

CENTURY BY CENTURY . . . . .

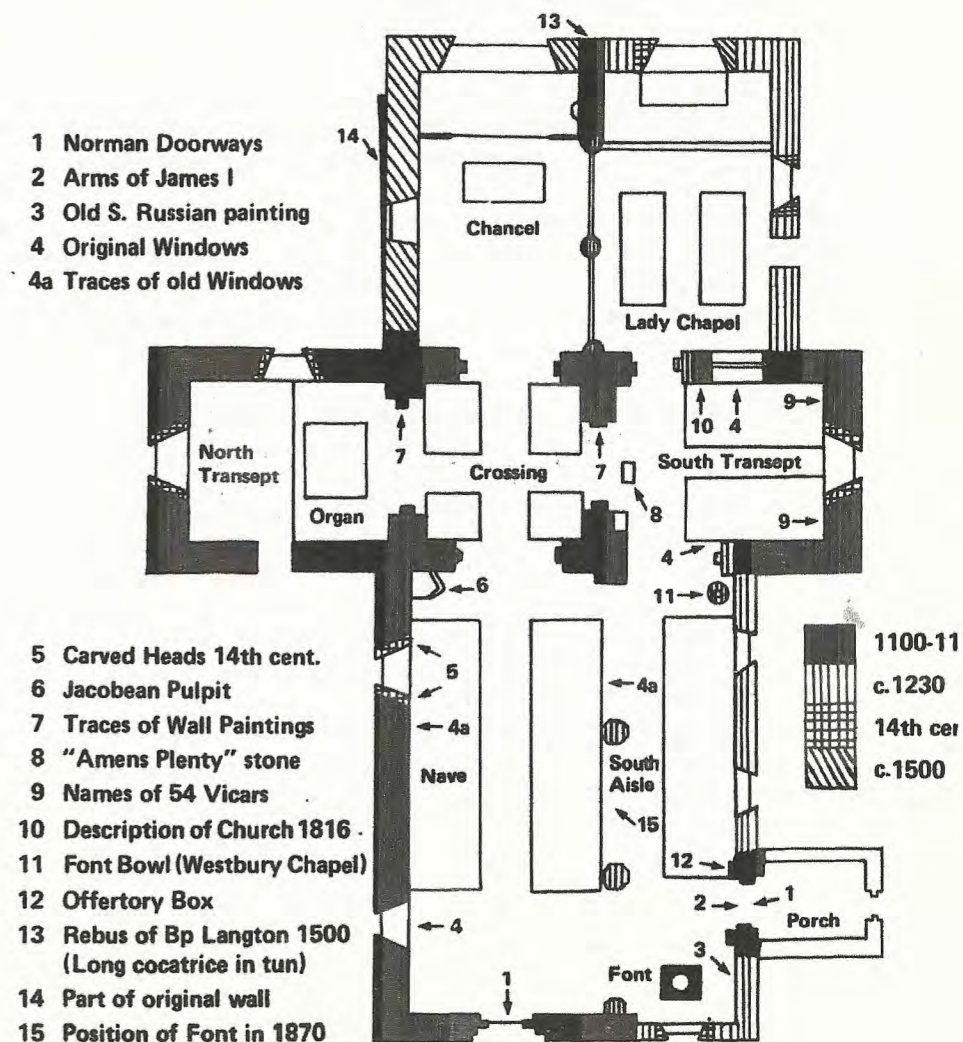
- XII c1100 the cruciform Church being built.  
c1150 completed. The Tournai Font.
- XIII c1230 Lady Chapel, Arcade & Aisle added. (EE)
- XIV Larger windows in the Nave
- XV Stone Pulpit (exquisite workmanship) to 1870  
c1500 Chancel & Lady Chapel rebuilt (perp.)
- XVII 1613 James I coat of Arms.  
1644 Damage by Roundheads.
- XVIII Rough Galleries S. Aisle & W. end; "mean" porch hides  
W. Doorway. N. Transept walled off for School (see 1816  
article framed in S. Transept)
- XIX 1870 Restoration  
New high pitched roofs to Chancel & Chapel (as before  
1500) & Transepts. Nave Roof; Spire repaired: Galleries  
removed; floors tiled; porch rebuilt; new stone pulpit;  
Altar at East Window, Organ between Chancel & Chapel,  
Choir stalls in Chancel; Font to present place from  
middle of arcade; N. Transept opened for vestry and  
children's pews. Smaller E Window.  
1890 Floor to Belfry above Crossing; bells rehung on new  
frame below original wh. remains. 2 new bells, 2 recast –  
now eight.
- XX 1906 – 1922 Restoration (Sir Ninian Comper)  
Floors down to original level and paved. Air Heating.  
New High Altar further W. Organ to N. Transept. Oak  
Screens, lectern & Priest's stalls. New East Window on pre  
1870 lines, 1912. Jacobean pulpit from Holy Trinity,  
Minorities (city of London). Altar & alabaster Reredos in  
Lady Chapel. Riddle Posts (4 Evangelists) & Altar furnis-  
ings. Lych Gate 1906. New Window in Chancel 1913.  
Most of the stained glass.

Since 1957 there has been a continuing process of restoration work under W.H.R. Blacking & Kenneth Wiltshire. The S. Aisle & N. & S. Transept roofs, extensive consolidation of walls & renewal of masonry, new gutters, new heating system, pointing, etc., have already been done.

Work costing many thousands of pounds needs to be done over the next five years including recovering the Lady Chapel and Chancel roofs. Our population is only 1000 – please help them to continue their magnificent efforts to preserve this House of God for the generations to come.

# EAST MEON

Hampshire





## GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

have made East Meon the sort of Church it is. Bronze Age Tumuli; the Iron Age farm on Little Butser (2½m), now working again, with its tale of prosperous farmers and organised society in 300 BC; the Iron Age fortress of Old Winchester Hill (2½m), ceremonial and market centre for many homesteads; the Celtic words from which "Meon" – upland pastures and "Coombe" come; nearby Villas and the full sized head of a Romano-British statue found in the Parish; a field called "Eadens" (still "Ytendene" in 1293 – the Jute's field) and Saxon charters – all these tell of a well defined neighbourhood from time immemorial richly endowed by Nature and the scene of much skill and hard work.

View the scene from Park Hill above the Church (footpath); visit Butser and Old Winchester Hill; visualise considerable forest and a deeper river; be aware of the Continent, the Channel, the lines of the Downs leading to Salisbury Plain; that great centre of an ancient civilisation, East Meon has been of greater importance than it is today.

The Celts remained when the Jutes came and called themselves "the Meonwara". The rising power of Wessex had its effect. In 824 Ecgbert (to be the first King of all England) gave lands here to Wulfheard, Aeldorman and soldier of renown. Winchester, only 16m away, was now to be England's capital for nearly 300 years. No trace remains of our Saxon Church.

King Alfred willed the Manor (a whole hundred) to his youngest son and in 1047 Bp Alwin left it to his successors for the benefit of the Monks of St. Swithun, the New Minster. Bp Stigand and the monks supported Harold in 1066 so, when Stigand died in prison, the Conqueror seized the Manor.

In 1086 (Doomsday Bk) William's cousin, Bp Walkelin was holding only the Church, a mill and 22 hides. The Bishop was building Winchester Cathedral near the New Minster whose monks took it down and built Hyde Abbey in 1110. He had a palace

here where our Court House now stands and may have begun building our Church before he died in 1098. Bp Henry of Blois (the Conqueror's grandson) saw the completion of the fine Tower c1150 with its stonework which still looks almost new today. Design and workmanship were superb. He gave the famous Tournai Font (of which there is a full size replica in the Victoria & Albert Museum).

These walls have seen many splendid scenes and great personages – and many generations of villagers who honoured God here – as we shall continue to do.

1154 King Henry II confirmed Stephen's grant of the manor to the Bishops of Winchester who held it continuously (except 1649-60) until 1869 when the Court House finally ceased to be the centre of a great agricultural complex and of law and order.

In 1189 John is said to have married Isabella here and to have lived at the Court House until he came to the Throne. Park Hill is all that remains of the Deer Park.

Bishop William of Wykeham rebuilt the Court House in the late 14th century. In his will he left our Church a Chalice and Breviary.

Queen Elizabeth leased the Manor in 1581; she stayed here in 1592 en route for Normandy.

In March 1644 Waller's troops met reinforcements here and camped before the Battle of Cheriton; doubtless our Church was badly damaged at this time. Hopton's Royalist cavalry had them in view from Old Winchester Hill. There were local skirmishes and deaths.



## EAST MEON CHURCH

### LOOKING AT THE NORMAN FONT

The Font is made from a single block of Marble from quarries on the banks of the Scheldt at Tournai (between Mons and Menin) Probably the gift of Bishop Henry of Blois (grandson of William the Conqueror) it is an important work of art – there is a full sized replica in the Victoria & Albert Museum – so please do not touch it. About 1150 it was brought here 500 miles by rivers and sea.

Study the detail of the unique carvings.

Start at the West (by the window). Here the flat Earth on its pillars and composite creatures, fish, reptile, animal and bird all in one.

Now go clockwise. Here is a “strip cartoon” (1) God the Father creates man. (2) He creates woman while Adam sleeps. (3) The Old Serpent offers Eve the forbidden fruit. (4) Adam eats it.

On the third face there is (1) A romanesque palace – the Gate of Paradise. (2) An Angel bars the way. (3) The Angel teaches Adam to dig and Eve to spin.

On the Fourth side the flat Earth and its pillars again. Now fierce dogs chase birds – enmity and death are here.

Now look at the top. All round the perfect circle are the Vine and the branches bearing fruit symbolising the life in Christ into which we are born by Baptism. At opposite corners, Doves drink from vessels with a Cross above. They probably represent Holy Communion, the other great Sacrament by which the Life in Christ is sustained.

So it is when people are being Christened here that the Font is really complete. Babies were usually immersed in the early days so the Bowl is very deep. The original lining probably went for bullets when Waller’s troops were here in March 1644; damaged then. It was probably then that the Font was damaged.

There are Tournai marble Fonts of this type at Winchester Cathedral, St. Michael’s, Southampton, St. Mary Bourne, Lincoln Cathedral, Ipswich and Thornton Curtis. There are some in Belgium and Northern France – now mostly, it is understood, in Museums.