, is an alabaster monument, formerly in the chancel, in memory of Thomas and Elizabeth Eyre. This is painted to resemble the oak panelling of Sir Robert's monument and shows Thomas and Elizabeth kneeling face to face at a prayer desk. In the panel below are fourteen of their fifteen children (the panel has been damaged at some time and one of their sons has been lost). Six bearded sons kneel beneath their father, facing five sisters, and the three children who died in infancy lie at the feet of their brothers and sisters, their bodies protruding from the lower edge of the panel.

Elizabeth married Thomas in about 1567. Thomas was churchwarden of this church 1574-75, Mayor of Salisbury 1586-7 and represented New Sarum in Parliament in 1597. He died in 1628.

In the north-east corner is another alabaster monument, similarly painted to resemble oak panelling, which shows Christopher Eyre facing his wife Esther, daughter of George Smithies, Sheriff of London. Above the kneeling figures is a semi-circular arch containing the figure of Father Time with scythe and hourglass. Christopher was born in 1578 and died in 1624, being the younger son of Thomas Eyre. He was a benefactor who left valuable bequests to the City of Salisbury.

Detailed descriptions of these monuments and the clothing worn by the carved figures may be found in the Church Record.

Francis le Breton

A floor slab in the east end of the north aisle is dedicated to Francis le Breton, Lieutenant RN, who died in 1796 aged 28. The interest lies in the name, which is that of one of the four knights who murdered St Thomas in Canterbury Cathedral, Hugh le Breton. It is curious that this slab lies just below a modern carving of St Thomas himself.



Sir Reginald Kennedy-Cox, CBE, 1881-1966

This memorial is on the west wall of the north aisle. Sir Reginald was a worshipper in St Thomas's Church and one time churchwarden, and the colourful painting of the arch over the Doom Painting was one of his generous gifts to the church. He founded the Docklands Settlements in London and devoted many years of his life to helping the people of the docklands.



John Webbe

This, the oldest memorial in the church, is a floor brass in the chancel, covered by a carpet. Webbe was a 16th century wool merchant whose grandfather is credited with building the great hall in Church House. He erected a large crane there to unload bales of wool from the river, hence the name of Crane Street, Salisbury.

This John Webbe possessed the manor of Odstock and died in 1570.





Stonework

St George's Altar

Standing in the north aisle just west of the organ is a stone altar, formerly known as the Godmanstone Tomb. This is a block of purbeck stone decorated on its sides with carved panels separated by smaller oblongs at front and rear. These front and rear panels contain a foliate design around a central shield. The centre shield has a merchant's mark which Pevsner says belongs to the Godmanstone family, although RCHM does not confirm this.

The top of the tomb contains two white marble tablets with the names of Thomas Chafin Esqr 1679 and Thomas Chafin Markes Esqr 1727.

This tomb dates from the late 15th or early 16th century at which time a member of the Godmanstone family founded the Guild Chapel of St George on the north side of the chancel for the Mayor and Corporation, and this is believed to be the tomb of the founder of the chapel. Later the tomb was appropriated by Thomas Chafin and his grandson Thomas Chafin Markes.

In 1971 it was moved from its original position under the central aisle of the chancel and dedicated as an altar to St George.

Behind the altar is hung a glass-covered frame containing a valuable old embroidered panel which dates from the late 15th century and which has been restored by the Textile Conservation Centre. A paper describing it stands nearby.

Reredos and Pulpit

Behind the main altar in the chancel is a panel of Siena marble carved with the scene of the crucifixion and attendant figures. This was designed by the Victorian architect G. E. Street and carved by Earp in 1868. The pulpit, a carved octagonal drum on a shaped plinth, was also designed by Street as part of his redecoration of the chancel and its furnishing in 1865-70.



Stonework

The Fonts

At the west end of the south aisle is a Victorian font with a carved wooden top in good condition, erected by parishioners and friends in memory of the Reverend William John Birkbeck, Vicar from 1894 to 1898.



In the north aisle is a free standing circular stone bowl of unknown date but obviously pre-13th century. This was restored to the church from a nearby garden in 1895. It was supposed to have been turned out of the church in 1647 when the order was made that all fonts be taken down in churches and placed near the Minister's seat. In 1661, after the Restoration, church accounts show a payment to Beckham for 'covering a new font'.

Carved Angels



High up above the chancel are ten carved angels between the clerestory windows. Each angel is playing a different musical instrument of medieval design. Curiously enough they are all left-handed. These are believed to date from the 16th century. The instruments include a harp, bagpipes, rebec, recorder, portative organ, psaltery, lute and tabor. You need field-glasses to study these closely.

The Salisbury Civic Shield

This antique coat of arms on a wooden base hangs on the north aisle wall. It has a curious history having been bought from a local antique dealer in 1922 and taken over to Salisbury, Connecticut. In 1984 it was brought back to England and handed over to the city authorities. It now hangs here on permanent loan from the Charter Trustees.



Benjamin Banks 1727-95

A famous maker of stringed instruments who was baptised in this church and whose gravestone may be seen in the south churchyard. He ran a flourishing musical instrument workshop in Catherine Street and was at various times churchwarden here.





The Bells

The Church has a ring of eight bells, mounted in two tiers in the tower (bells 1,2 & 5 being above the others), and there are also two quarter bells mounted on the outside of the chamber which appear to be struck by the two jacks.

Bells 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7 were all cast by Robert Wells of Aldbourne in 1771 and all except no. 3 are dated. No. 5 was the gift of John Wyndham in 1683 and was recast by Wells in 1771, and no. 8 (Tenor) was cast by Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester in 1716. All eight bells were rehung with new fittings and in a new iron frame by Gillett and Johnston in 1948.

The bells were again refurbished and fitted with new clappers in 2003/2004 by Whites of Appleton; the frame was not replaced. The cannons were removed from bells 5, 6, 7 & 8 and all eight bells were retuned by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. The tenor now weighs 25 cwt and 18 lbs and its note is D flat.



The Organ

This was built by Green and was given to Salisbury Cathedral by King George III in 1792, but when the Cathedral acquired a larger instrument in 1877 the Dean and Chapter gave the Green organ to St Thomas's Church.



In 1897 it was partially rebuilt and enlarged at a cost of £700, and it was restored again in 1969 at a cost of £6000. It needs further restoration today. It is a three-manual instrument in a panelled wood casing with Gothic enrichments. Originally it was much taller but it had to be cut down to fit into the smaller space available when it moved to this church.

There are inscriptions on three faces of the casing. The one in English reads: "This organ, the gift of His Majesty King George III to the Cathedral of Salisbury AD 1792, was presented to this Church by the Dean and Chapter AD 1877 and was restored and enlarged in the Diamond Jubilee Year of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria AD 1897. Electric blower installed and organ overhauled AD 1930." This organ case is the only surviving Wyatt case in pine. The decorations around the base are papier mache.





Mace Stands

There are two mace stands, one of which came from St Edmund's Church on the amalgamation in 1973. They both stand in the Lady Chapel. They are used to support the heavy city maces during Mayoral services because St Thomas's is the city parish church.

One is a carved wooden stand which supports an upper iron frame with brackets to hold the maces. The metal uprights end in small ovals with the coat of arms of Salisbury on the right and the three-headed eagles on the left. The top bar has a domed curve surmounted by the Royal Arms of King George III flanked by two fleur de lys. The date is said to be 1643 in which case the Royal Arms must be a later addition or repainting.

The other mace stand, from St Edmund's, has a brass bar at the half-way point with fitting for three maces, and is surmounted by a segmented pediment above which is a carved Royal Coat of Arms 1714-1801. This is very unusual in that the Lion is backed by the Unicorn and vice versa, so that the coat of arms is seen correctly from both sides.

The St Edmunds Mace stand has recently been refurbished (details in the Log Book).



List of Incumbents

List of Incumbents, Vestry and Churchwardens

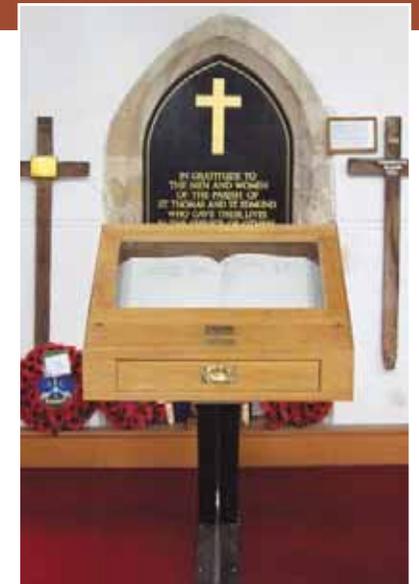
These lists are in the North Aisle, hung on the north side of the organ case, and list incumbents of St Thomas from 1238. They record the fact that the Church of St Edmund in Salisbury was joined with St Thomas's Church in 1973 to form the present parish of Sarum St Thomas and St Edmund.

Other lists record the names of the Vestry of St Thomas's, Churchwardens of St Edmund's and the Incumbents of St Edmund's from 1270 to 1959.



Book of Remembrance

The Chapel of Remembrance holds the Memorial Remembrance Book for the city of Salisbury. This was created with the proceeds of the Mayor's Appeal in 2003-4 and was instigated by the Mayor, Councillor Bobbie Chettleburgh. The book lists the names of the citizens of Salisbury who were killed in action from the beginning of World War 1 in 1914 to the present day. The pages are turned daily. In the drawer of the wooden stand is a copy of the information that can be perused by the public. The information is listed in a number of different ways – alphabetical name order, rank held, unit, medals awarded, etc.





Windows

There is some evidence that there was good stained glass in many of the windows, but nearly all this disappeared after the Reformation and only fragments remain today. However the following are worthy of attention:

The East Chancel Window

The stonework was renewed when the Victorian glass was inserted in 1856. An early engraving of 1843 shows a different window, but Alderman Smith left £400 for a new window when he died in 1856 so this is presumably the reason for the change.

The figures in the main lights, reading from left to right, are:

Upper Lights:

- St Philip carrying a cross
- St Peter holding keys, with St Andrew behind
- Christ blessing the disciples
- St John carrying a cup, with St James behind
- St Bartholomew with a knife

Lower Lights:

- St Simon Zelotes with a fish
- St Jude with a boat
- St Matthew with a quill pen
- St James the Less carrying a fuller's club
- St Thomas looking into the distance

The general colouring of bright reds, blues, greens etc. is typically Victorian.

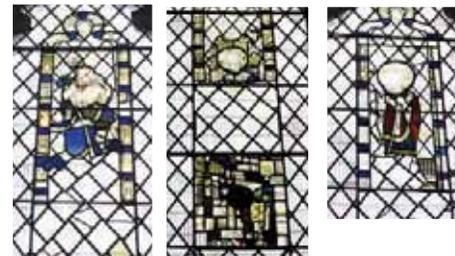


Windows

Lady Chapel East Window

Originally this window was larger than it is now and was filled with stained glass showing various saints, shields etc. Most of this was destroyed in 1548, but some of the old glass has survived and been re-leaded. Now the tracery lights are mainly filled with assorted fragments of 15th century glass, and the main lights are mixed shards in the heads, some with architectural detail, with plain glass below. This latter is probably 19th century glass. Major works and refurbishment were carried out upon The East Window in recent times (details in the Log Book).

Lady Chapel South Windows

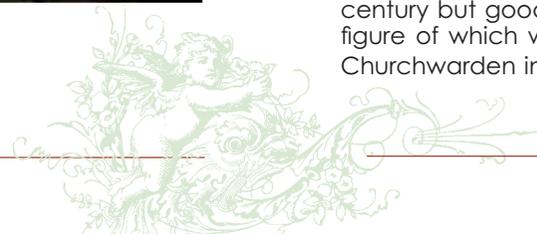


The window above the door to the garden has three main lights with insertions of good remains of 15th century coloured glass, of which there is a history.

The left hand insertion represents St Christopher with his staff, bearing a small child on his left shoulder. The centre light has two insertions. The upper has a round pane of clear glass (presumably once a head), a hand raised in blessing and shoulders covered by a white colour (ermine?) and a blue robe. This is believed to be a representation of God the Father which was removed in 1583 by order of the Sub-Dean to prevent its being destroyed by the Puritans. It seems to have been hidden for several hundred years, thereafter reappearing in the vestry east window, and moved to its present position in 1967.

The lower insertion in this centre light has a medley of varicoloured shards leaded together in no discernible pattern. The right hand light has a standing figure in a gold patterned chasuble, bordered with yellow. The fact that the left hand holds a crozier surmounted by a Canterbury cross indicates fairly certainly that this is St Thomas.

The next window has an insertion of a figure presumed to be St Edmund Rich, Archbishop of Canterbury in 1234. It originally belonged to St Edmund's Church in Salisbury and was given to St Thomas's when the Parishes were combined in 1974. It was inserted into this window in 1986. The glass is 19th century but good of its kind. The next window has an insertion, the figure of which was placed there in memory of Mrs June Watson, Churchwarden in 1982. This was made in the Cathedral workshops.



Windows

Memorial Window in the South Aisle

This is a memorial to the memory of the officers and men who gave their lives from the parish in the Great War 1914-19. The window and the alabaster tablet recording the names was provided by public subscription in 1919-20 and was dedicated on 18th April 1920 by the Bishop of Salisbury and the GOC Southern Command.

The following are represented in the window from left to right:

Central Lights:

- St Nicholas, Patron Saint of sailors
- St George
- St Michael, the Warrior Archangel
- King Richard in chain mail

Lower Lights:

- St Christopher carrying the Christ Child
- The Crucifixion
- An Archangel and a kneeling man in armour
- A Knight kneeling before an altar before departing on a crusade

The Artist was G. F. Hutchinson and the Glaziers, James Powell & Sons of London.



Windows

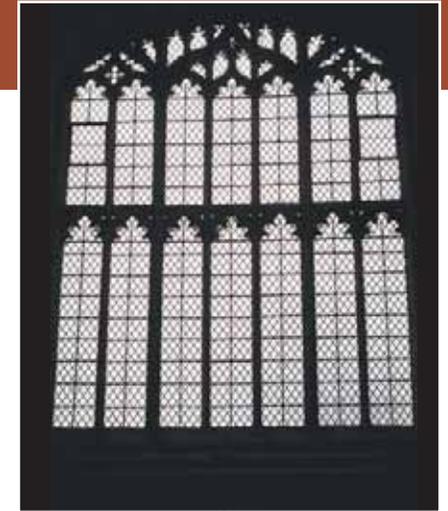
The Great West Window

This was built at the end of the 15th century when the Tudor roof and clerestory were added to the nave. The present glass is modern, having been inserted in 1951. Note that the outside view of this window carries more lights than the inside.

The Chancel Clerestory Windows

These high windows above the Chancel are interesting, but unfortunately they cannot be seen without field-glasses or a very long ladder. There are six windows on either side, all trefoil-headed lights with no tracery lights, and each has a circle of coloured glass pieces near the top centre. The remarkable part of the windows is the diagonal bands of writing, two on each light, which photography has revealed to be quotations from the Book of Revelations. Though much of the writing is no longer legible (because of poor firing) there is enough to distinguish the words and gaps can be filled.

The script is a copy of 14th century Lombardic capitals. The accepted date of this glass is between 1840 and 1850.





Roofs

The timber roofs, decorated with nearly 100 carved angels, are a magnificent feature of the church.

The Somerset nave roof has six king-strut tie-beam trusses, with moulded principal rafters forming eight large bays in each bay.

At the centre of each tie-beam the roof is embellished with an angel bearing a shield or scroll.

The 15th century roofs of the north and south aisles each have seven bays and are almost flat. Moulded longitudinal beams divide each bay into four compartments. Here there are 28 carved angel bosses bearing shields in both north and south aisles.



The ceilings of the chapels closely resemble those of the aisles. In the north chapel are five bays with carved angels bearing shields at the intersection of each main beam with the central longitudinal beam and the side wall plates. Many of the angels have lost their wings.

The larger beams in the north chapel are enriched by colour in diagonal bands and many of the shields are painted heraldically. The south chapel is similar, but has black letter inscriptions painted on the sides of the main beams, asking for prayers.

The chancel ceiling is heavier than that of the nave, and less elaborately carved. It has seven stout moulded king-strut tie-beam trusses braced to oak wall posts. These stand on carved stone corbels representing angels, crowned heads and shields. At the centre of each tie-beam is a carved wooden boss, one depicting a woman's head is probably from the 14th century.

Much of the detail of the angels, bosses and carvings in the roofs cannot be seen with the naked eye. You may care to look for a boss of a carved head with rudely protruding tongue. This is in the south aisle in the centre of the fourth panel from the west end and second in from the north edge.



Sunday Schools

Our flourishing Sunday Schools have been in existence since 1785 and are believed to be the second oldest schools in the country. We celebrated their 200th anniversary in 1985.





The Church Charities

This Church, being of ancient foundation, is fortunate in possessing a number of charities which produce a regular income to help the poor and needy.

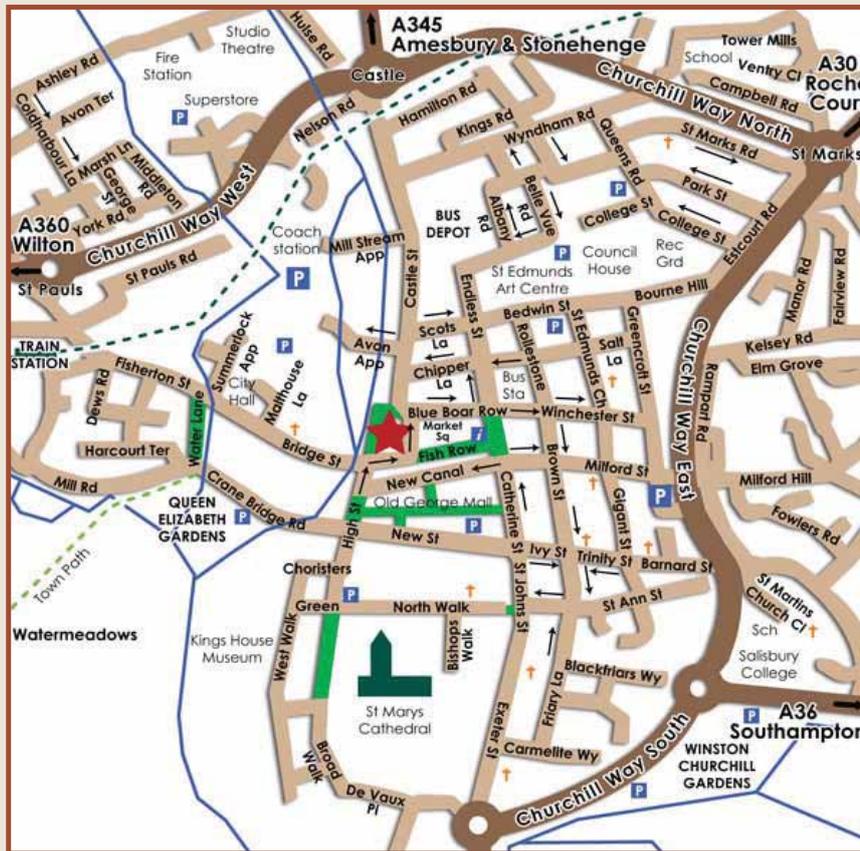
Until 1982 there existed a number of small benefactions - some originally to St Thomas's and some to St Edmund's - which individually produced very small sums in annual income, but the most important were then assimilated into one, the Salisbury St Thomas and St Edmund Charity, with a revised and simplified objective. This is administered by trustees, under the chairmanship of the rector, and currently produces an income of just over £3,000 a year which, under the terms of the scheme, is dedicated to the poor and needy of the parish. Since we are fortunate in living in a reasonably prosperous area of the city, many years ago, the trust "adopted" Bemerton Heath, an area with much poverty and need.

In 1696, John Fricker, owner of a shop in the city centre, bequeathed the income from the shop for distribution by the rectors of St. Martins and St. Edmunds. The charity is administered by its own trustees who maximise the income and pass it to the two rectors. The objects of the charity were relevant to the time of the will and have been modified over the years; further modifications to the objects and area are currently under discussion with the Charity Commission. The value of this bequest has grown over the years. In 1906, St. Edmund's share was £15. In 2009 the now joint parish of St. Thomas and St. Edmund received more than £10,000. Although the rector of the parish is the nominated distributor of the funds, he chooses to use the trustees of the St. Thomas and St. Edmund charity to help with the allocation and administration of the money. Broadly similar objects and area have been adopted and both funds are subject to annual independent inspection.

Thank you for visiting
St Thomas's Church, Salisbury

'Serving God in the Heart of the City'





How to find St. Thomas's Church, Salisbury.

Contact:

The Parish Office, St. Thomas's House,
St. Thomas's Square, Salisbury, SP1 1BA

Tel: 01722 322537

email: saint.thomas@btinternet.com

website: stthomassalisbury.co.uk

Admission is free, although donations are welcome towards the upkeep of this special building. There is full wheelchair access.

There is adequate parking and good Park and Ride facilities from all directions.

Opening times 8.30am – 6pm

Tues & Sat morning coffee is served in the People's Vestry 9.30am – noon.

