

THE CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, EAST MEON, HAMPSHIRE. **AN ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL GUIDE.**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

THE Church Council for The Church of All Saints at East Meon has requested a report on the church with a view to the preparation of a church guide. There follows below an overview of the geographic and historical importance of the church followed by a detailed record of the building's principal features and its general condition.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The parish church of All Saints is one of the finest in the county of Hampshire and is rich in architectural and historical interest and as a consequence is listed as Grade I, the highest classification for buildings of historical and architectural importance in the Department of National Heritage's register. It stands at the foot of a South Downs hill overlooking the village of East Meon. It is constructed mainly of flint, with ashlar blocks being used in the construction of the magnificent Norman tower which is the building's most imposing feature.

Internally it is quite stark with very little decoration surviving to walls, ceilings or floor. It is however, blessed with an elaborately carved twelfth century font of great rarity. The tower crossing although quite plain is nevertheless a very impressive feature which dominates the nave.

The church was closely associated in medieval times with the Bishops of Winchester who were figures of great national importance and it was the spiritual centre of one of the most productive and valuable manors in all of England.

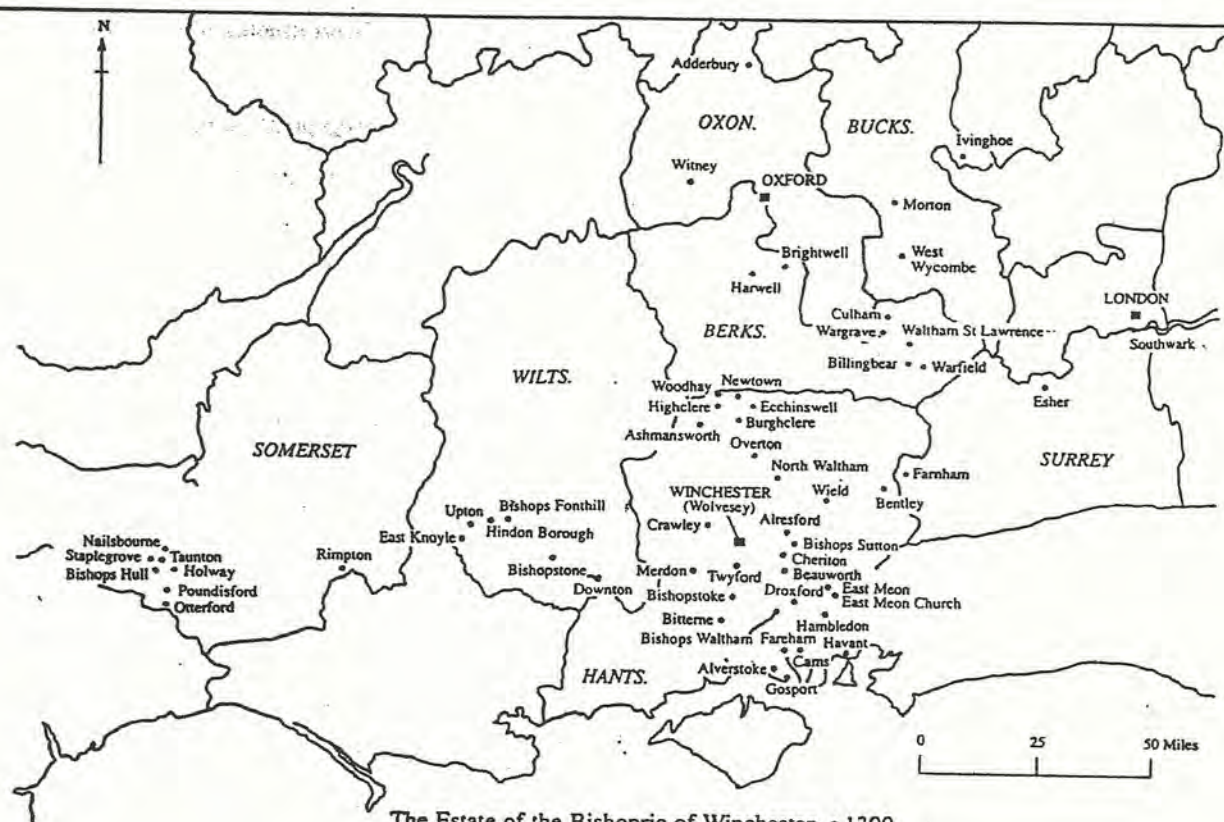
LOCATION AND SETTLEMENT HISTORY

The parish of East Meon is located in Eastern Hampshire, approximately 50 miles south of the City of London. The county's capital city, Winchester, is approximately 12 miles to the West and the town of Petersfield is approximately 4 miles to the East.

The village of East Meon itself is situated at the foot of the South Downs near the source of the River Meon. The area has been inhabited since prehistoric times as has been shown by the discovery of relics from Palaeolithic times nearby.

In Saxon times nearby Winchester became the capital city of the Wessex and later of England. Upon Alfred the Great's death he willed land that included East Meon to his youngest son.

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The Estate of the Bishopric of Winchester, c. 1300

It is possible that by this time there existed a fairly substantial church at East Meon. Saxon churches are to be found at nearby Corhampton and Warnford and this is supported by a charter of 963 AD by which King Edgar granted land at Ambersham (12 miles east of East Meon) to 'The Church of St. Andrew the Apostle at Meon'. The parishes of East Meon and nearby West Meon do not appear to have been separate at this date. In 1977 underpinning work to the North Transept of the present day church uncovered an ancient rubble wall approximately nine feet from the west wall near the tower. No archaeological study of this wall was carried out but it is possibly the remains of an earlier church on the site.

The church in Saxon times was part of the Diocese of Winchester which originally comprised the whole of the West Saxon kingdom. The Diocese was eventually broken up, All Saints has been in the Diocese of Portsmouth since 1927.

Until recent times Winchester Diocese was one of the most important sees in the whole of Europe. East Meon was granted to the monks of Winchester (those of St Swithun's priory) in the early twelfth century by Bishop Alwyn though he retained the management of the estate and the church and an associated tithing of land. The Bishops of Winchester had acquired the land themselves by royal charter.

As the Manorial overlords the Bishops of Winchester were merely adding to their extensive estates. In 1066 AD one third of Hampshire was in the hands of the clergy. By 1300 AD the Bishopric of Winchester included property near Taunton in Somerset as well as Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, Southwark in London and throughout Hampshire (see fig 1). Indeed such was the power of the Bishops of Winchester that their wealth can be favourably compared with the foremost Dukes of the Kingdom. Recent research suggests that apart from the manors in the Vale of Taunton the revenue produced mainly from arable production by the manor at East Meon was the highest of any manor in England during medieval times. The Diocese of Milan is thought to have been the only European Diocese more wealthy than Winchester in the Middle Ages which emphasises the importance of East Meon as a landholding of premier status.

This perhaps explains why after the Norman conquest of England in 1066 AD Bishop Walkelin chose to make East Meon the site of a palace which was to become his favourite residence. The palace included a deer park for hunting. The 500 acre park was on the downland located to the north of the church which is today still known as Park Hill even though it has long since ceased to be a wooded, enclosed park.

Walkelin was said to be the cousin of William I and was responsible for the start of work to build the new Winchester Cathedral in 1079 as a replacement for the earlier Saxon Minster. It is possible that Walkelin, who was a great parochial church builder, commissioned work to begin on the construction of the very large Church at East Meon.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The Church today seems incongruously large for a relatively small village. In the twelfth century however, Walkelin may have conceived of the new Church of All Saints as a symbol of the glory of God and the importance of the diocese. The great wealth at his disposal may have inspired him to begin work on the Church which was to become the parish church of the nearby Manor House (still in existence today and known as Court Farm as shown in fig 7) and within which both he and visiting dignitaries would be likely to worship.

The prestige of the Winchester Diocese is clearly demonstrated by the fact that William I was careful to be crowned at both Westminster and Winchester. It is known that later Kings were also crowned at Winchester and no doubt the Manor and Church at East Meon were regularly frequented by persons of national importance.

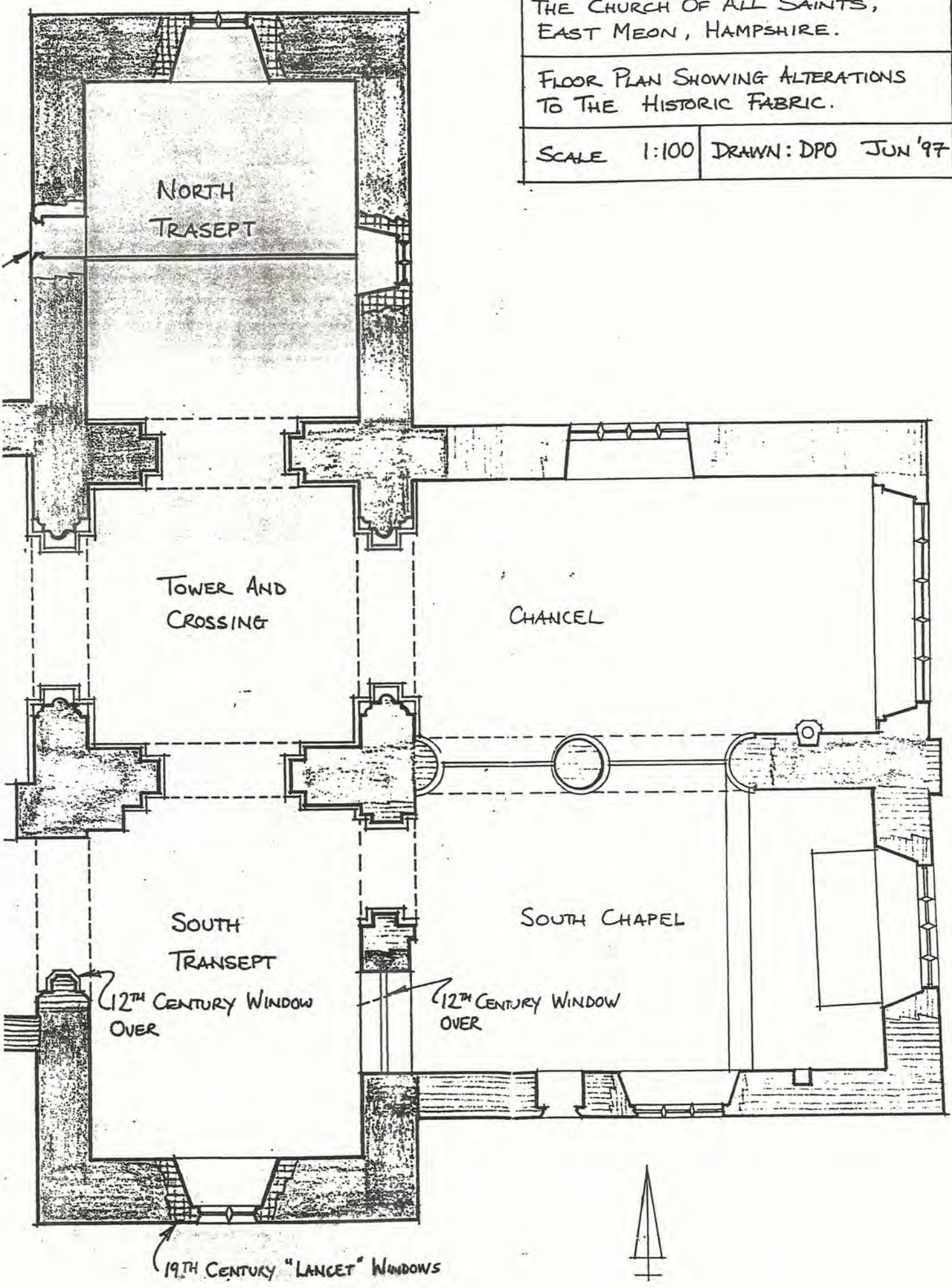
The Church was completed by approximately 1150 AD. It is uncertain how quickly the church was constructed but it was probably begun about 1080. Churches and Cathedrals are often built commencing at their Eastern end and the simple style of the arches of the tower crossing perhaps suggest an early date for their construction. The Chancel at the East end of the church was rebuilt in the fifteenth century so there is regrettably no evidence to confirm this theory. Clearly the hand building of the magnificent tower would have taken years to complete and this perhaps explains the relatively ornate decoration to the upper stages of the tower compared with that found at its base. The existing West door to the nave of the Church has features which suggest a later Norman date as does the main entrance door to the church in the South Aisle. It is possible that completion of the Church came during the episcopacy of Bishop Henry of Blois.

The Church was originally cruciform in plan and much of the twelfth century nave, tower and transepts have survived to the present day (see fig 3). In the thirteenth century the south aisle to the church was added as was the South Chapel and porch (see fig 4). Restoration work by the Architect Ewan Christian was begun in 1869 which raised the height of the roof ridges of the transepts and the chancel as well as remaking some of the window tracery and stone dressings to some of the doors. Between 1906 and 1922 Sir J.N. Comper was responsible for organising internal restoration of the church fittings (such as the choir stalls) and the remaking of the stained glass and the tracery to the East window of the chancel. He also inserted the North window of the Chancel.


THE CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS,
EAST MEON, HAMPSHIRE.


FLOOR PLAN SHOWING ALTERATIONS
TO THE HISTORIC FABRIC.

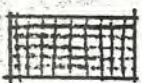
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KEY TO DATES OF ALTERATIONS.

12TH CENTURY 

13TH CENTURY 

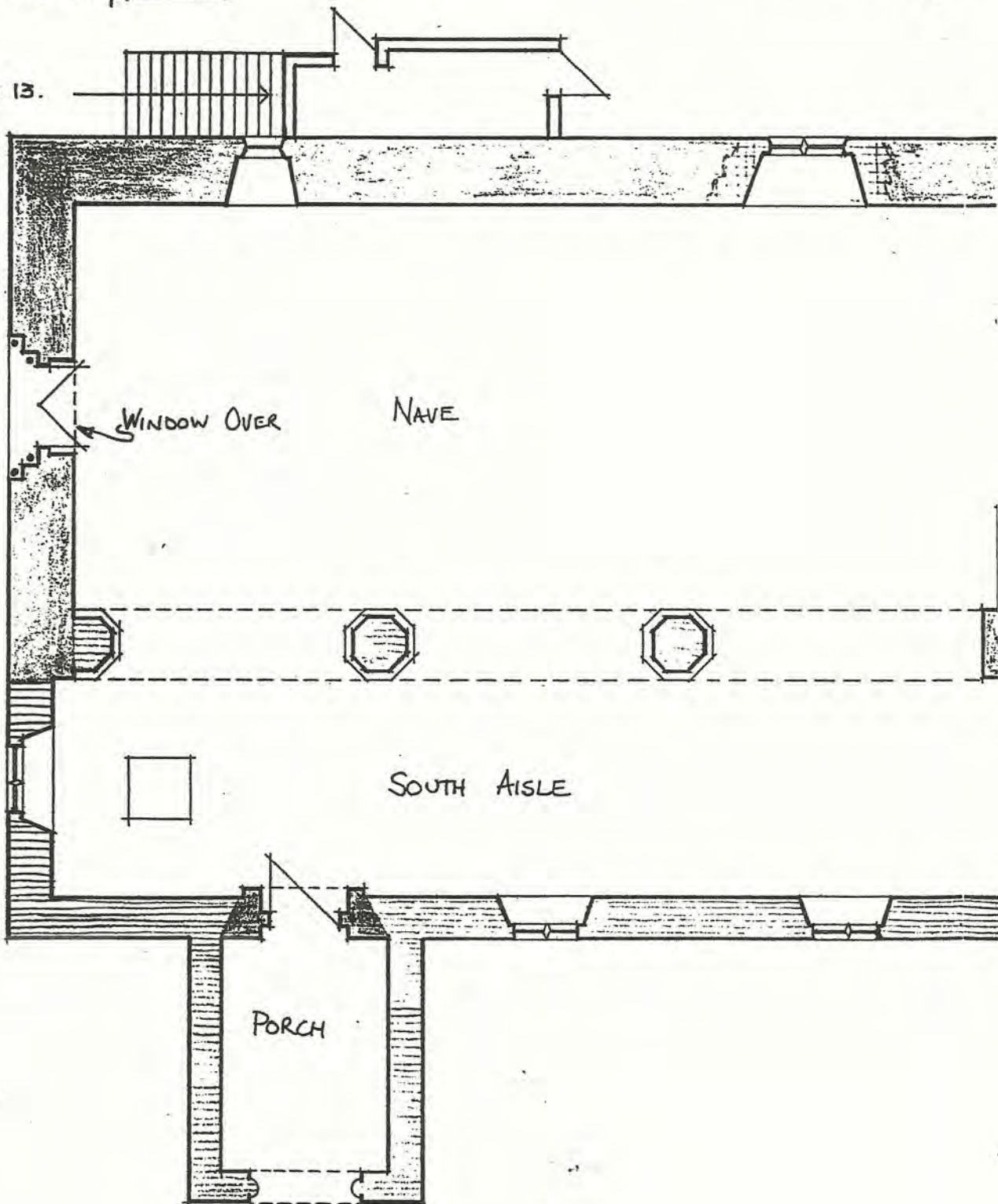
14TH CENTURY 

15TH CENTURY 

19TH & 20TH CENTURY 

WINDOW OVER ↗

DOWN 13. →



350

324

Chalk Pit

677

376

338

T
1028

679

338

676

353

669

T
1024

632

341

Stuice

VINN
LOT 3
(1915)

675

674

673

Walsley Meadow
Co. B

M e o n

683

Lot 4
685
Chalk
Lot 6
681

East Meon

672

VINN

LOT 2

1915

689

688

Kew's Meadow

Providence C.
(calvinist)
690

Garston Barn

671

702

Vineyard Hole

703

National S.
(Boys & Girls)

All Saints Church
(Vicarage)

Grave Yard

681

B.M. 367

377

Church Villa

Court Farm

706

Monastery
(Remains of)

700
Alms Houses

707

George Inn

Commercial
Barn

Mill House

HIGH STREET

713

Methodist
Chapel
(Primitive)

Zoar
Chapel
(Primitive)

712

714

Toll

698

697

696

Smithy
B.M. 362-2

716

Belmont Cottage

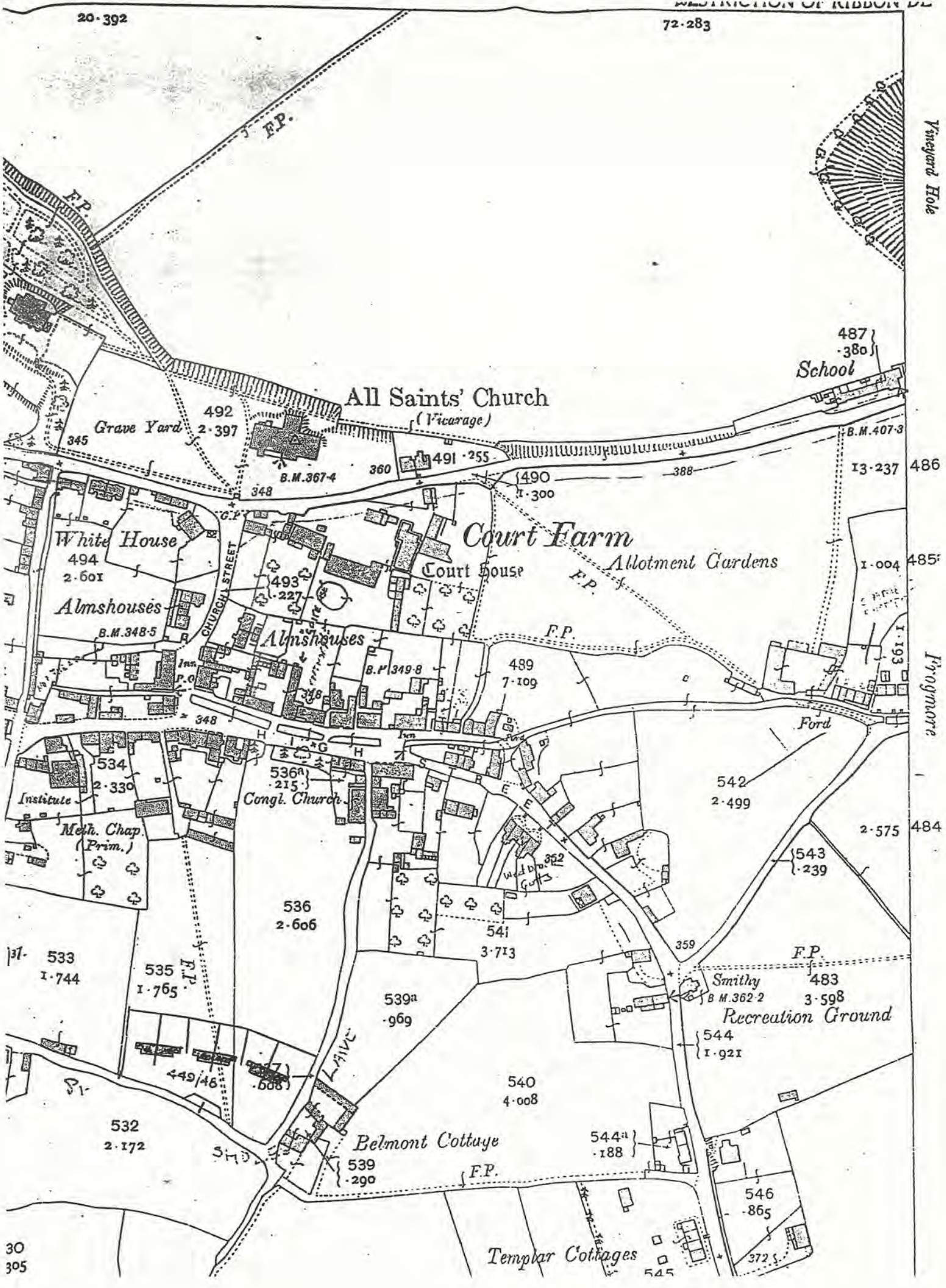
693

718

719

Vineyard Hole

Pygmore



487
380 }
School

All Saints' Church
(Vicarage)

492
2.397 }
Grave Yard

Court Farm

Court House

Allotment Gardens

White House
494
2.601

Almshouses
B.M.348-5

Almshouses
B.P.349-8

Congl. Church
536
215

Institute
534
2.330

Meth. Chap.
(Prim.)

542
2.499

2.575

543
239

533
1.744

535
1.765

536
2.606

539a
969

540
4.008

Smithy
B.M.362-2
483
3.598

Recreation Ground

544
1.921

532
2.172

Belmont Cottage
539
290

544a
188

546
865

Templar Cottages
545

4 6 7 5 0 0

4 6 7 6 0 0

4 6 7 7 0 0

4 6 7 8 0 0

4 6 7 9 0 0



4 6 7 5 0 0

4 6 7 6 0 0

4 6 7 7 0 0

4 6 7 8 0 0

4 6 7 9 0 0

0 468000 468100 468200 468300 468400



468000 468100 468200 468300 468400

24.449

310
2.008

B.M. 341.0

507ⁿ 1.092

338

503
1.515

498
1.628

341

SUNNY Vicarage
499 1.410

497
3.542

R i v e r

504
1.176

502
1.170

500
1.507

507
.638

505
2.299

M e o n

B.M. 343.6

506
.953

66/45(A)

501
1.136

496
2.206

495
1.701

East Meon

CHIDDEN CLOSE

520
19.812

521
2.415

524
8.093

526
4.730

525
.944

67/43

Garston Barn
29/42

519
.724

531
.667

527
.724

530
2.301

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the north transept of the church was used as a school. The floor in this area was raised by about seven feet and fuel was stored in the space so created below. The school moved along the road towards Petersfield in 1844 as is shown on the 1870 Ordnance Survey map (see fig 5). An interesting local folk tale has it that if you stand very quietly in the church at night you can still hear the whisper of the school childrens voices.

The churchyard today is larger than in earlier times. Land to the East of the church was purchased and the three medieval cottages upon it were demolished allowing the consecration of the enlarged churchyard in 1904. The positions of the cottages can be seen in the 1870 Ordnance Survey map extract (fig 5). They are shown as having been demolished in the later extract from the survey of 1909 (see fig 6)

The Church went with the manor until 1869 when Bishop Sumner passed them to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

A 'PERAMBULATION' AROUND THE CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS

There follows a detailed description of the Church and its principle features. These have been enumerated in topographic order but where possible an attempt has been made to combine this with the general order in which the main elements of the building were constructed.

THE EXTERIOR

THE TOWER

The tower is of twelfth century construction built of limestone ashlar blocks probably from the Quarries near Ryde on the Isle of White. A timber broach spire with lead covering surmounts the tower and is a later addition, probably originally dating from the thirteenth century though it was rebuilt as part of the restoration in 1869(see fig 101 for an illustration of the old spire). The leadwork is heavily patterned with rolls to prevent creeping of the lead on the very steep pitch of the spire. A gold weather vane on a wrought iron base decorates the pinnacle of the spire (see figs 8, 9 and 10)

The church might have been designed to feature a spire when it was first built. However, no medieval spire timbers survive. If a spire was present it is unlikely to have been to the current design but could have been of a simple early Norman pyramidal design similar to that found on the towers of Southwell Cathedral, Nottinghamshire (see fig 3 for a conjectural view of how this might have appeared in the twelfth century). The tower of nearby Winchester Cathedral does not have a spire though the tower is of a very similar Romanesque design.

Work on the Church and Cathedral would have been underway at the same time if the view is taken that All Saints was begun in Bishop Walkelin's episcopacy c1086. If this were true and if the same Master Mason was involved in the design of the two buildings it is then possible that no spire was built at All Saints until the thirteenth century.

The leadwork is generally in good condition but some minor patch repairs have been carried out in recent years.

The tower itself features a stone corbel table at the eaves of the spire with circular sound holes and segmental arched arcade with bell louvres on the succeeding stages below. Below the bell louvres a single row billet moulding forms a string course with a chevron patterned course above. The circular sound hole openings are decorated with mouldings featuring Romanesque zigzag motifs. The centre hole on all sides except the North has had a clock face inserted (see figs 10, 11 and 12). Presumably because the North elevation faces away from the village and is only overlooked by the hill behind it was not felt necessary to fit a clock on this side. A clock may have first been installed in the early nineteenth century at a lower level of the tower. This can be seen in fig 13 a drawing which dates from about 1800. The installation of the three clocks probably dates from the restoration of 1869.

The bell stage arcade comprises Romanesque round headed arches with two orders of shafts featuring stylised leaf capitals to the inner order and scalloped capitals to the outermost. This arrangement of capitals is identical to that found on the shafts at the west door to the nave. It is notable though that the bell louvre arches feature simple two dimensional zigzag decoration (see fig 12). Such decoration is usually of an earlier date than the three dimensional chevron pattern found on the West and South doors. This suggests that the tower was built before the nave and conforms with the common medieval practice of beginning church construction at the Eastern (Chancel) end and working toward the West (Nave) end.

The head mouldings of the louvres are round and decorated with a single billet mould. A simple string course joins the abacus of the adjoining shaft capitals at each corner of the tower. Nook shafts decorate each corner of the tower.

The pitched roof abutments to the tower of the Chancel, Transepts and Nave are neatly dressed with lead flashings and located beneath a stone moulding. This appears to be an intentional design feature but is somewhat incongruous as the pitched roofs of the Transepts and Chancel were not added until 1869. When the Architect, Ewan Christian, was restoring the church it appears he inferred from these diagonal mouldings that earlier pitched roofs were once a feature of All Saints. The medieval Bishops of Winchester as rectors of All Saints were responsible for the maintenance of the Chancel (the parishioners were normally responsible for maintenance of the nave) and kept building accounts as part of the manorial pipe rolls.

Once such fifteenth century roll records that a plumber was employed for six days to roof and mend the chancel so it seems likely that at this date a shallow pitched lead covered roof was a feature of this part of the Church.

It may be that these diagonal mouldings were simply a twelfth century decoration. Similar mouldings are found on the tower of Tewkesbury Abbey; over the entrance door of St Mary's, Margam and to the tower of St David's Cathedral, both in Wales. All three churches date from the twelfth century.

THE TRANSEPTS

The transepts form the perpendicular projecting 'wings' of the cruciform church and face south toward the village and north toward Park Hill.

The transepts formed part of the original Norman Church and are contemporary with the nave. They are constructed of flint facings to a mortared rubble core with some ashlar blocks on the corners where quoins are used to form a neat ninety degree angle which would be difficult to achieve with nodular flints

South Transept

The roof of the south transept is covered with slates and crested stone ridge tiles. It dates only from the 1869 restoration. Three lancet windows were added to the gable of the south transept at this time (see fig 14). The gable itself did not exist prior to 1869 but was formed when the new roof was put on to a higher ridge line. This can clearly be seen by the change from the large and irregular flint courses at low level and the smaller, predominantly knapped flints which have been used to form the gable wall (knapping involves splitting and sometimes squaring off the flint to expose the silicate core of the nodule for decorative use)

A stone string course is located beneath the lancet windows and below this there is an extensive area of 'random rubble' limestone which has been 'tooled' to give a roughened surface. This may have been inserted into the wall when the gable was built up, possibly as a stronger bearing material for the high gable and roof above.

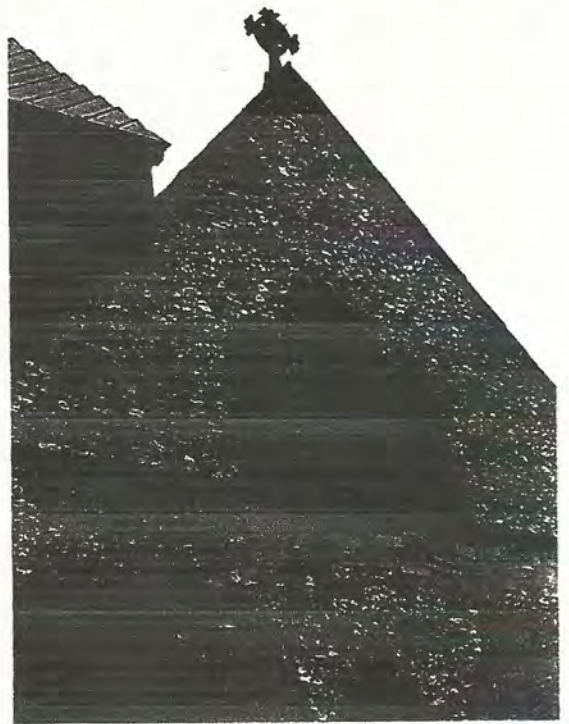
The verge end of the roof forms a stone parapet with Celtic style cross finial and nailhead pattern to the exposed arris of the end stone.

The lower window is an early fourteenth century insertion judging from its 'Y' shaped tracery and is similar to a window in the north wall of the nave. It is unusual in having a diagonal arched head which is almost Saxon in style (see fig 15)

13



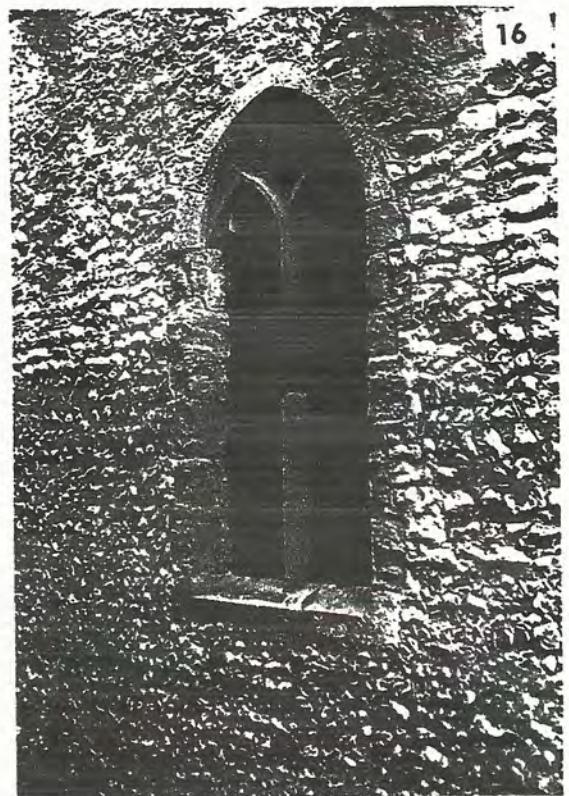
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15



16



17



North Transept

The North Transept is similar in most respects to the south transept, however it lacks the three lancets in the gable. The North facing window is of early fourteenth Century design featuring a pointed stone arch with Y pattern tracery. The stone dressings to the reveals of the window are heavily weathered (see fig 16).

The rear of the east window is of a similar date but has modern tracery (see fig 17). The west window is a Victorian Gothic insertion with geometric tracery. The Gothic arched door beneath this window was inserted in 1906 as part of J.N.Comper's restoration (see fig 24).

The roof is again of Victorian construction and features green Westmoreland slates which are not of local origin.

The walls are of flint facings to a mortar rubble core with stone quoins as for the South Transept. A more random pattern of flint is apparent at low level to the west wall with newer coursed flint at high level, probably an area of wall rebuilt when the roof was raised in 1869.

Rainwater disposal is, as for the entire church, via grey painted, square section, cast iron downpipes featuring the 1869 date of the church restoration.

The east wall has a brick insertion suggesting that some stitching together of the wall was necessary in the past, possibly in 1977 when this part of the church was underpinned.

THE NAVE

The fabric of the Nave is generally contemporary with that of the tower and transepts, though perhaps of a slightly later date. It is interesting to note that the Nave is slightly wider than the tower and Chancel. This could possibly be a result of following the earlier plan of a Nave and Chancel church on the site to which a tower and transepts were later added. However, if this was the case no material evidence exists to confirm this.

The roof is pitched with a lead covering divided into rolls. The west gable verge again features stone copings and 'kneeler' stones at the foot of the sloping parapet. A cross finial similar to those on the transepts is located at the west end (see fig 18).

The walls of the nave are again of flint with Bembridge limestone and Lower Greensand stone quoins at the external corners. The flints have been repointed with a 'strap' pointing finish.

The west elevation is graced by a magnificent Romanesque semi-circular arched door with four orders to the arch, the outer plain, second featuring nook shafting and torus moulding between square fillets, third with nook shaft and a double row of chevron moulding and the fourth with plain facings as for the inner face of the door (see fig 19).

The shafts themselves have leaf capitals to the second order and scalloped capitals to the third. The abacus of the shafts has square upper edges and a hollow chamfer below (see fig 20).

The west window is of three lights with modern tracery in a fifteenth century style. The window itself is of fourteenth century origin (see fig 21).

The north east window is of a similar design and date as that in the south wall of the south transept (see fig 22) It replaced an original twelfth century Norman window, traces of the jambs of which can still be seen internally. It also has an unusual straight sided pointed arch. The stone jambs have suffered heavy weathering externally.

The north west window is an original Romanesque opening with semi-circular arch and plain limestone dressings to jambs and cill (see fig 23).

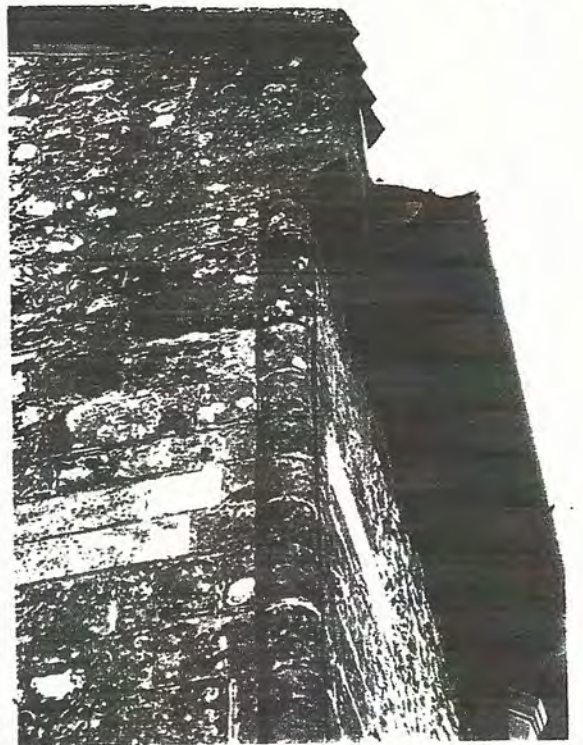
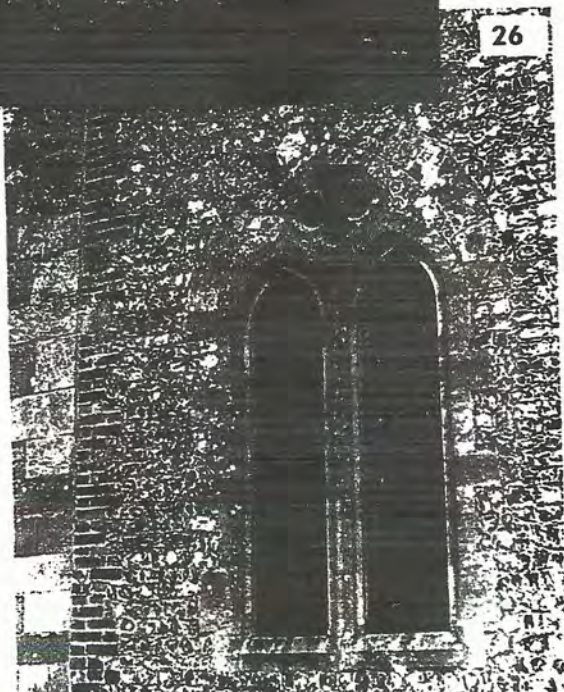
On the north elevation a single storey boiler house was constructed in the late nineteenth century. Its walls are constructed of flint and it has a pitched roof covered with felt which is split and in poor condition requiring replacement. The chimney stack is again of flint and has a large, repointed, crack down the centre which is possibly the result of a chimney fire (see fig 24).

It appears from Christian's 1869 drawings that a small window with a square lintol was removed during the restoration (see fig 98)

THE SOUTH AISLE

The South Aisle was added in about 1230 when the South Chapel was also added. The roof is of a monopitch design but is covered in lead similar to the nave. The walls are again predominately of flint with limestone quoins to the south west corner which includes a reset nook shaft, probably repositioned from the original south west corner of the nave (see fig 27). Some repairs using ashlar blocks have been carried out in an ad hoc manner in the past. At low level to the south elevation the masonry has been pointed with a galleting detail. This features small pieces of a glassy material which have been inserted into the mortar as a decorative feature (see fig 25). Galleting with flint pieces has been carried out to the west elevation.

A simple memorial wall tablet dedicated to Weekes family is located centrally to the south elevation (see fig 25).



The west window dates from 1869 but is in a thirteenth century plate tracery style (see fig 26).

The windows of the south elevation are two pairs of twin lancets with late thirteenth century plate tracery. The south east window has a quatrefoil in the head and a flatter arch which may be a result of rebuilding the window when the quatrefoil was added.

The south door of the Aisle is similar in age and design to the Romanesque west door of the Nave. It is however, simpler with only three orders. The inner order is plain with a square impost, the second has a pair of shafts and leaf capitals with semicircular chevron moulding, the outer is again plain (see fig 28). The whole door has been reset from its original position on in the south wall of the original nave as can be seen by the projection of the inner face of the door arch beyond the inner face of the Aisle wall. This has been the result of the nave walls being thicker than the Aisle walls into which the door has now been inserted.

There are faint remnants of early painting of the chevron moulding of the arch in bands of yellow and red. Sadly this has been stripped away, possibly at the time of the reformation, so that only a trace remains today.

THE PORCH

The south elevation of the nave features a single storey porch with double pitched roof covered with slates, crested ridge tiles, stone parapet and flint walls as previously described for the nave. The main south elevation is faced with ashlar blocks. It dates from the thirteenth century and so goes in date with the aisle. It is open to a doorway and steps at its south end (see fig 29).

The pointed, two centred, arch head features a hood moulding with stops at the ends. The moulding has been remodelled from an earlier squared label moulding and semi-circular arch as is shown in Christian's drawings and the 1800 print (see figs 13 and 97).

The south doorway has a single pair of shafts with simple squared, moulded capitals

At high level in the gable there is a stone inscribed with the figure 1812 though the significance of this is not clear.

The feet of the oak rafters are open at the eaves and are in good condition.

The ridge at the gable end is decorated by a stone cross added in 1869.

SOUTH CHAPEL

The south chapel dates from the same approximate date as the south aisle. Its roof is again of lead but in a shallow double pitched design having been converted from its earlier mono-pitched construction in 1869. The main walls are again of flint dressings with strap pointing (probably carried out as part of the nineteenth century restoration) to a mortar and rubble core. There is a gothic style door in the south elevation but this is a replacement for an earlier door which was also renewed in 1869 (see fig 30). The earlier door is shown in Ewan Christian's drawings as having a semi-circular arch and it is interesting to speculate whether this was a reset Romanesque door that had been inserted in the newer chapel wall in a similar fashion to the south door of the nave (see fig 97). At a higher level in the south elevation is a fifteenth century window featuring panel tracery of a perpendicular gothic pattern.

The east window is again of fifteenth century date, possibly installed at the same time as the south window and again has tracery of a perpendicular design (see fig 31).

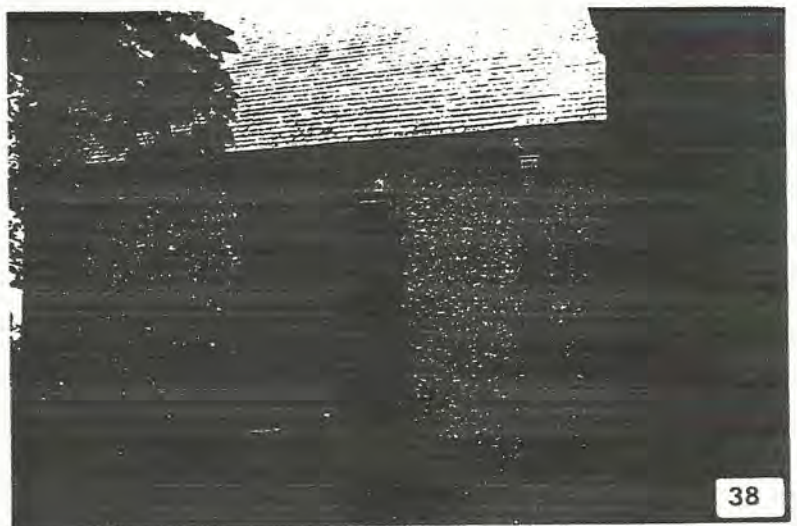
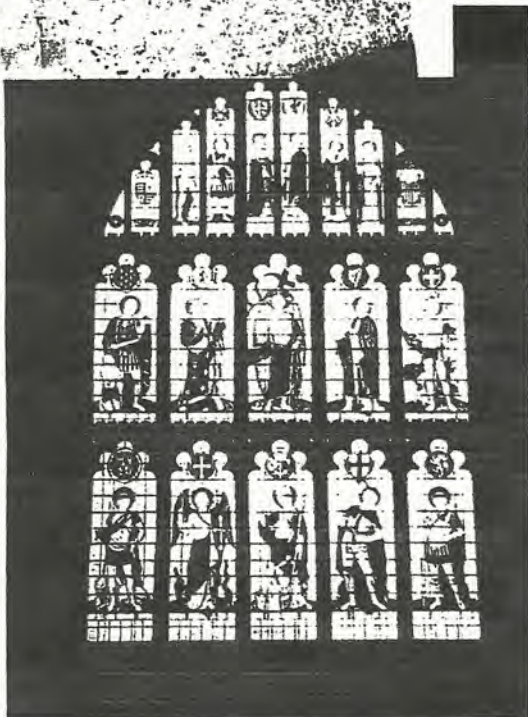
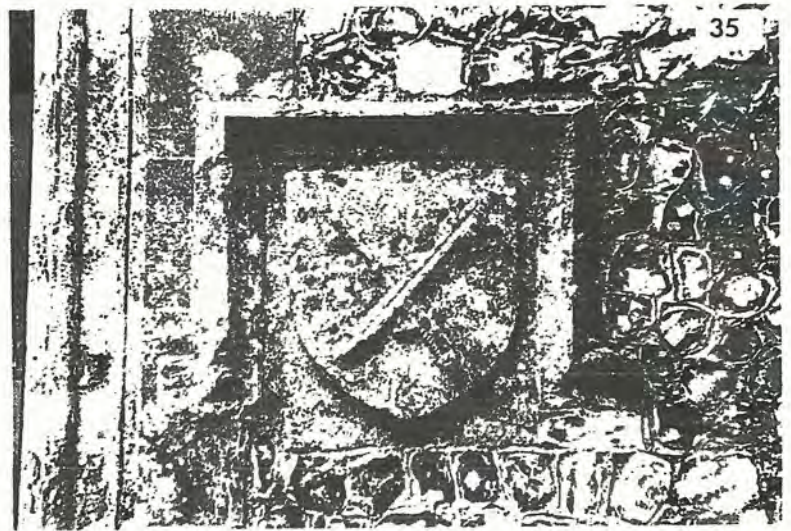
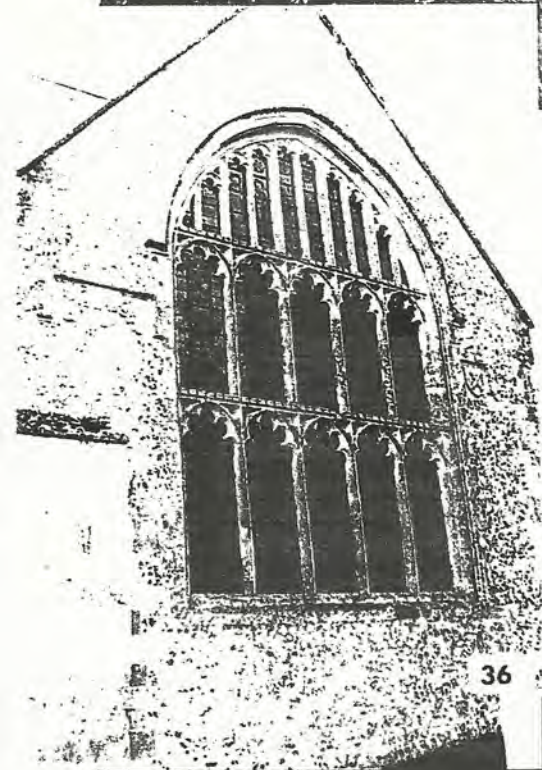
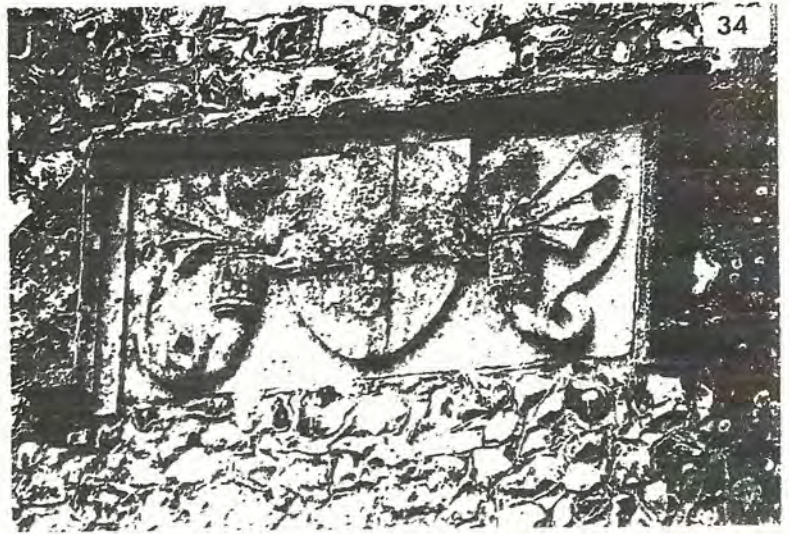
The print dating from 1800 displayed in the church shows a buttress at the south east corner of the chapel and evidence for this is apparent in the double row of stone quoins at this point (see fig 32). It is possible that this was removed prior to Christian's alterations since it does not feature in his drawings of the church 'in its present state' (i.e. before restoration).

THE CHANCEL

The Chancel is again of flint wall construction and has a slate covered, double pitched roof which is similar to the roofs of the transepts and was also changed to its present style as part of the 1869 restoration. Prior to this date it featured a shallow pitched, lead covered roof which is probably the design which was chosen as part of the complete rebuilding of the chancel in the fifteenth century. The chancel roughly follows the line of the original Norman Chancel. The remains of the original wall are visible to the north elevation where they form a plinth with a weathering at low level and follow a more northerly line (see fig 33).

It is unclear why the chancel was rebuilt. Since it is likely that it was the first part of the church to be built it may have become outdated featuring as it probably did small Norman windows.

The coat of arms belonging to Bishop Langton and the Diocese of Winchester can be seen either side of the east window (figs 34 and 35 respectively). It is likely that these were added in honour of the Bishop, who as rector would have been responsible for repairs to the chancel.



An additional buttress to the north east corner is shown in the 1869 drawings (see fig 99). This appears to have been removed during the restoration when a drainage gulley was formed to channel water away from the church presumably because it suffered flooding from Park Hill which encroaches closely upon the church at this point.

The east window (see fig 36) has perpendicular tracery and stained glass to a design by Comper from 1921 which he appears to have based on an earlier window shown in Christian's drawings (see figs 99 and 108). This twentieth century design was intended to commemorate the end of the Great War and to honour those who fell. The panels represent (shown in fig 37 from left to right and down when viewed internally):

Top row

The Royal Arms; Joan of Arc; Russia, St. Vladimir; St. Edward, St. Edward;
Wales, St. David; Serbia, St. Methodius; St. Catherine; USA

Middle Row

France (Ancient), St. Martin; Scotland, St. Andrew; The Risen Saviour;
Ireland, St. Patrick; Italy, St. Sebastian;

Bottom Row

Romania, St. Adrian; St. Michael, St. Michael (for the Air force); Royal Navy, St. Nicholas (for the Navy); England, St. George (for the Army); Belgium, St. Quentin.

Comper's design replaces that proposed by Christian in his 1869 restoration drawings which included entirely different geometric tracery, assuming that this window was installed.

The north window was added to admit more light to the chancel as part of the alterations carried out by Comper between 1906 and 1921. This has a flat arch with three lights, very simple mullions and tracery forming shallow three centred arches only. The stained glass is supported on a ferramenta of saddle bars (see fig 37).

THE INTERIOR

THE TOWER

The tower consists of three stages, the bell chamber, the ringing chamber and the crossing.

The bell chamber at the top houses ten bells. They were repositioned in a new bell frame in 1890 when new ninth and tenth bells were added. The original timber frame is retained (with new corbels to support the timber beams) at a higher level above the new frame which includes steel beams to take the increased load.

The stone tower gives a stable ringing platform but some pointing over the arches of the bell louvres has been necessary, particularly to those on the north and south sides which have also had the stones of the string course replaced. This localised cracking on opposite sides may have been due to the bells all swinging in the same direction as part of the old frame design causing resonance and swaying of the tower.

The bell stage is reached by ladder from the ringing chamber(see fig 39). This room has the bell ropes hanging centrally and is adorned with rules lists for the ringers and commemorative plaques for various achievements. These relate to ringing complex 'changes' of many hundreds of peels over very long periods of time.

There is also a nineteenth century plaque (complete with bell ringers graffiti) with rules that include the ringing of the 'Saints Bell'. There is no bell of this name at All Saints and it is probable that this refers to a bell from a Church in Petersfield (see fig 40).

At high level in this room are the shuttered windows of the tower which have now been internalised when the new roof was added in 1869. Fig 41 clearly shows that they are useless now as they are obstructed by the rafters.

The ringing floor was added as part of the 1869 restoration but a medieval door gives access to the timber landing and stairs that descend to the south chapel (see fig 42). This means of access is a modern addition, a ladder may have been used in the past. The antique age of the doorway lends weight to the theory that there was once a rood loft over the crossing rather than a ringing chamber. There are certainly score marks on the stones of the crossing arches indicating that the bells were once rung from ground level.

At ground level there are four Romanesque arches forming the crossing. The west and east arches are semi-circular and of three orders with plain stone vouchoirs (see fig 43). The inner order is decorated with half round shafts and the middle features nook shafting. The shafts terminate in scalloped capitals with the abacus extended to form a decorative string course that mirrors that externally at the bell stage (see fig 43). Some resetting of the vouchoirs in the arches of the crossing also indicates that there may once have been a rood loft.

The ceiling of the crossing is formed by the timbers and floor boards of the ringing chamber complete with trap door for lowering the bells through when they need repair.