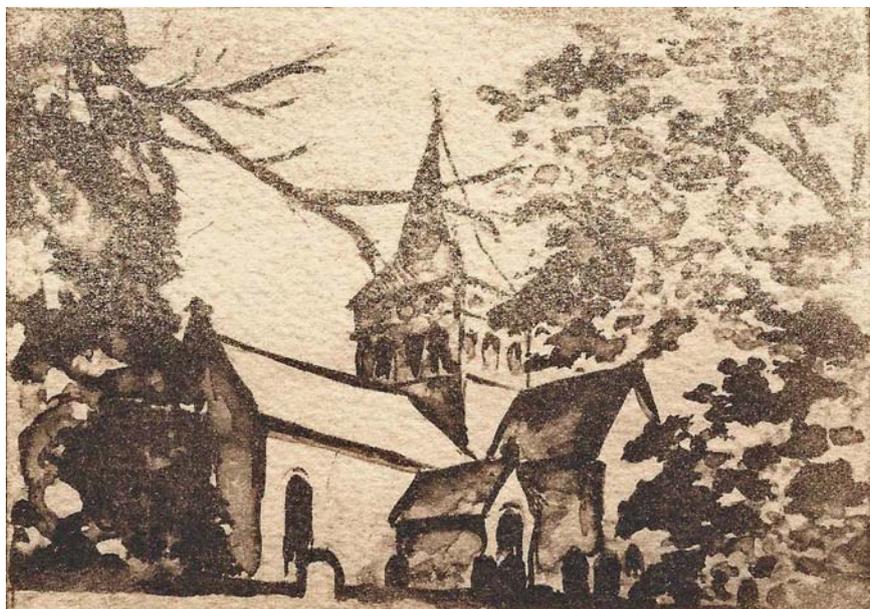


A Short History of All Saints

Michael Blakstad, East Meon History Group, October 2017



All Saints' Church, etching by Tricia Blakstad

Page	Contents
2	<i>Introduction</i>
3	<i>Saxon East Meon</i>
4	<i>Domesday Village</i>
	<i>The church building</i>
	❖ <i>12th century</i>
6	❖ <i>13th century</i>
8	<i>Tithes and taxes</i>
9	<i>The church in the community</i>
10	<i>Church premises</i>
11	<i>The church yard</i>
	<i>The Reformation</i>
13	<i>Monarchy and Parliament</i>
14	<i>Puritans</i>
15	<i>Nineteenth century</i>
16	<i>Twentieth and twenty-first centuries</i>

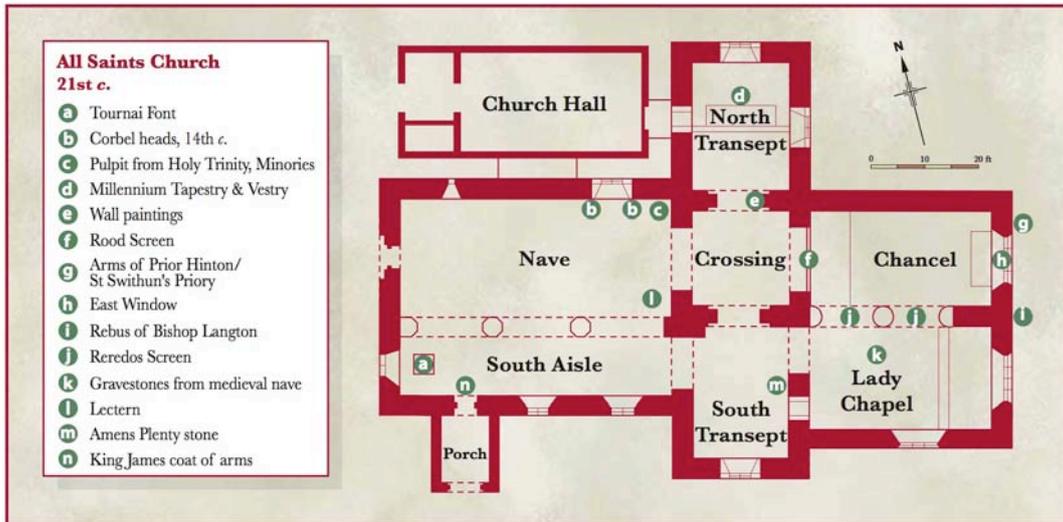


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Introduction

This history of the church building of All Saints is set in the context of the social history of the parish, taken from a variety of sources. Firstly, the history of All Saints written by the Reverend Terry Loudon, vicar from 1996 to 2014, who gave a talk on this subject in 2010¹. Secondly, among other books and articles by historians, the monumental *History of the English Parish* by N.J.G.Pounds, which describes the development of church buildings and parish life². Thirdly, research reports by members of East Meon History Group, available as PDFs on www.eastmeonhistory.net.



All Saints' Church in the 21st century, floorplan with items mentioned in this paper

Saxon East Meon

Christianity was probably brought to the Meon Valley in the 7th century by one of two missionaries. Bishop Birinus, who came to Kent with Augustine of Canterbury, may have come to the Meon Valley as part of the Jutish colonisation of Kent, the Isle of Wight and then up the Meon Valley; Wilfrid, the more likely candidate, was a pugnacious bishop from Lindisfarne, forced to go south on a mission to convert its Saxons.

East Meon may have been a *myinster*, a form of *monasterium*, a church served by a community of celibates rather than a single priest³: they lived under communal rules and served as hubs for networks of churches and bases from which missionaries set out to convert other communities to Christianity⁴. Minsters were often patronised by kings and nobles, who offered security and recruits, the Saxon charter of 970 AD recounts that King Edgar granted '*that famouse place which the locals have always called Aet Meon*' to his grandmother Eadgifu, which suggests that it was a minster; there are no traces of the original Saxon church.

¹ Rev Terry Loudon *History of All Saints*: <http://www.eastmeonhistory.net/church/>

² N.J.G.Pounds *A History of the English Parish* Cambridge University Press 2000

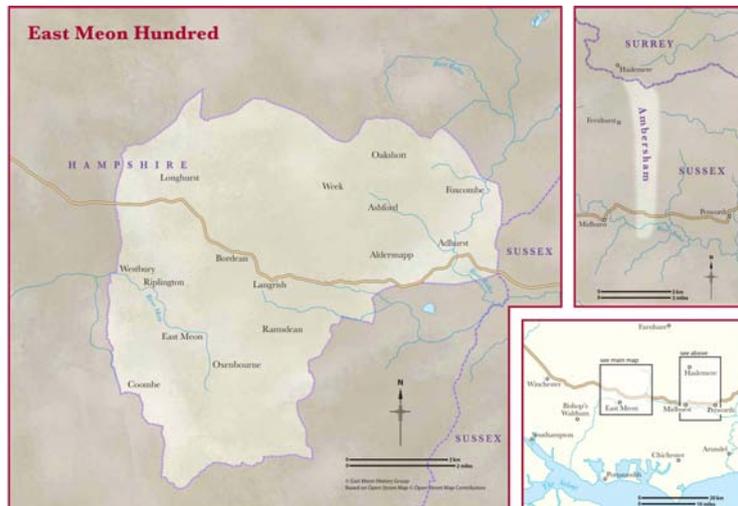
³ Yorke, Barbara, *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages* A map on p 183, taken from *Minsters and Parish Churches*, ed J.Blair, has three minster churches in our area, Titchfield, Bishop's Waltham and East Meon

⁴ Crane, Nicholas *The making of the British Landscape* Weidenfeld & Nicholson 2016 p256

Domesday village



A reconstruction of East Meon at the time of the Domesday Book, now at La Musee de la Tapisserie, Bayeux



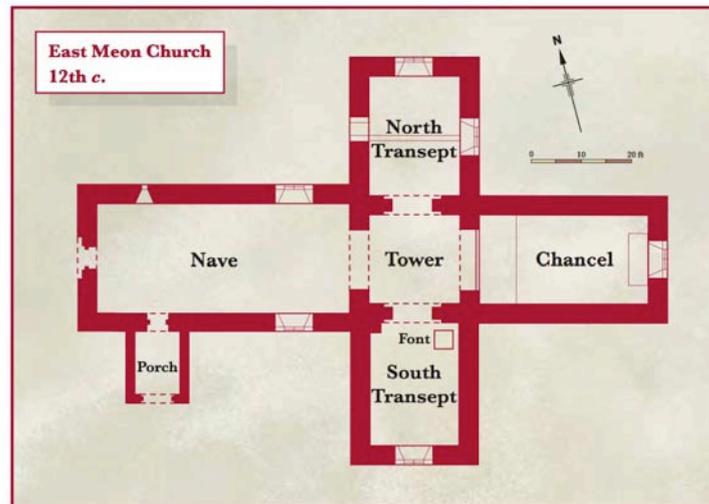
East Meon Hundred showing tithings including Ambersham in West Sussex (described as 'part of Hampshire').

By the time of Domesday, East Meon was the administrative and ecclesiastical centre of a large area. The Hundred of East Meon included the tithings of Langrish, Oxenbourne, Ramsdean, Coombe, Riplington, Steep, Froxfield and, over the Sussex border, Ambersham, located between Midhurst and Petworth (it was described as 'part of Hampshire'). There were two manors, Meon Manor and Meon Ecclesia, comprising the largest Hampshire estate of the Diocese of Winchester⁵. Finally, All Saints was the parish church or *ecclesia*, of the same geographic area: Froxfield, Steep and Ambersham had *capellae*, chapelries, and St Mary in the Field at South Farm was a chapel of ease ... at Westbury, St Nicholas was probably a private chapel of the Fauconberg family.

⁵ A more comprehensive account of East Meon as recorded in the Domesday Book is contained another paper: 'Medieval farming in East Meon', available as a PDF at <http://www.eastmeonhistory.net/farming-in-the-valley-project/research/medieval-farming/>.

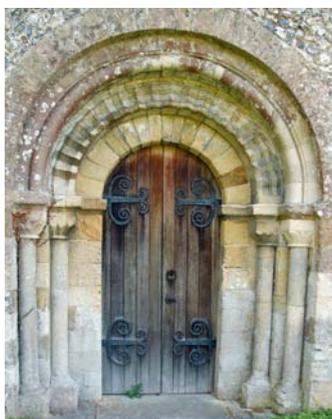
The church building

12th century

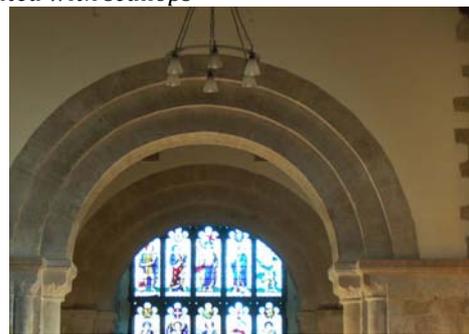
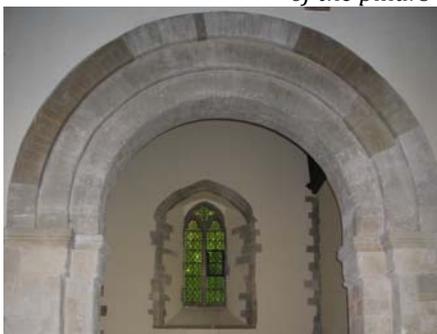


Floor plan of the church in the 12th century.

The oldest parts of the church we see today were planned in the 11th century and completed in the 12th, largely under Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester (1129 - 1171). It was cruciform in shape, consisting of nave, chancel and transept; the Victoria County History suggests that *'the excess of width of the nave over the chancel and transepts, unusual in a cruciform building, points to the former existence of a nave and chancel church'*. In other words, it must have been built on the footprint of a substantial Saxon church.



Romanesque arches of west doorway and bell openings in tower with zig-zag carvings; the capitals of the pillars are decorated with scallops



Less decorated arches in the crossing, leading to north transept and chancel

Of the 12th century building, rounded arches with zig-zag carvings and capitals decorated with scallops can be seen on the west door and in the bell-openings of the tower (which at this stage did not have a steeple). The arches in the crossing are simpler, with triple pillars and scallops again carved on the capitals. The inner door to the porch is also from this period, and Pevsner suggests it may have been moved there from the south wall when the south aisle was added⁶.

All Saints has been described as one of the finest examples in Southern England of Romanesque architecture, and it has been compared with another of Henry of Blois' creations, St Cross in Winchester. Henry was the brother of King Stephen, Chancellor of England and the richest and most powerful man in the country after the king. He gave East Meon its great treasure, the Tournai Font, which was originally placed in the south transept but was moved to its present position when the south aisle was later added. It is usually believed that the font was carved in Tournai, in what is now Belgium, shipped across the channel and up the river Meon; however, Nicholas Riall points out that Henry established a workshop in Winchester to which he imported Tournai craftsmen; it may have been carved there and carted to East Meon⁷.



The Tournai Font, originally placed in the south transept. Left, pillars support the earth, below, Adam and Eve are created, and Eve eats the forbidden fruit. Next page, they are banished from the garden and taught to dig and sow. (Photographs by John Mackinlay)



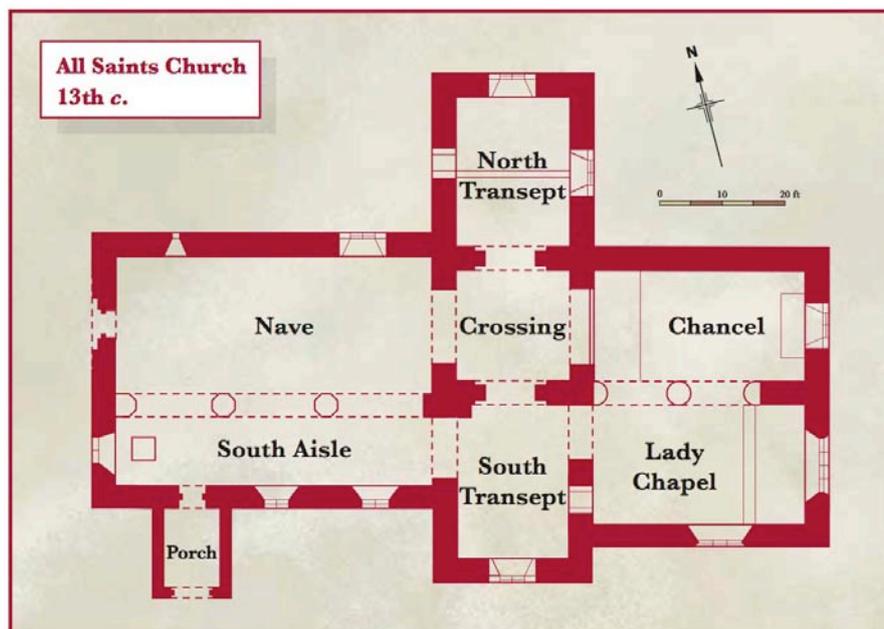
⁶ Bullen, Crook, Hubbuck and Pevsner *The buildings of England, Hampshire: Winchester and the North* Yale University Press 2010p 241

⁷ Nicholas Riall 'Henry of Blois, Bishop Winchester. A Patron of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance' *Hampshire Papers* pp18-19.



The Victoria County History describes the font as ‘one of the best examples of a class or black marble fonts, one of four in Hampshire. The others are in Winchester Cathedral, St Michael’s, Southampton and St Mary’s, Bourne.

13th century

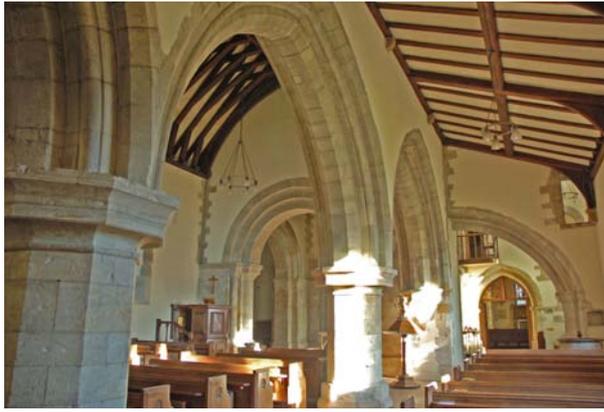


Floor plan of All Saints following 13th century addition of South Aisle, South Chapel and Porch

A century later, the diocesan lands were yielding substantial returns and Bishop Peter de Roches invested heavily in deer parks and fishponds in the diocese, including East Meon⁸. It may have been de Roches who enlarged All Saints by widening the church to the south (because the church is built into a steep hillside, expanding to the north would have been more of a challenge). The extension was prompted by the need for a second altar to accommodate the number of masses commissioned on behalf of the souls of well-off sinners who had left money in their wills for that purpose, resulting in what has been described as a ‘celestial bombardment’⁹.

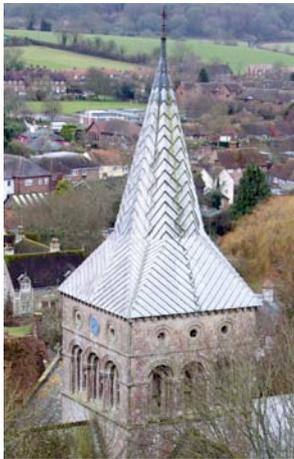
⁸ Roberts, Edward *The Bishop of Winchester’s Fishponds in Hampshire 1130 – 1400*, Hampshire Field Club & Archaeological Society, 42 1986 p 125

⁹ Pounds, *Ibid* p393



The south wall of the 12th century church was removed, and replaced with an arcade separating the chancel from a new lady chapel, with 'a sturdy round pier, round capitals and abacus and big hollow chamfers in the arches' and another in the nave with 'very short octagonal piers'¹⁰. The nave and the chancel are separated by a half-arch.

South aisle with Early English arches.



The steeple was added to the tower in around 1250, and may be the earliest surviving timber framed spire of its kind in England or Normandy¹¹.

In the fourteenth century, the head of a man and a woman were carved as corbels on the nave window; it is conjectured that these represented one of the bishop's stewards and his wife.

The steeple, added to the tower at a later stage.



These carvings of a man and a woman are possibly of one of the bishops' stewards and his wife

¹⁰ Bullen, Crook, Hubbuck and Pevsner *Ibid* p 242

¹¹ Bullen, Crook, Hubbuck and Pevsner *Ibid* p 241

Tithes and taxes.

The bishops could well afford to pay for the building and expansion of All Saints. Most forms of tax paid in the Middle Ages went to the Diocese which also owned the manors of East Meon; this meant that residents paid rent to the Diocese, either in money or 'labour services', a specified number of days' work on the lands which the diocese did not let to tenants but farmed 'in demesne'. The bishop was the rector of the parish and received the 'greater', or rectorial tithes, one tenth of the crops of the open fields farmed by tenant farmers.

The vicar looked after the parish 'vicariously' for his lord and received the 'lesser' tithes, a tenth of garden crops, and of animal products, poultry, timber, turf and hay. 'Gardens' were used to cultivate sufficient vegetables, pigs and chickens to feed the family. The vicar would have been provided with the free use of a vicarage and the produce of glebe land, which he might have cultivated himself; his benefice might also have included a stipend and fees for conducting baptisms, marriages and mortuaries paid at burials. As probably the only literate member of the community he also wrote wills and other agreements, and often educated the children of those who could afford to pay him.

Other taxes, such as church scots and poor rates went to the parish to cover its costs which included, since the twelfth century, responsibility for maintaining the church building (apart from the chancel, which fell to the rector). On the outside of the east wall are two inscriptions; one has the arms of Prior Hinton and the monastery of St. Swithun of Winchester, the other is a rebus of Bishop Langton, the effigy being a pair of elongated dragons each wearing a barrel, or 'tun', his arms being a pun on his name – 'long-tun'. These probably reflect the fact that the prior and the bishop had met the cost of rebuilding the north and east walls of the chancel in the late fifteenth century, the final piece of construction work conducted before the Reformation.



*On the east wall, the 'rebus' of Bishop Langton
(a pun on 'long tun' or barrel)*

The church in the community



All Saints today, much as it was in the thirteenth century

The church building was the seat of local government. The equivalent of today's PCC met in the vestry and took its name from it; yeoman farmers and other worthies were elected annually as churchwardens, sidesmen, overseers and surveyors. These officers were unpaid and from the 12th century were responsible for raising parish taxes, to meet the costs of maintaining the building, and of employing the sexton, clerk, constables, overseers of the poor, surveyors of roads and bridges and other officers who also included the 'beggar-banger', responsible for controlling the length of stay of any unwanted 'stranger', and the 'knock-knobbler', whose job it was to drive dogs out of the church.

The vestry was one of three seats of local administration; the second was the manor court which met twice-yearly in The Court Hall, presided over by the bishop's steward; it handled the economic affairs of the diocese including the inheritance of land, the granting of leases, the regulation of ploughing and the control of common grazing. It heard also civil cases regarding obstructed paths, encroachments on other men's lands and the like,

The third was the Archdeacon's court which met from time to time in the western end of the nave, and heard cases relating to church attendance and the payment of tithe, marriage and testamentary matters.

Meetings of the whole parish were also held in the nave, as well as many other forms of social activity, including the convivial 'church ales' held on feast days. The beer was probably brewed in the vicarage. (Beer was safer than water, and even the children drank 'small beer'.)

Church interior

In the Middle Ages, the nave would have been a dark and smelly place. There would have been no seating, apart from stone benches along the walls where the elderly and disabled would have sat ... hence the expression 'going to the wall'. The Romanesque windows were tiny, the floor was beaten soil, dogs probably had the freedom of the place and rushes were scattered both to absorb filth and to make kneeling less uncomfortable. Incense helped to hide the stench during services; there are entries in churchwardens' accounts for the clearance and replacement of the straw before saints' days. The only stone on the floor were the gravestones of wealthy parishioners who paid to be buried inside the church, with a flat gravestone to commemorate them¹². The less-well-off were buried outside in the churchyard, in unmarked graves.

The walls would have been heavily decorated with moralities and paintings of biblical scenes. Benches for prominent parishioners were introduced later to the nave and these added to the clutter, as did chantries and funerary monuments. The western end accommodated equipment owned by the parish, including fire buckets, long ladders and poles for extracting burning thatch. The parish 'herse' was also there, a frame of metal or wood, hired out for funerals. The lych gate acted as resting place for the hurdle or coffin until the vicar was ready to conduct the service.

In the fourteenth century a rood screen separated the chancel from the congregation in the nave. It was densely carved with saints and floral patterns, with a Calvary, or rood, at the top; above the arch was a painting of the 'doom', or Last Judgment¹³. Inside the chancel, the altars were of stone, set against the east wall, and the priest conducted the service with his back to the congregation. The chancel was lit by lantern candles during services, especially on feast days, glinting off the silver and pewter altar vessels¹⁴. The priest wore a coloured chasuble and cope and the congregation was treated to glimpses, through the rood screen, of a rich spectacle.

Candles, vestments and incense, were all paid for by the parishioners. Candles were usually made within the parish, generally by elderly widows. The wardens bought the wax and put it out to the candlemakers. What would have been lacking was music. Some churches boasted a portable organ, but the full-blooded version we see today did not arrive until the nineteenth century. The cost of producing books meant that only the priest had access to a score, and he intoned the service as best he could. Congregational singing was not an established practice, but there were occasions when the 'husky, tuneless' voices of the peasantry made themselves heard¹⁵.

¹² Gravestones from earlier periods were transferred to the Lady Chapel during Victorian refurbishments.

¹³ See page 12; there are traces of paintings on the north-east pillar of the transept

¹⁴ During the Middle Ages only the priest received the wine, which meant that only a small cup – a chalice – was necessary. When the body of adult parishioners was admitted to communion in both kinds, the chalice was replaced by a much larger communion cup.

¹⁵ Pounds, *Ibid* p439

The church yard

The vicar, his wardens and 'knock-knobbler' fought a constant battle to keep parishioners and their animals from treating the churchyard as their own, but it did provide the largest and most convenient space for gatherings of local people. The authorities frowned particularly on churchyard markets but they failed to suppress them.¹⁶ East Meon was not entitled to hold a weekly market: Petersfield did have a license and was near enough for villagers to walk their produce to market and return in a day. However, Mark Page of Leicester University has established that unofficial markets were held from the 12th century at All Saints on feast days.

The 1321 will of Thomas le Mason shows that he left to his wife Alice and brother Peter two stalls 'next to the stile of East Meon churchyard'. Four years later a third stall in the same location was surrendered by Thomas le Barrer¹⁷. Stalls were movable wooden trading booths, but by the 14th century many had become semi-permanent structures which could be bought, sold and inherited, a type of property. Peter le Mason's, next to the stile of the churchyard, was explicitly called a shop in 1339 when he surrendered it to Richard le Ridler, who enlarged it by acquiring additional ground on its south, east and north sides, suggesting that it bordered the churchyard on its west side. As surnames often indicated a man's trade, Richard le Ridler would probably have been a sifter of sand and lime, in making mortar, and Peter le Mason a stoneworker: both would have been involved in the building trade, and the shop may have the medieval equivalent of a builder's yard at a time when construction work on the church and later the Court Hall were providing trade.¹⁸

The Reformation

Almost half the parishes in England were confiscated by the Crown between 1536 and 1540 during the Dissolution of the Monasteries and sold off to the laity. Most churches lost their rood screens and many images were defaced. Any remaining rood screens were removed under Edward; some were hastily restored under Mary, then taken down again under Elizabeth. The holes in the pillars to the east of the crossing show where brackets once were, and there are faint traces of a mural on the north-east pillar (*photograph, below*). Notes written in 1912 by the Reverend Thomas Heywood Masters record that: 'Old inhabitants of East Meon can remember a "Doom" (i.e., a painting of the Last Judgment) above the chancel arch; the Vicar also possessed notes written in 1838 which describe 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 Christ¹⁹.'

¹⁶Page, Mark. *Village shops in Medieval Hampshire: the case of East Meon* Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club 2017 Q1 p7

¹⁷ Evidence from the Winchester pipe rolls entered in M. Page, 'Peasant land markets in southern England, 1260 - 1350' database deposited at ESRC data archive ref no SN 4086.

¹⁸ Page, Mark. *Village shops in Medieval Hampshire: the case of East Meon* Hampshire Field Club 2017 p8

¹⁹ Masters, Thomas Heywood, PDF at <http://www.eastmeonhistory.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/1912-Notes-Thomas-Heywood-Masters.pdf>



*The plain walls of today's church (above)
Faint traces of a mural of saints or angels on the
north-east pillars of the transept (above right and
right)*

Stone altars were replaced with wooden tables; the stone slabs which had formed their tops were made to serve as paving or even grave markers. Some of the destruction was freelance ... In the quaint words of a nineteenth century church historian: *'private fraudulence, quickened into desperate exertion, won the race against the King's Commission. Parlours appeared hung with altar cloths; tables and beds were covered with copes, fair large cushions reposed in windows and chairs; many a chalice entered the taproom or the pantry as a parcel gilt goblet'*²⁰ Much of the destruction of the 1540s and 1550s was orchestrated, paid for, and controlled by the wardens.²¹

In the reign of Edward VII the sermon became the chief vehicle in the spread of new doctrines... and the means of conveying news on secular matters as well. Communion was now celebrated only two or three times a year, whilst Matins and Evensong were held every Sunday, at which the presence of every member of the parish was demanded. Coloured vestments made way for plain surplices. Portable organs, where they existed, were replaced by wind instruments. Singing gained ground in the reformed liturgy and music was now composed especially for church use.

The Diocese of Winchester conducted a survey of rentals in 1567, presumably to establish what property it still possessed, which did include East Meon, for the time being.

²⁰ Richard W Dixon *History of the Church of England from the Abolition of the Roman Jurisdiction*, London 1878, 111, 453

²¹ Pounds *Ibid* p460

Monarchy and Parliament



James I's coat of arms by the south porch (*left*) would originally have been hung above where the rood screen had been, a sign that the King of England and not the Pope of Rome, was now head of the church. It also marked a momentous 'regime change': the accession of the first Stuart monarch. ...

Under Charles I, Archbishop Laud, who would have been described in today's terminology as a high churchman, demanded the restoration of the furniture of the chancel to what it had been at the death of Henry VIII. He had the table moved to the east wall of the chancel, and insisted that communion be taken kneeling, so communion rails were installed.

Then, in March 1644, Civil War brought the Parliamentary Army under Sir William Waller to East Meon; it camped to the east of the village, while the Royalist cavalry took up position on nearby Winchester Hill to keep an eye on them and harry their foraging parties. On March 28th that year, 12,000 men marched through the village to Westbury, turned up Vinnell's Lane and the next day at Cheriton met the Cavalier Army under Lord Hopton. They left behind a peak in mortality among the citizens, probably caused by war typhus; any surviving stained glass, carvings or wall paintings were now defaced²².

They also left behind the remains of four men, probably soldiers, curiously buried upright, marked by the inscription 'Amens Plenty' (*right*) which is now mounted in the south transept, possibly a reference to the tendency of Puritan preachers, and their congregations, to punctuate their sermons with 'Amens'.



East Meon's vicar, John Shrigley, had been appointed two years earlier by Walter Curle, a Royalist Bishop of Winchester who had supported Archbishop Laud. Shrigley was among over 2,000 Anglican vicars who were replaced by more zealous puritans; he was imprisoned and seems to have died in Kent. Parliament confiscated all episcopal properties, and granted lands in East Meon to its supporters; when Charles II was restored to the throne, he gave ownership back to the bishops but granted tenancies to his supporters, who in turn purchased the rectorial tithes; these made up a significant part of the income of many country gentry well into the nineteenth century.

²² EMHG member David Hopkins has written an account of Waller's encampment in East Meon: <http://www.eastmeonhistory.net/wars/the-civil-war-in-east-meon/>

Puritans



The pulpit of All Saints' dates from 1706 and was originally housed in the church of Holy Trinity, Minories, near the Tower of London, which was demolished in 1899; it was brought to East Meon by Rev E.M. Tomlinson who had previously been the incumbent of Holy Trinity. Interaction between minister and congregation was once again the key element of worship

and the altar table was brought forward once more to the front of the chancel. Sermons could be interminably long and there are records of hour-glasses being placed in the pulpit where both preacher and congregation could see them. To make congregations more comfortable during these sermons, benches were replaced by pews, some of them with high sides both to shelter their occupants from drafts and to give them privacy; some even took light refreshments during the sermons. Rent from the pews provided income for the church, and the wealthiest parishioners took the locations nearest the altars, forcing the least-well-off to the back of the church. Social strife often resulted, which had to be patrolled by the hapless churchwardens²³. Pews were legally part of their owner's estate, and were bequeathed or sold along with house and other property. By now, the floor of the nave had been paved, and the gravestones which had been located there were moved to the Lady Chapel.

While cathedrals had an organ and choir to perform the polyphonic music which was composed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, most parish churches rejected plainsong chant as being 'Romish' and turned to the metrical version of the psalms and at a later date to hymns. Wind instruments and fiddles replaced the portable organ, where there was one, often in a small band. 'Noise was a crucial element in celebration'²⁴ and a heavy drain on the churchwardens budget. Of the surviving bells in the All Saints belfry, the two oldest date back to the eighteenth century, with a further six to the nineteenth and the newest, the treble and the second, cast as recently as 1990, when they were all rehung with new fittings following a fund-raising drive in the parish .

The parish's role in civil administration had grown in the seventeenth century when Kings and Parliament took advantage of this unpaid local civil service by making parishes responsible for collecting the Poor Rate, and the Overseers of the Poor for its disbursement (and for seeing off vagrant poor who might become a drain on the parish). Meticulous accounts show how carefully this was done; if you could prove you were born or had full residence in the parish, you would not starve.

²³ Richard Gough *The History of Myddle*, Penguin edition. 1981. He wrote a lively account in 1700 of the Shropshire village of Myddle, taking the pew plan as the blueprint of the social structure

²⁴ David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* London 1987 pp86 - 103

By 1727, East Meon had its own workhouse, administered by the church worthies, which survived until the early 19th century when the government decided to strip parishes of their duties of care, setting up district councils and union workhouses in nearby towns.

Nineteenth century

The most significant change to the practice of religion in the parish in the 19th century was the arrival and growth of nonconformist congregations, who first met in private houses but grew to build three chapels in the village of East Meon, one Calvinist, one 'Zoar', and one Primitive Methodist. There were other nonconformist chapels in Ramsdean, Langrish and Stroud²⁵. As many as a third of parish residents subscribed to one or other of these congregations which suggests a shift in the social structure of the parish; tradesmen and shopkeepers were the most prominent members of these chapels.



East Meon National School in the 1880s, with separate entrances for girls and boys.



The Village Institute founded in 1887.

In the early 19th century, the vicars had given religious instruction to up to 160 parish children in the north transept²⁶; in 1845 the Bishop donated a narrow strip of land at the bottom of the Park on which the National (Church of England) school was built. In 1887, the parish established a Village Institute where Park Vista now stands, which provided a reading room, coffee rooms, a venue for music and drama and indoor sports (including, later, a rifle range; it was sold in 1973 to be replaced by the Village Hall on Workhouse Lane. It was chaired by the vicar until after World War II.²⁷

²⁵ PDF of paper by David Hopkins at <http://www.eastmeonhistory.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/RamsdeanStroud-Chapelsreducedl.pdf>

²⁶ Masters, *ibid*, 'In the Gentleman's Magazine of October, 1819, an article mentions the fact that a School was held in the northern transept, and that 160 children assembled there for religious instruction.'

²⁷ For a full account: http://www.eastmeonhistory.org.uk/content/catalogue_item/institute-library

East Meon's vicar in the mid-19th century, Thomas Cooke Kemp was responsible for a footnote in the history of tithes when he insisted that tithes be paid on turnips grubbed up for feeding animals. George Bartlett gave a talk on the Tithing of Turnips to East Meon History Group in 2015 and his paper can be read at ²⁸. The vicar was opposed by the owner of Bereleigh, Captain Samuel Pechell, RN; Kemp took him to court and won the case, but an Act was passed in Parliament in 1835, reversing the judgment. In the following year, the Tithe Commutation Act led to a country-wide survey of lands, rents and tithes in order to establish their monetary value.

It might be counted a blessing that no very visible alterations were made to All Saints during the 19th century, although in 1869 the next vicar, William Brodie engaged the architect Ewen Christian to restore its infrastructure. The external signs of this restoration are gutters and down pipes and he also worked on the roofs, especially of the Lady Chapel, chancel and transepts, and the spire. The three-faced clock came at this time. Internally, the box pews and gallery were removed, and were replaced by the pews as we have them today .

Twentieth & twenty first centuries

Just before and after World War I, an extraordinary vicar, Thomas Heywood Masters (1902 – 1922), engaged the Arts and Crafts architect, Ninian Comper, to refurbish the church²⁹. Comper designed much of the woodwork you can see today, notably the reredos screens in the Lady Chapel, the lectern with its splendid angels, both altars and their riddel posts, the vestry door and most notably the glorious East Window which features the coats of arms and the patron saints of the nations who fought with Britain in the First World War.

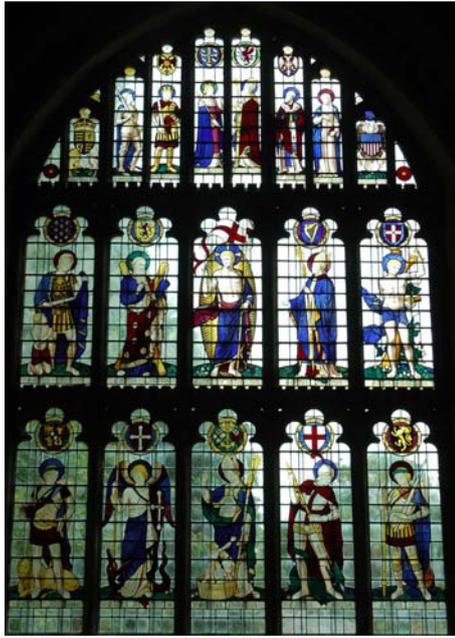


Left, reredos screen, by Comper; below left, angel on lectern; below, filigree woodwork above entrance to Lady Chapel.



²⁸ Bartlett, George <http://www.eastmeonhistory.net/tithes-and-turnips/>

²⁹ Bussell, Betty & Stewart 'Vicar at War', <http://www.eastmeonhistory.net/vicar-at-war/>

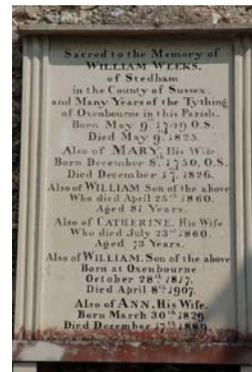
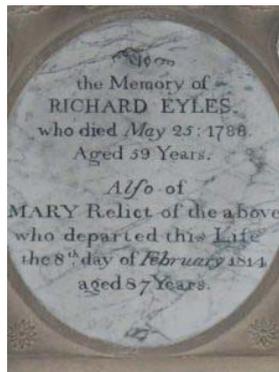
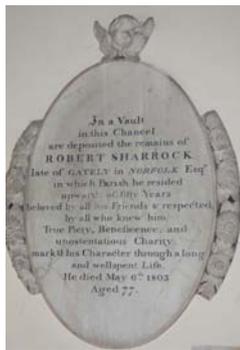


Left, the east window, Comper's memorial to the allied nations who fought in World War I featuring their patron saints

In 1925, the Tithe 1925 transferred the income from tithes to the Queen Anne's bounty fund; the Tithe Act of 1936 extinguished tithes altogether.

In 1987, the Petersfield branch of NADFAS, under the leadership of East Meon resident Rosemary Ryder, conducted a detailed survey of All Saints' Church, cataloguing and photographing all its contents. The findings are kept in the vestry, but have been scanned and can be seen on East Meon's history website³⁰.

There is much more history to explore. Plaques in the Lady Chapel record two notable families, the Sharrocks of Norfolk, who leased the 'Mansion House and Manor' of East Meon, i.e. The Court House, at the end of the 18th century, and the Eyles, who occupied Glenthorne House and built the house at Bereleigh at the beginning of the 19th century³¹. The Bonham memorial records one of our wealthiest landowning families, of Adhurst in Steep, while the plaque to William Weeks, father and son, on the south wall by the porch, commemorates successful yeoman farmers of Oxenbourne in the second half of the 19th century³². The War Memorial in the High Street, another Comper design, commemorates the villagers who died in two world wars, and whose stories are also told on our website. The story of East Meon is entwined with the fabric of the church.



Left to right, plaques in the Lady Chapel commemorating Robert Sharrock of Gately in Norfolk, and Richard and Mary Eyles and, by the porch, William Weeks, father and son

³⁰ NADFAS Church Records, section of:

http://www.eastmeonhistory.org.uk/content/catalogue_item/nadfas-church-records

³¹ http://www.eastmeonhistory.org.uk/content/catalogue_item/glenthorne-house/eyles-family

³² PDF: Oxenbourne Tithing <http://www.eastmeonhistory.net/farming-in-the-valley-project/reasearch/oxenbourne-tithing/>

This account of a thousand years of All Saints' Church comes to an end as we enter the twenty first century, which saw the building of a new Church Hall between the church and Park Hill, a beautiful design in flint and oak, and the creation of the Millennium Embroidery, a tableau of the village by needlewomen, men and children of the parish³³. It was dedicated on November 2nd 2008.



Left, the millennium tapestry in its oak frame, made by an American cabinet maker, Steve Lamont, who was living in the village at the time; it doubles as the vestry.

Details of the embroidery showing, below left, a wedding carriage outside the lych gate and, below right, the allotments at the east of the village.



Nikolaus Pevsner described All Saints as ‘one of the most thrilling village churches in Hampshire’³⁴. Amen to that, or even ... Amens plenty.

³³ For more detail go to http://www.eastneonhistory.org.uk/content/catalogue_item/architecture-2/millennium-embroidery

³⁴ Nikolaus Pevsner and David Lloyd *Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* The Buildings of England University Press, Yale. 2002 P19