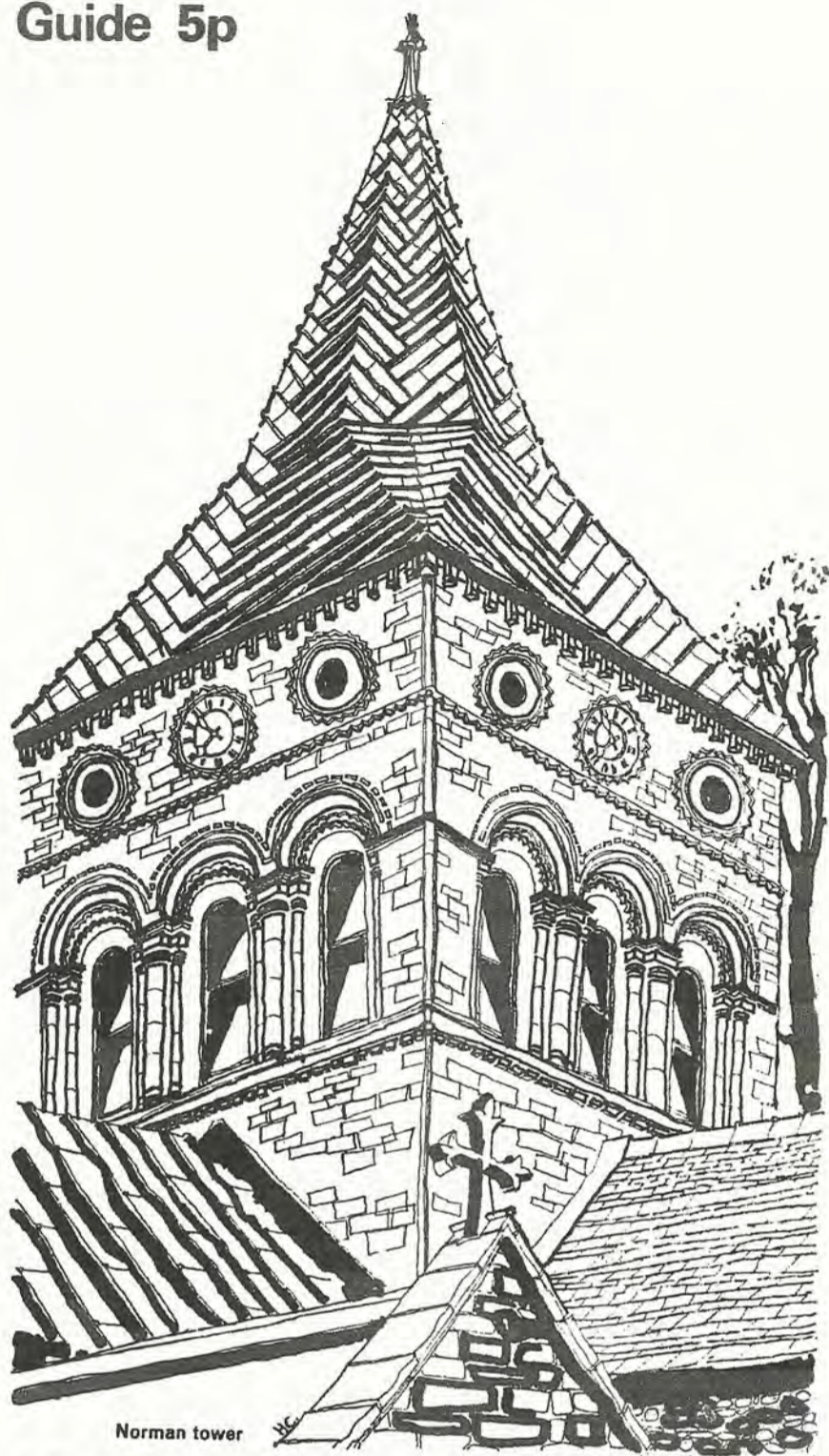


Guide 5p



Norman tower

All Saints, East Meon Hampshire

ALL SAINTS, EAST MEON,
HAMPSHIRE.

Originally the Church was in the shape of a cross: the nave, transepts and tower remain all in the Norman style. Its length is 110 feet, and breadth 36 feet, (61 feet across the transepts). It was built somewhere between the years 1075 and 1150 - perhaps by Walklyn, Bishop of Winchester - and is, therefore, some 850 years old. Notice the fine Norman chancel-arch, repeated towards each transept and towards the altar. The west wall of the nave, too, has the original Norman doorway, and the northern wall, one of the original windows. The Tower is a fine specimen of French-Norman work, and resembles the great tower of Winchester Cathedral built by Bishop Walklyn.

About 1230 the Church was enlarged, the Lady Chapel being built out from the chancel. By this time Church architects had given up the round Norman arch for the pointed arch (Early English) supported by lighter pillars. These two arches opening out from the chancel into the chapel are beautiful specimens of this style.

About the same time the south aisle was added to the nave, the outside wall being pierced for the arches which now separate the nave from the aisle; above one of these will be seen the remains of one of the earlier Norman windows. The Norman south door, originally opening into the nave, was now moved back to its present position.

Patches of colour will be noticed on the pillars in the nave. No doubt the whole interior of the Church was once richly decorated with wall-paintings. Old inhabitants of East Meon remembered a "Doom" (a painting of the Last Judgment) above the chancel arch. Some notes made in 1838 describes a large figure painted "on the south side of the singing gallery" - which was above the west door - supporting another figure upon its shoulder, and supposed by some to have been a figure of St. Christopher carrying the infant Christ. Except blotches of reddish colour here and there, little of these wall-paintings now remain; but on the eastern respond of the northern transept (between the choir stalls and the organ) are the faint remains of a figure of the crucified Saviour, whilst on the southern respond opposite are traces of a crowned head.

Except the peculiar pointed windows in the lower part of the south transept wall and near to the pulpit we know of no fabric additions and alterations to the Church until the time of Bishop Langton, who died in 1501. His Arms are to be found and the Arms of the See of Winchester on the outside of the east wall of the Church, and it is plainly evident that a restoration of the chancel and Lady Chapel took place about that time, for the character of the windows in the Chapel and the style of the chancel roof removed in 1870, point to this.

1870 RESTORATION

The present roofs were inserted, the doorway into the Chapel and the porch arch were built. A stone pulpit (assigned to the reign of Henry VII), the ancient altar of the Chapel, and a sanctus bell (which hung in one of the lower windows of the tower) disappeared, as did also some singers' galleries.

An organ was placed in the western of the two arches between the chancel and Chapel, a small altar against the east wall, singers' stalls on either side of the chancel, and a stone pulpit of poor design against the north west chancel arch. An ill-proportioned east window was placed in the high chancel, the present oak pews were added and the floor space between the pews was paved with Minton tiles.

The most satisfactory work which was done at this time appears to have been the re-roofing of the Church and spire with lead, and the reclaiming of the northern transept from its use as a Day School. The Gentleman's Magazine of October 1819 mentions a School in the north transept, and 160 children. In 1890 the belfry floor was built,

The small stone under the southernmost arch of the tower with the words "Amen's Plenty" inscribed upon it was found during the 1870 restoration over a vault in the east side of the south transept. The vault contained the skulls of four men placed back to back, who had - as the remains evidently showed - been buried upright. The stone seat at the entrance to the south transept may be of an old altar.

1906 RESTORATION

Under the direction of Sir Ninian Comper, the interior of the church was re-modelled. The floor levels, except in the Lady Chapel, were lowered, so that the dignified proportions of the arches are seen: the 1870 oak benches were retained, except in the northern transept, where they gave place to the organ and vestry. A number of tombstones found under the boards were placed in the floor of the north transept. Hopton wood stone was substituted for the Minton red tile paving in the passage ways and a hot air warming apparatus was added.

Other structural additions and alterations included the new doorway on the west side of the north transept, the oak screens and tracery dividing the Lady Chapel from the high chancel and south transept, two piscinas, the Priest's stalls, the removal of the singers' seats from the chancel to the central tower, and the replacing of the altar footpace and step in the Lady Chapel. The new high Altar was placed some 12 feet from the east wall and the space behind made into a Priest's vestry. Some old oak panels set in a new frame; these came out of a cottage, probably the Priest's dwelling, which was taken down when the churchyard was enlarged eastward in 1904.

The glass in the east window of the Chapel, placed there in 1907 to the memory of Mrs. Forbes, who founded the Alms-houses, is by Comper. The subject is the Annunciation in the two central lower lights, and the Salutation in the small upper lights. On either side of the lower central light are the figures of St. Anne and S. Agnes; the former teaching the Blessed Virgin to read. The angels in the upper lights are carrying the Arms of the Forbes families and those of the donor.

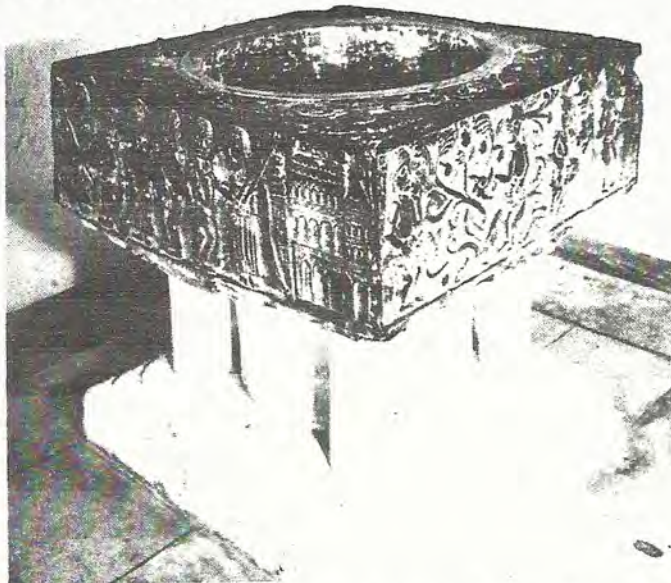
The pulpit, presented by the Revd. E. M. Tomlinson, who resigned in 1901, formerly stood in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Minories, London. When that Church was pulled down, he obtained the pulpit, and

in 1906 placed it on a new oak base and presented it to the Church. It is of inlaid oak and dates from 1706.

In 1911 was added the beautiful Reredos in the chapel, to the memory of Mrs. Ada Mary Hayward. The work is of English alabaster and carved out of four separate blocks. The four panels reading from north to south represent the betrothal of the Blessed Virgin, the Nativity, the visit of the Three Kings, and the presentation of Our Blessed Lord in the Temple. It is set in a richly carved and decorated oak frame and was designed by Mr. J. N. Comper.

In 1912 new perpendicular tracery in the exact lines of the pre 1870 East window replaced it. In 1913 stonework from the 1870 window was used for a new three light window in the north wall of the Chancel; a window had once been there.

The Lych Gate was built in 1906 in memory of H. A. W. Batten "the Poor Man's Doctor".



Our Font is one of the Winchester Group; the six others being in Winchester Cathedral, St. Michael's Southampton, St. Mary Bourne, Hants, Lincoln Minster, St. Peter's Ipswich and Thornton Curtis in Lincolnshire. Other Fonts of the same kind are known to exist in Belgium, Northern France and Germany. The form and general outline of these Fonts are similar. The bowls are round on the inside and square on the outside; the bases are square, and the stems are composed of five supporting columns of circular cross-section. The bowls and capitals are formed out of one block of marble; such a bed of stone is still being worked at Tournai in Hainault. It is hard, close-grained, containing lime, very nearly black with a bluish tinge.

The average outside diameter of the square bowls is 3 feet 6 inches; the East Meon Font measures two inches less. Both the architectural and ornamental features of all these Fonts have had great care lavished upon them, and the sculpture consists of figure subjects taken from the Scripture and the lives of the Saints, of symbolic birds and beasts, and conventional foliage.

The Scenes from Genesis on the northern and eastern sides of the East Meon Font run from right to left beginning with the creation of Adam and Eve.

Then the Temptation; the Tree of Life is in the centre, with Eve on the right receiving the apple from the Serpent coiled round it, and Adam on the left raising the apple to his mouth.



On the east face an Angel stands with a drawn sword in front of the gates of Paradise, driving Adam and Eve before him, and in the next scene the Angel is showing Adam how to dig with a spade, whilst Eve has distaff and spindle.

Note the minute care lavished by the Sculptor upon the details of the costumes, buildings, spinning and digging implements.

On the Southern and Western faces of the Font we have a narrow frieze of birds, beasts and mythical creatures, above an arcade of round arches. The fleur-de-lys is also introduced. On the upper face of the Font round the basin will be noticed a vine wreath with clusters of grapes and two pairs of birds drinking out of bowls.

Dean Kitchin dated it about the middle of the twelfth century, when the fame of St. Nicholas of Myra whose miracles are depicted on the Winchester Font, had found its way to Northern Europe. He advances evidence to show that our Font and the other three in our Diocese, were most probably purchased by Henry Blois, Bishop of Winchester 1129-1171.

Thomas Heywood Masters, our Vicar from 1902 to 1921, and Provost of Portsmouth 1932 to 1938, wrote this pamphlet. His body lies in our Churchyard (beside that of Frank Partridge, second Bishop of Portsmouth); his tombstone is inscribed "Restorer of this Church".

The Parish Registers from 1560 are in the County Archives at Winchester. The names of 53 of our Vicars from 1283 are shown in the South Transept. The East Window (by Comper) pictures our risen Lord and the patron Saints of Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen, and those of the Allies in the Great War. The oak Stairs to the Ringers' Chamber

replaced an iron ladder in 1954. The mediaeval Font Bowl nearby was brought from the ruins of the Chapel near Westbury House in 1936. The Royal Arms of James I hang over the South Door.

In the tower hangs the fifth heaviest peal of eight bells in the County.

Until 1890 they were a peal of six hung in a very ancient oak frame at the very top of the tower immediately behind the circular windows. This fine frame is still preserved in situ. In 1890, two new trebles were added and the whole peal was re-hung in a new oak and steel frame lower down the tower on a level with the large louvred windows: the 7th and Tenor bells were recast.

<u>Bell</u>	<u>Inscription</u>	<u>Diameter</u>	<u>Note</u>	<u>Cwt. Qr. lb</u>
Treble	John Taylor, Loughborough 1890	2'3.1/8"	F	4 - 3 - 22
2nd	John Taylor, Loughborough 1890	2'4.1/8"	E	5 - 1 - 9
3rd	Chapman & Mears fecerunt 1782			
	John Luffe, Churchwarden	2'6"	D	5 - 1 - 14
4th	Thomas Mears, London			
	Founder 1834	2'8.5/8"	C	6 - 1 - 20
5th	T. Mears of London, Fecit 1819			
	When female virtue weds with mainly worth, we catch the rapture and we spread it forth. Revd. John Docker, Vicar.			
	Thomas White) William Weeks) Churchwardens	2'10.7/8"	B	7 - 1 - 25
6th	William Tosier cast me in 1722			
	John Bonham & Stephen Steel	3'0 1/2"	A	8 - 2 - 21
7th	Recast 1890 by John Taylor			
	Loughborough	3'5.5/8"	G	13 - 1 - 19
Tenor	Presented by Mr. Forbes of Bereleigh 1890			
	Revd. E. M. Tomlinson, Vicar. J. Stubbington, F. R. Harrison			
	Churchwardens			
	John Taylor, Loughborough	3'10.5/8"	F	19 - 2 - 18
				<u>71 - 1 - 8</u>

From the antiquarian point of view, the 6th is the most interesting bell. It is one of only eight bells in Hampshire cast by William Tosier, who owned the Salisbury Foundry between 1718 and 1733, when it finally closed down having been in operation since 1590

The work of preserving and restoring the Church continues as fast as money allows. Thousands of pounds are needed: a lot of The Work is urgent. The Cheques to "East Meon Church Restoration Fund" sent to The Vicar, East Meon Vicarage, Petersfield, Hants, would be a great encouragement and help. There is a Wall Safe near the door for contributions, please.